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THE POEMS OF
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

VOLUME III

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THE POEMS
OF
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

VOLUME III
TIPSYCHIDION, ADONAI8,
HELLAS,
Etc.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
C. D. LOCOCK

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PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY¹

VOLUME III

EPIPSYCHIDION

Epipsychidion was written early in 1821, and published in pamphlet form by Messrs. Ollier in the same year. The edition was limited to one hundred copies at 2s. each, and it is doubtful whether any were sold. Three of the connected fragments 1-11 were given in Mrs. Shelley's Second Collected Edition, and the remainder in the *Relics of Shelley*. One of the Shelley Notebooks in the Bodleian Library contains three versions, more or less incomplete, of the Preface, a version in ink and pencil, much cancelled, of the last 80 lines of the poem, and some additional lines (Fragments 12, 13 and 14) which did not appear in the printed text. For the uncanceled portions of the prefaces, and a transcription of the rough draft of the 80 lines of verse, given precisely as Shelley first wrote them, the reader is referred to *An Examination of the Shelley MSS.* etc. (Clarendon Press). A facsimile reprint of the original edition, with an introduction by the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, was published for the Shelley Society in 1884. One

¹ A brief sketch of Shelley's career is prefixed to the first volume of this edition

verbal alteration ('or' for 'and' in l. 49) has been made in the present text.

The meaning of the title has been much discussed. Mr. Forman's interpretation—"a little poem about a soul"—cannot etymologically be correct. The word is formed on the analogy of "epicycle," and would mean literally "A little additional soul," or, as Shelley himself puts it (l. 238), "this soul out of my soul" (Compare also his *Essay on Love*—"A miniature as it were of our entire self," and "A soul within our soul.")

The first two lines of the poem have been suspected, but fortunately all possibility of doubt is set at rest by Shelley's own translation into Italian of these two lines, to be found on the back of p. 3 of his MS. of *The Masque of Anarchy*—

"Anima dolce, che sei la sorella
Di quella oisana anima che regge
Il nome e la forma mia"

The "orphan one," as Dr. Garnett points out in his *Relics of Shelley*, is Mary Shelley, whom Emilia was accustomed to address as "Cara Sorella"; the "name" is Shelley's own.

The "Emilia V." to whom the poem is addressed was the eldest daughter of Count Viviani of Pisa. Owing to the jealousy of her stepmother she was placed in the convent of St. Anna at Pisa under pretence of completing her education. She was first visited there by Shelley early in December 1820, and remained for several months on the most friendly terms with the Shelleys and Miss Clairmont. The first passion for her soon subsided, and as early as February 16 the poet described *Epipsychidion* as a portion of himself "already dead."

Early in 1822 Emilia married Biondi, and, accord-

to Mrs. Shelley, "led him and his mother (to use a vulgarism), a devil of a life." According to Medwin she died about six years later at Florence. In June 1822 Shelley wrote, "The *Epipsychidion* I cannot look at; the person whom it celebrates was a cloud instead of a Juno. . . . I think one is always in love with something or other; the error—and I confess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it—consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is, perhaps, eternal." This is, in fact, the key-note of the whole poem—

"In many mortal forms I rashly sought
The shadow of that idol of my thought"

The poet tries to identify in some tangible form that image of "Intellectual Beauty"—the Idea of Beauty—which, as in *Alastor* and elsewhere, he was ever striving to realise. He failed, and as Mr. Stopford Brooke points out, he "never tried to reach it again. The greatness of the failure, following on the greatness of the effort, made him put this kind of thing away for ever. . . . And all the love poems which follow *Epipsychidion* are in the real world, without a trace of philosophy, inspired only by personal affection." And for that reason, perhaps, they never soar again to the same heights.

The metre of *Epipsychidion* is the same "rhymed blank verse" which Shelley had used so successfully in *Julian and Maddalo* and the *Letter to Maria Gisborne*. The distinction from the ordinary heroic metre of his predecessors is well shown in the unaccented rhymes of lines 1-2 and 4-6. In lines 362-363 the same device is used with singular effect—

"Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might,
Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light."

Compare the unemphatic rhyme-termination of the last line of *Adonais*—

“Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are”

For music and passion combined *Epipsychidion* is probably Shelley's greatest work; the climax, beginning at l. 388, is, in Mr. Stopford Brooke's opinion, “The most beautiful thing—for pure beauty—which exists in English poetry.” Mr. Swinburne finds fault with the poem as a whole on account of its autobiographical enigmas. “In all poetry,” he says, “mysteries must have place, but riddles should find none. . . . Art should have nothing to do with puzzles.” The “Moon” of lines 277 etc. is clearly Mary Shelley, but none of the other persons mentioned in the body of the poem have been identified with any degree of certainty. Some may be only imaginary, or, at the most, mythological. A greater blot on the perfection of the poem, is, in my judgment, the inclusion of the dialectical passage 147–189, written in the familiar style of some of the omitted fragments. Much of the poem—more particularly the wonderfully peaceful “Conclusion”—shows the influence of Dante. It should be compared with Shelley's prose fragment entitled *Una Favola*.

ADONAIS

Adonais was composed in May and early June of 1821, and printed at Pisa, “with the types of Didot,” in the following month. The author himself has left on record that the poem was printed correctly; but he subsequently made two or three alterations which were incorporated in Mrs. Shelley's Collected Edition of 1839. An edition purporting to be an exact

reprint of the original edition ("a few biographical errors only being corrected") was issued at Cambridge in 1829. Mr. W. M. Rossetti has edited the poem with introductions and elaborate notes (Clarendon Press, 1891 and 1903). The cancelled passages are from Dr. Garnett's *Relics of Shelley*.

Shelley and Keats appear to have first met in February 1817. They engaged from time to time in friendly competitions, of which *The Revolt of Islam*, *Endymion* and the *Sonnets on the Nile* were the results, but owing to Keats' sensitiveness and desire for independence the two poets were never really intimate. Shelley claimed much credit for having read *Endymion*, "the author's intention appearing to be that no person should possibly get to the end of it. Yet it is full of some of the highest and finest gleams of poetry." For *Hyperion* he had always the greatest admiration; the volume containing it was found on him at his death.

At the end of July 1820 Shelley heard that Keats had broken down in health, and urged him to come to Pisa as his guest for the winter: Keats took the advice as far as the journey to Italy was concerned, and arrived at Naples in October with Joseph Severn, the well-known artist, removing to Rome in the following month. The news of his death there, on February 23, 1821, appears not to have reached Shelley till April. In ascribing the cause of his death to the "savage criticism" of *Endymion* which had appeared in the *Quarterly Review* nearly two and a half years earlier, Shelley not only exaggerated the effect of that article but neglected the far more savage attack in *Blackwood's Magazine*. Of this latter article he was probably not aware, whereas the *Quarterly* critique was known to

him in the summer and elicited his well-known unfinished letter to that magazine in defence of Keats. Shelley describes *Adonais* as "perhaps the least imperfect" of his compositions: "It is a highly wrought piece of art, and perhaps better, in point of composition, than anything I have written." } And again, "I confess I should be surprised if *that* poem were born to an immortality of oblivion." It is in fact the most widely read of Shelley's compositions, the more so, perhaps, because what was written for Keats is so strangely applicable to Shelley himself. In detail it is not flawless throughout—less so perhaps than *Epipsychidion*—while the numerous adaptations from Bion and Moschus—set out fully in Mr. Rossetti's edition—weakens considerably its claims to originality. But, as in *Prometheus*, the classical allusions are all in the earlier portion of the poem, ceasing almost entirely in the second and greater half, when Urania's grief for the loss of Adonais gives place as a theme to the poet's own yearnings for immortality. >

HELLAS

Hellas was written at Pisa in the early autumn of 1821, and was published by C. & J. Ollier in the following spring, together with the *Lines Written on hearing the News of the Death of Napoleon*. The drama was transcribed, and the title suggested, by Edward Williams. Shelley described it as "prettily printed, and with fewer mistakes than any poem I ever published"; but his own very incomplete list of *errata* hardly bears out this statement. A facsimile reprint of the First Edition, with an introduction by Mr. T. W. Higginson, was issued by the Shelley Society in 1887.

Hellas was Shelley's last finished poem of any considerable length. He describes it as "a sort of lyrical, dramatic, nondescript piece of business," and in his Preface, as "a mere improvise." Naturally therefore it is very unequal in merit, and the author has often borrowed ideas not only, as Professor Woodberry points out, from Æschylus, Virgil, and Shakespeare, but to a great extent from his own earlier poems, and notably from the *Prometheus*. Most of the lyrical passages are of a very high order, but Mrs. Shelley's judgment in singling out for special mention the conclusion of the final Chorus may be disputed. The Chorus itself, as Shelley remarks in his notes, is "indistinct and obscure," while the similarity to Byron's *Isles of Greece* is rather too obvious. The blank verse is more variable in quality; much of it is merely—to use Shelley's own phrase—"newspaper erudition" cut into lengths; other passages are of great beauty, notably the description of Ahasuerus (ll. 137-184), the battle-scene (385-424), much of the phantom-scene (ll. 738-930) and some shorter passages.

The *Prologue to Hellas* was deciphered from MS. by Dr. Garnett and printed in the *Relics of Shelley*. Probably it was originally intended for the drama on the subject of Job which Shelley had long contemplated. At any rate the incongruity with *Hellas* itself is obvious enough. The fragments are from the *Relics*.

GINEVRA

This was written in 1821 and published by Mrs. Shelley in *Posthumous Poems* (1824). The story is taken from *Osservatore Fiorentino sugli edifizî della*

sua Patria (1821). Probably Shelley had in his mind the approaching marriage of Emilia Viviani. The poem shows in a marked degree the influence of Byron's style.

FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED DRAMA

These fragments were written at Pisa early in 1822. Lines 1-14, 28-69, 100-120 and 15-27 appeared in *Posthumous Poems* (1824), the last mentioned passage being there printed as an independent *Song* of a *Spirit*. Dr. Garnett gave ll. 127-238 in *Relics of Shelley* under the title of *The Magic Plant*. Lines 70-99, 120-126 and 239-244 were first published by Mr. Rossetti in 1870 from a transcription by Dr. Garnett.

Mrs. Shelley gives the following preliminary note:—
 “An Enchantress, living in one of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, saves the life of a Pirate, a man of savage but noble nature. She becomes enamoured of him; and he, inconstant to his mortal love, for a while returns her passion: but at length, recalling the memory of her whom he left, and who laments his loss, he escapes from the enchanted isle, and returns to his lady. His mode of life makes him again go to sea, and the Enchantress seizes the opportunity to bring him, by a spirit-brewed tempest, back to her island.”

And again after l. 27—

“A good Spirit, who watches over the Pirate's fate, leads, in a mysterious manner, the lady of his love to the Enchanted Isle. She is accompanied by a youth, who loves this lady, but whose passion she returns only with a sisterly affection. The

ensuing scene takes place between them on their arrival at the Isle."

The drama was probably intended to set forth the adventures of Edward Trelawny, one of Shelley's most intimate friends at Pisa. The "Magic Plant" episode should be compared with *The Zucca*, composed in January 1822. In the earlier half of the poem Shakespeare, Milton, and Shelley's own earlier works are freely drawn on, but "over all," says Professor Woodberry, "is a new charm, original, pure, and delicate, which makes the verse a new kind in English." This "last manner" of Shelley's abounds in little pictures of unrivalled delicacy, such for instance as—

"Its shape was such as summer melody
Of the south wind in spicy vales might give
To some light cloud, bound from the golden dawn
To fairy isles of evening" (l. 215 etc.).

Compare *The Triumph of Life*, 378—

"Yet sweet, as on the summer-evening breeze,
Up from the lake a shape of golden dew
Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon,
Dances i' the wind."

CHARLES THE FIRST

Most of this fragment was written in 1822, though the "elements" of it were in existence during most of the previous year and the idea had been formed as early as 1818. The greater part of the drama was first published by Mr. Rossetti from his own transcription in 1870, the remainder having previously appeared in *Posthumous Poems*, with the exception of sc. iii. 27-32, which was given in the *Relics of Shelley*.

Shelley, like Coleridge, took little interest in English

History, and worked very fitfully on *Charles* 16, which he ultimately abandoned for *The Triumph of Life*. Scene v., where I have adopted (perhaps too readily) Mr. Forman's suggested 'count' for 'court,' contains the famous "Widow bird" song. In the third line of this it may be noted that the *Posthumous Poems* version gave 'kept' instead of 'crept.' I have adopted the following emendations,—(i), 107, 'bondage' (Forman) for 'bondages'; (ii), 99, 'state' (Garnett) for 'stake'; 367, 'Gonzalo's' (Rossetti) for 'Gonzaga's.'

Though Shelley expressed himself as satisfied with the poetry of the earlier scenes, they may seem rather dull to most readers, interspersed though they are with such passages as (i) 38—

"The day that dawns in fire will die in storms,
Even though the noon be calm. My travel's done;
Before the whirlwind wakes I shall have found
My inn of lasting rest, but thou must still
Be journeying on in this inclement air.
Wrap thy old cloak about thy back;
Nor leave the broad and plain and beaten road,
Although no flowers smile on the trodden dust,
For the violet paths of pleasure."

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

Shelley's last great work was written in the early summer of 1822. "At night," wrote Mrs. Shelley, "he often went alone in his little shallop to the rocky caves" bordering on the Bay of Spezzia, "and sitting beneath their shelter wrote *The Triumph of Life*." Much of it too was composed on board the new yacht *Ariel*, "as he sailed or weltered on that sea which was soon to engulf him."

The Triumph of Life appeared in *Posthumous Poems* (1824). Owing to its fragmentary state, and Mrs.

Shelley's confession that she arranged it in its present form with the greatest difficulty, it affords some scope for the emendator. Dr. Garnett gave long ago several emendations from the MS., as well as the 'cancelled opening'; and Mr. Rossetti supplied 'that' for 'these' (184) and various improvements in pointing.

Besides these I have adopted Professor Bradley's 'conqueror' for 'conquerois' (129), and his omission of the comma after 'canst' (188) and of the long pause at the end of 190; also my own perhaps over-bold 'ware' for 'where' (161). Professor Bradley also suggests 'woke' for 'wake' (334); but as the latter is more euphonious, and as a similar change of tense in the previous line ('imagined' for 'imagine') had occurred to me independently, I have judged it safer to leave both lines alone. The last three words of l. 133, and the last $3\frac{1}{2}$ lines of the poem were given to me by Dr. Garnett and have not previously appeared in print.

POEMS OF 1814-15

All of these were published in the *Alastor* volume, with the following exceptions:—*Stanza*, written at *Bracknell* (Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, 1858); *To Harriet* (Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, 1887); *To Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin* (Posthumous Poems, 1824); Sonnet: "*Yet look on me*" (Mrs. Shelley's Second Collected Edition, 1839: therein placed conjecturally among the poems of 1817); "*The cold Earth slept below*" (Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823). This latter poem is generally supposed to refer to the death of Harriet Shelley; if this is so, the date 1815 must be incorrect. Mrs. Shelley states that the Stanzas headed $\Delta\alpha\delta\mu\alpha\iota$, $\kappa\tau\lambda$. were addressed to Coleridge; but B. Dobell,

in March 1820. The exquisite *Invocation to Misery* appeared first in *The Athenæum* (1832) and again in Medwin's *Shelley Papers* (1833). I have followed mainly the version printed by Mrs. Shelley in 1839, adopting three or four variations from the Bodleian MS. in Stanzas I., VII., XII. The *Stanzas Written in Dejection*, also in the Bodleian, give no verbal variations. The same MS. gives a sketch of the intended plot of *Tasso*, of which this scene is from the *Relics of Shelley*, as also are the fragments *To Byron* and *To Silence*. The last four fragments were printed by Mr. Rossetti in 1870.

POEMS OF 1819

The two political poems placed first and third appeared in *The Athenæum* (1832) and in the *Shelley Papers* (1833). Three emendations in the first of them are from the Harvard MS.; in the other, 'moon' for 'morn' (II. 4) is Mr. Rossetti's conjecture. The *Ode to the Assertors of Liberty* was included in the *Prometheus* volume, with the exception of the last stanza, which was published by Mr. Rossetti in *The Times*. The next three poems were also printed with *Prometheus*, the manuscript of which contains a draft of the *Ode to Heaven*; there is another copy of this at Harvard, and also of *An Exhortation*, which perhaps should be classed among the poems of 1820. Several versions of the *Indian Serenade* are extant. The poem first appeared in the second number of *The Liberal* (1822), and again in *Posthumous Poems*. An autograph copy of the MS. was given by Shelley to Miss Stacey, to whom the next poem was addressed, in 1819; another was deciphered by Robert Browning.

INTRODUCTION

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I have followed no one version exclusively,—adopting from *The Liberal* and the Harvard MS. the reading ‘burning’ (I. 4), from *The Liberal* ‘Hath’ (I. 7), from the *Posthumous Poems* and the Harvard MS. the omission of ‘And’ at the beginning of II. 3—and of the ‘s’ after ‘Champak,’ from *The Liberal* and *Posthumous Poems* ‘die’ (II. 7), from the Harvard MS. and the MS. seen by Browning ‘Oh’ (II. 8), and from *Posthumous Poems* the reading adopted in III. 7. The first fragment *To William Shelley* comes from *Posthumous Poems*, the Harvard MS. authorising the omission of the word ‘the’ in II. 7; nearly all the others are from Mrs. Shelley’s later editions and the *Relics of Shelley*. Of the three last fragments, *O Pillow Cold* was published by Mr. Rossetti in 1870; the next is a recent discovery in the Bodleian, and the last was printed by Zupitza in the *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*.

POEMS OF 1820

The first three were published in the *Prometheus* volume. Three variations in the *Vision of the Sea*—noteworthy as the only unfinished poem published by Shelley—have been adopted from the Harvard MS., viz. ‘sunk’ for ‘sank’ (I. 8), ‘by’ for ‘from’ (I. 35), and ‘sits’ for ‘sit’ (I. 37). The Harvard MS. of *To a Skylark* gives no variations. The four classical poems which follow are all in the Bodleian Library in Shelley’s writing, being inserted in the dramas *Proserpine* and *Midas* which were written out, and perhaps composed by Mrs. Shelley. From these manuscripts I have adopted the following new readings:—*Arethusa*; ‘unsealed’ for ‘concealed’ (I. 25), ‘And the beard’ for

'The beard' (l. 31), and 'Ocean's' for 'ocean' (l. 69); *Hymn of Apollo*, Stanza vi., 'it is' for 'itself' (l. 2), 'is' for 'are' (l. 4), and 'its' for 'their' (l. 6),—this last improvement having already been adopted by Mr. Rossetti on his own conjecture; *Hymn of Pan*; 'Listening my' for 'Listening to my' (i. 5 and 12), 'and the waves' for 'and waves' (ii. 7). Line 6 of the second stanza of *The Question* was first published by Dr. Garnett in *The Westminster Review*, July, 1870. Two minor emendations in the same poem are from the Harvard MS. The fragment here entitled *Study for Autumn, a Dirge* is from the Bodleian MS. In the sonnet *Ye hasten* etc. the Harvard MS. gives an important correction—'must' for 'mayst' in line 7. Three other corrections—'grave' for 'dead' (l. 1), 'pale Expectation' for 'Anticipation' (l. 5), and 'all that' for 'that which' (l. 8), are from another MS. *A Satire on Satire* was first printed by Professor Dowden in 1880. *Orpheus* is from the *Relics of Shelley*, with some corrections by Mr. Rossetti from the manuscript. *Time long Past*, and the fragments *The Deserts of Sleep*, *Consequence*, *A Face*, and *Milton's Spirit* were printed in 1870 by Mr. Rossetti, who is also responsible for the last two lines of *To the Moon*. The last five fragments are from the Bodleian Library.

POEMS OF 1821

From the Harvard MS. I have taken 'o'er' for 'over' in the first line of *To Night*. The last three lines of the poem *To Emilia Viviani* were discovered by Dr. Garnett, who gave the first of them in the *Relics of Shelley*, leaving the others to be printed in Mr. Forman's 1877 edition. All previous editors, with

the exception of Mr. Rossetti, have regarded them as the commencement of a second stanza; to me they appear to give an appropriate conclusion to the whole poem. The song *Rarely, rarely comest thou* is dated in the Harvard manuscript, "Pisa, May, 1820"; but the date, which is in Shelley's handwriting, was probably a mistake. I have followed Dr. Garnett's suggestion, adopted by Mr. Forman, in printing the lines *Music, when soft voices die* without the artificial division into stanzas. The lines on Napoleon appeared in the *Hellas* volume (1824). I have followed Mr. Rossetti in regarding the first part of Section III. of *The Fugitives* as an exchange of "interjectional queries between the lovers." To Mr. Rossetti are also due, on manuscript authority, four emendations in the poem *To Edward Williams*, viz.—'herb' for 'herd' (i. 2), 'which' for 'that' (ii. 2), 'lately' for 'ever' (iv. 2), and 'unrelieved' for 'unreprieved' (vii. 5). No less than three manuscript versions of *Remembrance* appear to be extant; while relying mainly on the text of *Posthumous Poems* for the pointing, and for the word 'her' (instead of 'his') in ii. 2—a reading supported also by the Harvard MS.—I have adopted for the last half of Stanza i. the version given by Mr. Forman from another manuscript. A portion of *The Boat on the Serchio* appeared in *Posthumous Poems*, the remainder being printed by Mr. Rossetti, who was the first to point out that the lines printed in square brackets are an alternative version of ll. 48–51. To the same editor we are also indebted for the third version of *Epithalamium*, the latest form of the *Sonnet to Byron*, and the fragments *A Dream*, *If I walk in Autumn's even*, *I faint*, *I perish*, and the next three; the five last-mentioned being supplied to him by Dr. Garnett.

POEMS OF 1822

Some corrections in *The Zucca* and *When the Lamp is Shattered* are due to Mr. Rossetti. The version of *The Invitation* here printed is from Mrs. Shelley's Second Collected Edition, and is in accordance with the manuscript. An earlier form, combining this and the next poem, appeared in *Posthumous Poems*. 'Strain' for 'stain' in the *Dirge* is Mr. Rossetti's emendation.

The text of the principal contents of the present volume is based on the following editions:—

EPIPSYCHIDION.—First Edition (C. & J. Ollier, 1821)

ADONAI8.—First Edition (Pisa, "with the types of Didot," 1821), with some corrections from Mrs. Shelley's Collected Edition of 1839.

PROLOGUE TO HELLAS.—*Relics of Shelley* (Moxon & Co., 1862).

HELLAS.—First Edition (C. & J. Ollier, 1822), with corrections from Shelley's list of *errata*.

GINEVRA.—*Posthumous Poems* (J & H. L. Hunt, 1824).

FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED DRAMA.—	{	<i>Posthumous Poems</i> (1824), <i>Relics of</i> <i>Shelley</i> (1862).
CHARLES THE FIRST.—		<i>Shelley's Poetical</i> <i>Works</i> , ed. W. M. Rossetti (1870).

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.—*Posthumous Poems* (1824), with additions, etc., by Dr Garnett.

C^d D. LOCOCK

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SHELLEY'S POEMS

EPIPSYCHIDION

(1821)

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND UNFORTUNATE LADY

EMILIA V——

NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF ——

L'anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nell' infinito un
Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso balatro
HER OWN WORDS

MY Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,—
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain;
Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring
Thee to base company, (as chance may do)
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
I pity thee, comfort thy sweet self again,
My last delight! tell them that they are dull,
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

ADVERTISEMENT

THE Writer of the following Lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the *Vita Nuova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the

circumstances to which it relates; and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats. Not but that *gran vergogna sarebbe a eolui, che rimasse cosa sotto veste di figura, o di colore rettorico: e domandato non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotai veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento.*

The present poem appears to have been intended by the Writer as the dedication to some longer one. The stanza on the opposite¹ page is almost a literal translation from Dante's famous Canzone

Voi, ch' intendete, il terzo ciel movete, etc.

The presumptuous application of the concluding lines to his own composition will raise a smile at the expense of my unfortunate friend: be it a smile not of contempt, but pity.

S.

EPIPSYCHIDION

SWEET Spirit! Sister of that orphan one,
Whose empire is the name thou weepest on,
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee
These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow cage,
Pourest such music, that it might assuage
The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,
Were they not deaf to all sweet melody;
This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale
Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale! 10
But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,
And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-winged Heart! who dost forever
Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,
Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed
It oversoared this low and worldly shade,
Lie shattered; and thy panting, wounded breast
Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!
I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be,
Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee. 20

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human,
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman
All that is insupportable in thee
Of light, and love, and immortality!

¹ To the nine lines on the preceding page.—Ed.

EPIPSYCHIDION

Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse!
 Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe!
 Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou living Form
 Among the Dead! Thou Star above the Storm!
 Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror!
 Thou Harmony of Nature's art! Thou Mirror
 In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,
 All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on!—
 Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee now
 Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow;—
 I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song
 All of its much mortality and wrong,
 With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew
 From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,
 Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy:
 Then smile on it, so that it may not die.

I never thought before my death to see
 Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,
 I love thee; though the world by no thin name
 Will hide that love from its unvalued shame.
 Would we two had been twins of the same mother!
 Or, that the name my heart lent to another
 Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,
 Blending two beams of one eternity!
 Yet were one lawful or the other true,
 These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due,
 How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!
 I am not thine: I am a part of *thee*.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burnt its wings
 Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,
 Young Love should teach Time, in his own grey style,
 All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,
 A lovely soul formed to be blest and bless?
 A well of sealed and secret happiness,
 Whose waters like blithe light and music are,
 Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? a Star
 Which moves not in the moving Heavens, alone?
 A smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone
 Amid rude voices? a beloved light?
 A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?
 A lute, which those whom Love has taught to play
 Make music on, to soothe the roughest day
 And lull fond Grief asleep? a buried treasure?
 A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure?
 A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I measure

The world of fancies, seeking one like thee, 70
And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,
And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day,
Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,
Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,
In the suspended impulse of its lightness,
Were less ætherially light: the brightness
Of her divinest presence trembles through
Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew
Embodied in the windless Heaven of June, 80
Amid the splendour-winged stars, the Moon
Burns inextinguishably beautiful:
And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full
Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,
Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops
Of planetary music heard in trance.
In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
The sunbeams of those wells which ever leap
Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep
For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense. 90
The glory of her being, issuing thence,
Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade
Of unentangled intermixture, made
By Love, of light and motion: one intense
Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,
Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing
Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing,
With the unintermitted blood, which there
Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air
The crimson pulse of living morning quiver,)— 100
Continuously prolonged, and ending never,
Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled
Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world;
Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.
Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress,
And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress
The air of her own speed has disentwined,
The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind;
And in the soul a wild odour is felt,
Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt 110
Into the bosom of a frozen bud.—
See where she stands! a mortal shape induced
With love and life and light and deity,
And motion which may change but cannot die;
An image of some bright Eternity;

A shadow of some golden dream ; a Splendour
 Leaving the third sphere pilotless ; a tender
 Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love
 Under whose motions life's dull billows move ;
 A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning ; 120
 A Vision like incarnate April, warning,
 With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
 Into his summer grave.

Ah, woe is me !
 What have I dared ? where am I lifted ? how
 Shall I descend, and perish not ? I know
 That Love makes all things equal : I have heard
 By mine own heart this joyous truth averred :
 The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
 In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse ! Sister ! Angel ! Pilot of the Fate 130
 Whose course has been so starless ! O too late
 Beloved ! O too soon adored, by me !
 For in the fields of immortality
 My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,
 A divine presence in a place divine ;
 Or should have moved beside it on this earth,
 A shadow of that substance, from its birth ;
 But not as now . . . I love thee ; yes, I feel
 That on the fountain of my heart a seal
 Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright 140
 For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast delight.
 We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,
 For one another, though dissimilar ;
 Such difference without discord, as can make
 Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake
 As trembling leaves in a continuous air ?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare
 Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wreckt.
 I never was attached to that great sect,
 Whose doctrine is, that each one should select 150
 Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
 And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
 To cold oblivion, though 'tis in the code
 Of modern morals, and the beaten road
 Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,
 Who travel to their home among the dead
 By the broad highway of the world, and so
 With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,
 The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay, 160
 That to divide is not to take away.
 Love is like understanding, that grows bright,
 Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,
 Imagination! which from earth and sky,
 And from the depths of human phantasy,
 As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills
 The Universe with glorious beams, and kills
 Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow
 Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow
 The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates, 170
 The life that wears, the spirit that creates
 One object, and one form, and builds thereby
 A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this:
 Evil from good; misery from happiness;
 The baser from the nobler; the impure
 And frail, from what is clear and must endure.
 If you divide suffering and dross, you may
 Diminish till it is consumed away;
 If you divide pleasure and love and thought, 180
Each part exceeds the whole; and we know not
 How much, while any yet remains unshared,
 Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared:
 This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw
 The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law
 By which those live, to whom this world of life
 Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife
 Tills for the promise of a later birth
 The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft 190
 Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,
 In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,
 Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
 Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves
 Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves
 Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor
 Paved her light steps;—on an imagined shore,
 Under the grey beak of some promontory
 She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,
 That I beheld her not. In solitudes 200
 Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,
 And from the fountains, and the odours deep
 Of flowers which, like lips murmuring in their sleep

Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,
 Breathed but of *her* to the enamoured air ;
 And from the breezes whether low or loud,
 And from the rain of every passing cloud,
 And from the singing of the summer-birds,
 And from all sounds, all silence. In the words
 Of antique verse and high romance,—in form, 210
 Sound, colour—in whatever checks that Storm
 Which with the shattered present chokes the past ;
 And in that best philosophy, whose taste
 Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom
 As glorious as a fiery martyrdom ;
 Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth
 I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,
 And towards the loadstar of my one desire
 I fitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight 220
 Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,
 When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere
 A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,
 As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—
 But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame,
 Past, like a God throned on a winged planet,
 Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,
 Into the dreary cone of our life's shade ;
 And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,
 I would have followed, though the grave between 230
 Yawned like a gulph whose spectres are unseen :
 When a voice said :—" O Thou of hearts the weakest,
 The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest." ,
 Then I—" Where ? " The world's echo answered " where ! "
 And in that silence, and in my despair,
 I questioned every tongueless wind that flew
 Over my tower of mourning, if it knew
 Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul ;
 And murmured names and spells which have controul
 Over the sightless tyrants of our fate ; 240
 But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate
 The night which closed on her ; nor uncreate
 That world within this Chaos, mine and me,
 Of which she was the veiled Divinity,—
 The world, I say, of thoughts that worshipped her :
 And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear
 And every gentle passion sick to death,
 Feeding my course with expectation's breath,

Into the wintry forest of our life;
 And struggling through its error with vain strife, 250
 And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,
 And half bewildered by new forms, I past
 Seeking among those untaught foresters
 If I could find one form resembling hers,
 In which she might have masked herself from me.
 There,—One, whose voice was venom'd melody
 Sate by a well, under blue nightshade bowers;
 The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,
 Her touch was as electric poison,—flame
 Out of her looks into my vitals came, 260
 And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
 A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew
 Into the core of my green heart, and lay
 Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown grey
 O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime
 With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought
 The shadow of that idol of my thought.
 And some were fair—but beauty dies away :
 Others were wise—but honeyed words betray : 270
 And One was true—oh ! why not true to me ?
 Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,
 I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,
 Wounded and weak and panting ; the cold day
 Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain :—
 When, like a noonday dawn, there shone again
 Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed
 As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed,
 As is the Moon, whose changes ever run
 Into themselves, to the eternal Sun ; 280
 The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,
 Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles ;
 That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame
 Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,
 And warms not but illumines. Young and fair
 As the descended Spirit of that sphere,
 She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night
 From its own darkness, until all was bright
 Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind ;
 And, as a cloud charioted by the wind, 290
 She led me to a cave in that wild place,
 And sate beside me, with her downward face
 Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon
 Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.

And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,
 And all my being became bright or dim
 As the Moon's image in a summer sea,
 According as she smiled or frowned on me;
 And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed:
 Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead:—
 For at her silver voice came Death and Life,
 Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,
 Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,
 The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,
 And through the cavern without wings they flew,
 And cried, "Away! he is not of our crew."
 I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

300

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,
 Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips
 Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse;—
 And how my soul was as a lampless sea,
 And who was then its Tempest; and when She,
 The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost
 Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast
 The moving billows of my being fell
 Into a death of ice, immoveable;—
 And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,
 The white Moon smiling all the while on it,
 These words conceal:—if not, each word would be
 The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me!

320

At length, into the obscure Forest came
 The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.
 Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns
 Flashed from her motion splendour like the Morn's,
 And from her presence life was radiated
 Through the grey earth and branches bare and dead;
 So that her way was paved, and roofed above
 With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love;
 And music from her respiration spread
 Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated
 By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,
 So that the savage winds hung mute around;
 And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair
 Dissolving the dull cold in the frore air:
 Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,
 When light is changed to love, this glorious One
 Floated into the cavern where I lay,
 And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay

330

Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below
 As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow 340
 I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night
 Was penetrating me with living light :
 I knew it was the Vision veiled from me
 So many years—that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,
 This world of love, this *me* ; and into birth
 Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart
 Magnetic might into its central heart ;
 And lift its billows and its mists, and guide
 By everlasting laws, each wind and tide 350
 To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave ;
 And hush its storms, each in the craggy grave
 Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers
 The armies of the rainbow-winged showers ;
 And, as those married lights, which from the towers
 Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe
 In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe ;
 And all their many-mingled influence blend,
 If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end ;—
 So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway 360
 Govern my sphere of being, night and day !
 Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might ;
 Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light ;
 And, through the shadow of the seasons three,
 From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,
 Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
 Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom !
 Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,
 Who drew the heart of this frail Universe
 Towards thine own ; till, wreckt in that convulsion, 370
 Alternating attraction and repulsion,
 Thine went astray, and that was rent in twain ;
 Oh, float into our azure Heaven again !
 Be there love's folding-star at thy return ;
 The living Sun will feed thee from its urn
 Of golden fire ; the Moon will veil her horn
 In thy last smiles ; adoring Even and Morn
 Will worship thee with incense of calm breath
 And lights and shadows ; as the star of Death
 And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild 380
 Called Hope and Fear : upon the heart are piled
 Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine
 A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine,
 Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth
 Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth
 Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,
 Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.
 To whatso'er of dull mortality
 Is mine, remain a vestal sister still ; 390
 To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,
 Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united
 Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.
 The hour is come :—the destined Star has risen
 Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
 The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set
 The sentinels . . . but true love never yet
 Was thus constrained : it overleaps all fence :
 Like lightning, with invisible violence
 Piercing its continents ; like Heaven's free breath, 400
 Which he who grasps can hold not ; liker Death,
 Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
 Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
 Of arms : more strength has Love than he or they ;
 For it can burst his charnel, and make free
 The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
 The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,
 A ship is floating in the harbour now,
 A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow ;
 There is a path on the sea's azure floor,— 410
 No keel has ever ploughed that path before ;
 The halcyons brood around the foamless isles ;
 The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles ;
 The merry mariners are bold and free :
 Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me ?
 Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest
 Is a far Eden of the purple East ;
 And we between her wings will sit, while Night,
 And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,
 Our ministers, along the boundless Sea, 420
 Treading each other's heels, unheededly.
 It is an isle under Ionian skies,
 Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,
 And, for the harbours are not safe and good,
 This land would have remained a solitude
 But for some pastoral people native there,
 Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air

Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,—
 Simple and spirited, innocent and bold.
 The blue *Ægean* girds this chosen home, 430
 With ever-changing sound and light and foam
 Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar;
 And all the winds wandering along the shore
 Undulate with the undulating tide:
 There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide;
 And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
 As clear as elemental diamond,
 Or serene morning air; and far beyond,
 The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer
 (Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year,) 440
 Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls,
 Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls
 Illumining, with sound that never fails
 Accompany the noonday nightingales;
 And all the place is peopled with sweet airs;
 The light clear element which the isle wears
 Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
 Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,
 And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;
 And from the moss violets and jonquils peep, 450
 And dart their arrowy odour through the brain
 Till you might faint with that delicious pain.
 And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,
 With that deep music is in unison,
 Which is a soul within the soul,—they seem
 Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—
 It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,
 Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;
 Bright as that wandering Eden, Lucifer,
 Washed by the soft blue *Oceans* of young air. 460
 It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,
 Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light
 Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they
 Sail onward far upon their fatal way:
 The winged storms, chaunting their thunder-psalm
 To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm
 Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,
 From which its fields and woods ever renew
 Their green and golden immortality.
 And from the sea there rise, and from the sky 470
 There fall clear exhalations, soft and bright,
 Veil after veil, each biding some delight,
 Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,
 Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride

Glowing at once with love and loveliness,
 Blushes and trembles at its own excess :
 Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
 Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
 An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile
 Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen 480
 O'er the grey rocks, blue waves, and forests green, ,
 Filling their bare and void interstices.—
 But the chief marvel of the wilderness
 Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
 None of the rustic island-people know :
 'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height
 It overtops the woods ; but, for delight,
 Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime
 Had been invented, in the world's young prime,
 Reared it, a wonder of that simple time, 490
 An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
 Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
 It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,
 But, as it were Titanic ; in the heart
 Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown
 Out of the mountains, from the living stone,
 Lifting itself in caverns light and high :
 For all the antique and learned imagery
 Has been erased, and in the place of it
 The ivy and the wild-vine interknit 500
 The volumes of their many-twining stems ;
 Parasite flowers illumine with dewy gems
 The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky
 Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery
 With moonlight patches, or star-atoms keen,
 Or fragments of the day's intense serene ;—
 Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
 And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers
 And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
 To sleep in one another's arms, and dream 510
 Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we
 Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed
 Thee to be lady of the solitude.—

And I have fitted up some chambers there
 Looking towards the golden Eastern air,
 And level with the living winds, which flow
 Like waves above the living waves below.—
 I have sent books and music there, and all
 Those instruments with which high spirits call 520

The future from its cradle, and the past
 Out of its grave, and make the present last
 In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,
 Folded within their own eternity.
 Our simple life wants little, and true taste
 Hires not the pale drudge Luxury, to waste
 The scene it would adorn, and therefore still,
 Nature, with all her children, haunts the hill.
 The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet
 Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit 530
 Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance
 Between the quick bats in their twilight dance ;
 The spotted deer bask in the fresh moonlight
 Before our gate, and the slow, silent night
 Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep.
 Be this our home in life, and when years heap
 Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,
 Let us become the overhanging day,
 The living soul of this Elysian isle,
 Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile 540
 We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,
 Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,
 And wander in the meadows, or ascend
 The mossy mountains, where the blue Heavens bend
 With lightest winds, to touch their paramour ;
 Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,
 Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea
 Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy :—
 Possessing and possessed by all that is
 Within that calm circumference of bliss, 550
 And by each other, till to love and live
 Be one :—or, at the noontide hour, arrive
 Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep
 The moonlight of the expired night asleep,
 Through which the awakened day can never peep ;
 A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,
 Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights ;
 Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain
 Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.
 And we will talk, until thought's melody 560
 Become too sweet for utterance, and it die
 In words, to live again in looks, which dart
 With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,
 Harmonizing silence without a sound.
 Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound,
 And our veins beat together ; and our lips
 With other eloquence than words, eclipse

The soul that burns between them, and the wells
 Which boil under our being's inmost cells,
 The fountains of our deepest life, shall be 570
 Confused in passion's golden purity,
 As mountain-springs under the morning Sun. .
 We shall become the same, we shall be one
 Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?
 One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,
 Till, like two meteors of expanding flame,
 Those spheres instinct with it become the same,
 Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still
 Burning, yet ever inconsumable:
 In one another's substance finding food, 580
 Like flames too pure and light and unimbued
 To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,—
 Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away:
 One hope within two wills, one will beneath
 Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,
 One Heaven, one Hell, one Immortality,
 And one annihilation.—Woe is me!
 The winged words on which my soul would pierce
 Into the height of Love's rare Universe,
 Are chains of lead around its flight of fire . . . 590
 I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,
 And say:—"We are the masters of thy slave;
 What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine?"
 Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave,
 All singing loud: "Love's very pain is sweet,
 But its reward is in the world divine
 Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave."
 So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste
 Over the hearts of men, until ye meet 600
 Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,
 And bid them love each other and be blest:
 And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,
 And come and be my guest,—for I am Love's.

EARLY DRAFTS OF THE PREFACE

[From the Bodleian Manuscript.]

(1)

THE following Poem was found amongst other papers in
 the Portfolio of a young Englishman with whom the Editor

had contracted an intimacy at Florence,—brief indeed, but sufficiently long to render the Catastrophe by which it terminated one of the most painful events of his life.—

The literary merit of the Poem in question may not be considerable; but worse verses are printed every day, and

He was an accomplished and amiable person; but his error was, *θηγὸς ὦν μὴ θνητὰ φρονεῖν*;—his fate is an additional proof that ‘The tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.’—He had framed to himself certain opinions, founded no doubt upon the truth of things, but built up to a Babel height; they fell by their own weight, and the thoughts that were his architects became unintelligible one to the other, as men upon whom confusion of tongues has fallen.

[These] verses seem to have been written as a sort of dedication of some work to have been presented to the person whom they address: but his papers afford no trace of such a work.—The circumstances to which [they] the poem allude, may easily be understood by those to whom [the] spirit of the poem itself is intelligible: a detail of facts, sufficiently romantic in [themselves, but] their combinations

The melancholy charge of consigning the body of my poor friend to the grave, was committed to me by his desolated family. I caused him to be buried in a spot selected by himself, and on the h

(2)

[The following Poem was found in the P.F. of a young Englishman, who died on his passage from Leghorn to the Levant. He had bought one of the Sporades]. He was accompanied by a lady supposed to be his wife, and an effeminate-looking youth, to whom he shewed so excessive an attachment as to give rise to the suspicion that she was a woman. At his death this suspicion was confirmed;

object speedily found a refuge both from the taunts of the brute multitude, and from the of her grief in the same grave that contained her lover.—He had bought one of the Sporades, and fitted up a Saracenic castle, which accident had preserved in some repair, with simple elegance, and it was his intention to dedicate the remainder of his life to undisturbed intercourse with his companions.

These verses apparently were intended as a dedication of a longer poem or series of poems.

(3)

The writer of these lines died at Florence in [January 1820] while he was preparing for one <of the> wildest of the Sporades, where he bought and fitted up the ruins of some old building.—His life was singular, less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which they received from his own character and feelings.

The verses were apparently intended by the writer to accompany some longer poem or collection of poems, of which there [are no remnants in his] portfolio.—

The editor is induced to

The present poem, like the *Vita Nova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it relates; and to a certain other class, it must and ought ever to remain incomprehensible.—It was evidently intended to be prefixed to a longer poem or series of poems—but among his papers there are no traces of such a collection.

FRAGMENTS CONNECTED WITH EPIPSYCHIDION

(1)

HERE, my dear friend, is a new book for you;
I have already dedicated two
To other friends, one female and one male,—
• What you are is a thing that I must veil;
What can this be to those who praise or rail?

Free love has this, different from gold and clay,
That to divide is not to take away :—
Like ocean, which the general north wind breaks
Into ten thousand waves, and each one makes
A mirror of the moon : like some great glass, 10
Which did distort whatever form might pass,
Dashed into fragments by a playful child,
Which then reflects its eyes and forehead mild;
Giving for one, which it could ne'er express,
A thousand images of loveliness.

If I were one whom the loud world held wise,
I should disdain to quote authorities
In commendation of this kind of love :—
Why, there is first the God in Heaven above,

Who wrote a book called Nature,—'tis to be
 Reviewed, I hear, in the next *Quarterly* ;
 And Socrates, the Jesus Christ of Greece,
 And Jesus Christ himself did never cease
 To urge all living things to love each other,
 And to forgive their mutual faults, and smother
 'The Devil of disunion in their souls.

20

(2)

I LOVE you !—Listen, O embodied Ray
 Of the great Brightness ; I must pass away
 While you remain, and these light words must be
 Tokens by which you may remember me.
 Start not—the thing you are is unbetrayed,
 If you are human ; and if but the shade
 Of some sublimer Spirit,

(3)

AND as to friend or mistress, 'tis a form ;
 Perhaps I wish you were one. Some declare
 You a familiar spirit, as you are ;
 Others with a more inhuman
 Hint that, though not my wife, you are a woman :—
 "What is the colour of your eyes and hair ?"
 Why, if you were a lady, it were fair
 The world should know. But as, I am afraid,
 The *Quarterly* would bait you if betrayed,
 And as it will be sport to see them stumble
 Over all sorts of scandals, hear them mumble
 Their litany of curses,—some guess right,
 And others swear you're a Hermaphrodite,
 Like that sweet marble monster of both sexes,
 With looks so sweet and gentle that it vexes
 The very soul that the soul is gone
 Which lifted from her limbs the veil of stone—

10

(4)

It is a sweet thing, friendship, a dear balm,
 A happy and auspicious bird of calm,
 Which rides o'er life's ever-tumultuous Ocean ;
 A God that broods o'er chaos in commotion ;
 A flower which fresh as Lapland roses are,
 Lifts its bold head into the world's frore air,
 And blooms most radiantly when others die,—
 Health, hope, and youth, and brief prosperity ;

EPIPSYCHIDION

19

And with the light and odour of its bloom,
Shining within the dungeon and the tomb ;

10

(5)

If I had but a friend ! Why, I have three
Even by my own confession ; there may be
Some more, for what I know, for 'tis my mind
To call my friends all who are wise and kind,—
And these, Heaven knows, at best are very few ;
But none can ever be more dear than you.
Why should they be ?

(6)

To the oblivion whither I and thou,
All loving and all lovely, hasten now
With steps, ah, too unequal ! May we meet
In one Elysium or one winding-sheet !

If any should be curious to discover
Whether to you I am a friend or lover,
Let them read Shakspeare's sonnets, taking thence
A whetstone for their dull intelligence
That tears and will not cut ; or let them guess
How Diotima, the wise prophetess,
Instructed the instructor, and why he
Rebuked the infant spirit of melody
On Agathon's sweet lips, which, as he spoke,
Was as the lovely star when morn has broke
The roof of darkness, in the golden dawn,
Half-hidden, and yet beautiful.

10

I'll pawn
My hopes of Heaven—you know what they are worth—
That the presumptuous pedagogues of Earth,
If they could tell the riddle offered here
Would scorn to be, or being to appear
What now they seem and are : but let them chide,—
They have few pleasures in the world beside ;
Perhaps we should be dull were we not chidden ;
Paradise-fruits are sweetest when forbidden.
Folly can season Wisdom, Hatred Love.

20

(7)

I WILL not, as most dedicators do,
Assure myself and all the world and you,

That you are faultless:—would to God they were
 Who taunt me with your love! I then should wear
 These heavy chains of life with a light spirit;
 And would to God I were,—or even as near it
 As you, dear heart! Alas! what are we? Clouds
 Driven by the wind in warring multitudes;
 Which rain into the bosom of the earth,
 And rise again, and in our death and birth, 10
 And through our restless life, take as from Heaven
 Hues which are not our own, but which are given,
 And then withdrawn, and with inconstant glance
 Flash from the spirit to the countenance.
 There is a Power, a Love, a Joy, a God
 Which makes in mortal hearts its brief abode,
 A Pythian exhalation, which inspires
 Love, only love: a wind which o'er the wires
 Of the soul's giant harp
 There is a mood which language faints beneath; 20
 You feel it striding, as Almighty Death
 His bloodless steed.

(8)

AND what is that most brief and bright delight
 Which rushes through the touch and through the sight,
 And stands before the spirit's inmost throne,
 A naked seraph? None hath ever known.
 Its birth is darkness, and its growth desire;
 Untameable and fleet and fierce as fire,
 Not to be touched but to be felt alone,
 It fills the world with glory—and is gone.

(9)

It floats with rainbow pinions o'er the stream
 Of life, which flows, like a dream
 Into the light of morning, to the grave
 As to an ocean.

(10)

WHAT is that joy which serene infancy
 Perceives not, as the hours content them by,
 Each in a chain of blossoms, yet enjoys
 The shapes of this new world, in giant toys
 Wrought by the busy ever new?
 Remembrance borrows Fancy's glass, to shew

These forms more sincere
Than now they are,—than then, perhaps, they were,
When everything familiar seemed to be
Wonderful, and the immortality 10
Of this great world, which all things must inherit,
Was felt as one with the awakening spirit,
Unconscious of itself, and of the strange
Distinctions which in its proceeding change
It feels and knows, and mourns as if each were
A desolation.

(11)

WERE it not a sweet refuge, Emily,
For all those exiles from the dull insane
Who vex this pleasant world with pride and pain,
For all that band of sister-spirits known
To one another by a voiceless tone?

(12)

If day should part us—night will mend division,
 And if sleep parts us—we will meet in vision ;
 And if life parts us—we will mix in death,
 Yielding our mite of unreluctant breath.
 Death cannot part us—we must meet again
 In all, in nothing—in delight, in pain :
 How, why, or when, or where—it matters not,
 So that we share an undivided lot.

(13)

[WHILE all things seem the shadow of thy soul
Harmonized by some unbelh'd controul.]

(14)

AND we will move, possessing and possest,
Wherever beauty on the earth's bare breast
Lies like the shadow of thy soul—till we
Become one being with the world we see.

ADONAIΣ

(1821)

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS

AUTHOR OF ENDYMION, HYPERION, ETC.

Ἄσπῆρ πρὶν μὲν ἑλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν ἔϊος·
Νῦν δέ, θανῶν, λάμπεις ἔσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.

PLATO

PREFACE

Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, ποτὶ σὸν στόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες·
Πῶς τευ τοῖς χεῖλεσσι ποτέδραμε, οὐκ ἐγλυκάνθη;
Τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσσοῦτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κεράσαι τοι,
ἢ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον; ἐκφυγεν ὠδάν.

Moscuus, *Ερμύρῃ. Βίον.*

It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem, a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled, prove, at least, that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of *Hyperion*, as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the — of — 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of antient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I

have dedicated these unworthy verses, was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where canker-worms abound, what wonder, if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics, of the true greatness of his powers, were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said, that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows, or one, like Keats's, composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, *Paris*, and *Woman*, and a *Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men, who in their venal good nature, presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery, dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion*, was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, "almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend." Had I known these circumstances

before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from "such stuff as dreams are made of." His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career: may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

ADONAIS

I.

WEEP for Adonais—he is dead!
 Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years,
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
 And teach them thine own sorrow; say, With me
 Died Adonais; till the Future dares
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
 An echo and a light unto eternity!

II.

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
 When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
 In darkness? where was lorn Urania
 When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
 'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
 She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,
 Rekindled all the fading melodies,
 With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
 He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

III.

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!
 Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
 Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
 Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,
 Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
 For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
 Descend;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
 Will yet restore him to the vital air;
 Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV.

Most musical of mourners, weep again !
 Lament anew, Urania !—He died,
 Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
 Blind, old, and lonely,—when his country's pride
 The priest, the slave, and the liberticide
 Trampled and mocked with many a loathed rite
 Of lust and blood ; he went, unterrified,
 Into the gulph of death ; but his clear Sprite
 Yet reigns o'er earth, the third among the sons of light

V.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew !
 Not all to that bright station dared to climb ;
 And happier they their happiness who knew,
 Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
 In which suns perished ; others more sublime,
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime ;
 And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
 Which leads, through toil and hate, to Faine's serene abode,

VI.

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has perished,
 The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
 Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
 And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew ;
 Most musical of mourners, weep anew !
 Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
 The bloom, whose petals, nipt before they blew,
 Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste ;
 The broken hly lies—the storm is overpast.

VII.

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
 Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
 He came ; and bought, with price of purest breath,
 A grave among the eternal.—Come away !
 Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
 Is yet his fitting charnel-roof ! while still
 He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay ;
 Awake him not, surely he takes his fill
 Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill,

VIII.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
 Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
 The shadow of white Death, and at the door
 Invisible Corruption waits to trace
 His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
 The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
 Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
 So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
 Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX.

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,
 The passion-winged Ministers of thought,
 Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
 The love which was its music, wander not,—
 Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
 But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn the
 lot
 Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
 They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X.

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,
 And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries,
 "Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
 See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
 Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
 A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain."
 Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
 She knew not 'twas her own,—as with no stain
 She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

XI.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
 Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;
 Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw
 The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
 Which frozen tears instead of pearls began;
 Another in her wilful grief would break
 Her bow and winged reeds—as if to stem
 A greater loss with one which was more weak—
 And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

XII.

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,
 That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath,
 Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
 And pass into the panting heart beneath
 With lightning and with music: the damp death
 Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
 And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
 Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
 It flushed through his pale limbs, and past to its eclipse.

XIII.

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,
 Winged Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
 Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
 Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;
 And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
 Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp might seem
 Like pagantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV.

'All he had loved, and moulded into thought'
 From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
 Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
 Dimmed the aerial eyes that kindle day;
 Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
 Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
 And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

XV.

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
 And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
 And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
 Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
 Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
 Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
 Than those for whose disdain she pined away
 Into a shadow of all sounds;—a dream
 Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

xvi.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
 Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
 Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
 For whom should she have waked the sullen Year?
 To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear
 Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
 Thou, Adonais; wan they stand and sere
 Amid the faint companions of their youth,
 With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

xvii.

Thy spirit's sister, the loon nightingale,
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
 Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
 Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
 Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
 Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
 As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
 Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
 And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

xviii.

Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
 But grief returns with the revolving year;
 The ails and streams renew their joyous tone;
 The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
 Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;
 The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
 And build their mossy homes in field and brake;
 And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
 Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

xix.

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean
 A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst,
 As it has ever done, with change and motion,
 From the great morning of the world when first
 God dawned on Chaos; in its steam immersed
 The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
 All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
 Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight,
 The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

ADONAI8

xx.

The leprous corpse touched by this spirit tender
 Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
 Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
 Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
 And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
 Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows *can*
 Be as a sword consumed before the sheath *And*
 By sightless lightning?—Th' intense atom glows
 A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

xxi.

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
 But for our grief, as if it had not been,
 And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we of what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean
 Meet, massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
 As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
 Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
 Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.



He will awake no more, oh, never more!
 "Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother! rise
 Out of thy sleep, and slake in thy heart's core
 A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs."
 And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
 And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
 Had held in holy silence, cried, "Arise!"
 Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
 From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

xxiii.

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
 Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
 The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
 Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
 Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
 So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
 So saddened round her like an atmosphere
 Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
 Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
 Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
 And human hearts, which to her acery tread
 Yielding not, wounded the invisible *repel force*
 Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell :
 And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
 Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
 Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV.

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
 Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
 Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
 Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
 Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
 "Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
 As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
 Leave me not!" cried Urania: her distress
 Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain
 caress.

XXVI.

"Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
 Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
 And in my heartless breast and burning brain
 That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive,
 With food of saddest memory kept alive,
 Now thou art dead, as if it were a part"
 Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
 All that I am to be as thou now art!
 But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

XXVII.

"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
 Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
 Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
 Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
 Defenceless as thou wert!—oh where was then
 Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
 Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
 Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
 The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

XVIII.

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures, to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,
When like Apollo, from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,—
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

XIX.

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling Heaven; and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night."

XX.

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest woe,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

XXI.

'Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

XXXII.

A pard-like Spirit, beautiful and swift—
 A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
 Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
 The weight of the superincumbent hour;
 It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
 A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak
 Is it not broken? On the withering flower
 The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
 The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break

XXXIII.

His head was bound with pansies over-blown,
 And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
 And a light spear, topped with a cypress cone,
 Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
 Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
 Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
 Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
 He came the last, neglected and apart;
 A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
 Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
 Who in another's fate now wept his own;
 As in the accents of an unknown land
 He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
 The Stranger's mien, and murmured, "Who art thou?"
 He answered not, but with a sudden hand
 Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
 Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that it should be so

XXXV.

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
 Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
 What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
 In mockery of monumental stone,—
 The heavy heart heaving without a moan
 If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
 Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,
 Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs
 The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

1
XXXVI.

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh,
 What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
 Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
 The nameless worm would now itself disown:
 It felt, yet could escape the magic tone
 Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
 But what was howling in one breast alone,
 Silent with expectation of the song,
 Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

XXXVII.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
 Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
 But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
 And ever at thy season be thou free
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow:
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

XXXVIII.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
 Far from these carrion kites that scream below;
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
 Thou canst not-soar where he is sitting now.—
 Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
 Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
 A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
 Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

XXXIX.

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
 He hath awakened from the dream of life:
 'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
 And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
 Invulnerable nothings.—We decay
 Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
 Convulse us and consume us day by day,
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

XL.

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,
 Can touch him not and torture not again;
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain
 He is secure, and now can never mourn
 A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XLI.

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;
 Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
 Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
 Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

XLII.

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
 His voice in all her music, from the moan
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
 He is a presence to be felt and known
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,—
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
 Which wields the world with never-weary'd love,
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII.

He is a portion of the loveliness
 Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
 All new successions to the forms they wear;
 Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
 And bursting in its beauty and its might
 From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light

XLIV.

The splendours of the firmament of time
 May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not ;
 Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
 And death is a low mist which cannot blot
 The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
 Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
 And love and life contend in it for what
 Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
 And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV.

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
 Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
 Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
 Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not
 Yet faded from him ; Sidney, as he fought,
 And as he fell, and as he lived and loved,
 Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
 Arose ; and Lucan, by his death approved :
 Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reprovèd.

XLVI.

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,
 But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
 So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
 Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
 "Thou art become as one of us," they cry ;
 "It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
 Swung blind in unascended majesty, *of L Byron*
 Silent alone amid an Heaven of song. *like*
 Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng !"

XLVII.

Who mourns for Adonais ? Oh come forth,
 Fond wretch ! and know thyself and him aright.
 Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth ;
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
 Sate the void circumference : then shrink
 Even to a point within our day and night ;
 And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
 When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the ~~brink~~

XLVIII.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre .
 Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought
 That ages, empires, and religions there
 Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
 For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
 Glory from those who made the world their prey;
 And he is gathered to the kings of thought
 Who waged contention with their time's decay,
 And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX.

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
 And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
 And flowering weeds and fragrant copses dress
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
 Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

L.

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand:
 And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
 Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand
 Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
 A field is spread, on which a newer band
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce-extinguished breath.

LI.

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
 To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
 Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
 Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
 Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
 Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind,
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII.

The One remains, the many change and pass;
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
 Until Death tramples it to fragments—Die,
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
 Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky, ~~blue~~
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak—
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
 Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
 They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
 A light is past from the revolving year,
 And man, and woman; and what still is dear
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
 The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near:
 'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,—
 No more let Life divide what Death can join together

LIV.

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
 That Beauty in which all things work and move,
 That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
 Which through the web of being, blindly wove
 By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
 The fire for which all thirst,—now beams on me,
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
 The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
 I am borne darkly, fearfully afar;
 Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

CANCELLED PASSAGES OF ADONAI'S

PASSAGES OF THE PREFACE

. . . . the expression of my indignation and sympathy. I will allow myself a first and last word on the subject of calumny as it relates to me. As an author I have dared and invited censure. If I understand myself, I have written neither for profit nor for fame. I have employed my poetical compositions and publications simply as the instruments of that sympathy between myself and others which the ardent and unbounded love I cherished for my kind incited me to acquire. I expected all sorts of stupidity and insolent contempt from those

These compositions (excepting the tragedy of *The Cenci*, which was written rather to try my powers, than to unburthen my full heart) are insufficiently commendation than perhaps they deserve, even from their bitterest enemies; but they have not attained any corresponding popularity. As a man, I shrink from notice and regard; the ebb and flow of the world vexes me; I desire to be left in peace. Persecution, contumely, and calumny, have been heaped upon me in profuse measure; and domestic conspiracy and legal oppression have violated in my person the most sacred rights of nature and humanity. The bigot will say it was the recompense of my errors; the man of the world will call it the result of my imprudence; but never upon one head

Reviewers, with some rare exceptions, are a most stupid and malignant race. As a bankrupt thief turns thief-taker in despair, so an unsuccessful author turns critic. But a young spirit panting for fame, doubtful of its powers, and certain only of its aspirations, is ill qualified to assign its true value to the sneer of this world. He knows not that such stuff as this is of the abortive and monstrous births which Time consumes as fast as it produces. He sees the truth and falsehood, the merits and demerits of his case, inextricably entangled. No personal offence should have drawn from me this public comment upon such stuff

The offence of this poor victim seems to have consisted solely in his intimacy with Leigh Hunt, Mr. Hazlitt, and some other enemies of despotism and superstition. My friend Hunt has a very hard skull to crack, and will take a deal of killing. I do not know much of Mr. Hazlitt, but

I knew personally but little of Keats; but on the news of his situation I wrote to him, suggesting the propriety of trying the Italian climate, and inviting him to join me. Unfortunately he did not allow me . . .

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF ADONAIS

(1)

AND ever as he went he swept a lyre
 Of unaccustomed shape, and strings
 Now like the of impetuous fire,
 Which shakes the forest with its murmurings,
 Now like the rush of the aerial wings
 Of the enamoured wind among the trees,
 Whispering unimaginable things,
 And dying on the streams of dew serene,
 Which feed the unmown meads with ever-during green.

(2)

AND the green Paradise which western waves
 Embosom in their ever-wailing sweep,—
 Talking of freedom to their tongueless caves,
 Or to the spirits which within them keep
 A record of the wrongs which, though they sleep,
 Die not, but dream of retribution,—heard
 His hymns, and echoing them from steep to steep,
 Kept

* * * *

(3)

AND then came one of sweet and earnest looks,
 Whose soft smiles to his dark and night-like eyes
 Were as the clear and ever-living brooks
 Arc to the obscure fountains whence they rise,
 Shewing how pure they are: a Paradise
 Of happy truth upon his forehead low
 Lay, making wisdom lovely, in the guise
 Of earth-awakening morn upon the brow
 Of star-deserted Heaven, while ocean gleams below.

His song, though very sweet, was low and faint,
 A simple strain

* * * * *

(4)

A MIGHTY Phantasm, half concealed
 In darkness of his own exceeding light,
 Which clothed his awful presence unrevealed,
 Charioted on the night
 Of thunder-smoke, whose skirts were chrysolite

* * * *

(5)

AND like a sudden meteor, which outstrips
 The splendour-wingèd chariot of the sun,
 The armies of the golden stars, each one
 Pavilioned in its tent of light—all strewn
 Over the chasms of blue night——

* * * *

PROLOGUE TO HELLAS

A FRAGMENT

(1821)

HERALD OF ETERNITY

IT is the day when all the sons of God
Wait in the roofless senate-house, whose floor
Is Chaos, and the immoveable abyss
Frozen by His steadfast word to hyaline

* * * *

The shadow of God, and delegate
Of that before whose breath the universe
Is as a print of dew.

Hierarchs and kings
Who from your thrones pinnacled on the past
Sway the reluctant present, ye who sit
Pavilioned on the radiance or the gloom 10
Of mortal thought, which like an exhalation
Steaming from earth, conceals the of Heaven
Which gave it birth, assemble here
Before your Father's throne ; the swift decree
Yet hovers, and the fiery incarnation
Is yet withheld, clothed in which it shall
annul

The fairest of those wandering isles that gem
The sapphire space of interstellar air,
That green and azure sphere, that Earth inwrap 20
Less in the beauty of its tender light
Than in an atmosphere of living spirit
Which interpenetrating all the
it rolls from realm to realm
And age to age, and in its ebb and flow
Impels the generations
To their appointed place,
Whilst the high Arbiter *
Beholds the strife, and at the appointed time
Sends his decrees veiled in eternal 30

Within the circuit of this pendent orb
 There lies an antique region, on which fell
 The dews of thought in the world's golden dawn
 Earliest and most benign ; and from it sprung
 Temples and cities and immortal forms
 And harmonies of wisdom and of song,
 And thoughts, and deeds worthy of thoughts so fair.
 And when the sun of its dominion failed,
 And when the Winter of its glory came,
 The winds that stript it bare blew on, and swept 40
 That dew into the utmost wildernesses
 In wandering clouds of sunny rain that thawed
 The unmaternal bosom of the North.
 Haste, sons of God, for ye beheld,
 Reluctant, or consenting, or astonished,
 The stern decrees go forth, which heaped on Greece
 Ruin and degradation and despair.
 A fourth now waits : assemble, sons of God,
 To speed or to prevent or to suspend,
 If, as ye dream, such power be not withheld, 50
 The unaccomplished destiny.

* * * *

CHORUS

The curtain of the Universe
 Is rent and shattered,
 The splendour-wingèd worlds disperse
 Like wild doves scattered.

Space is roofless and bare,
 And in the midst a cloudy shrine,
 Dark amid thrones of light.
 In the blue glow of hyaline
 Golden worlds revolve and shine. 60
 In flight
 From every point of the Infinite,
 Like a thousand dawns on a single night
 The splendours rise and spread ;
 And through thunder and darkness dread
 Light and music are radiated,
 And in their pavilioned chariots led
 By living wings high overhead
 The giant Powers move,
 Gloomy or bright as the thrones they fill. 70

* * * *

A chaos of light and motion
Upon that glassy ocean.

* * * *

'The senate of the Gods is met,
Each in his rank and station set;
There is silence in the spaces—
Lo! Satan, Christ, and Mahomet
Start from their places!

CHRIST

Almighty Father!

Low-kneeling at the feet of Destiny

i * * *

There are two fountains in which spirits weep 80
When mortals err, Discord and Slavery named,
And with their bitter dew two Destinies
Filled each their irrevocable urns; the third,
Fiercest and mightiest, mingled both, and added
Chaos and Death, and slow Oblivion's lymph,
And hate and terror, and the poisoned rain

* * * *

The Aurora of the nations. By this brow
Whose pores wept tears of blood, by these wide wounds.
By this imperial crown of agony,
By infamy and solitude and death,— 90
For this I underwent; and by the pain
Of pity for those who would for me
The unremembered joy of a revenge,—
For this I felt; by Plato's sacred light,
Of which my spirit was a burning morrow;
By Greece and all she cannot cease to be,
Her quenchless words, sparks of immortal truth,
Stars of all night; her harmonies and forms,
Echoes and shadows of what Love adores
In thee;—I do compel thee, send forth Fate, 100
Thy irrevocable child: let her descend
A seraph-wingèd victory
In tempest of the omnipotence of God
Which sweeps through all things.

From hollow leagues, from Tyranny which arms
Adverse miscreeds and emulous anarchies
To stamp, as on a wingèd serpent's seed,
Upon the name of Freedom; from the storm
Of faction, which like earthquake shakes and sickens

The solid heart of enterprise ; from all
By which the holiest dreams of highest spirits
Are stars beneath the dawn

110

She shall arise
Victorious as the world arose from Chaos !
And as the Heavens and the Earth arrayed
Their presence in the beauty and the light
Of thy first smile, O Father ; as they gather
The spirit of thy love which paves for them
Their path o'er the abyss, till every sphere
Shall be one living Spirit ; so shall Greece—

SATAN

Be as all things beneath the empyrean,
Mine ! Art thou eyeless like old Destiny,
Thou mockery-king, crowned with a wreath of thorns ?
Whose sceptre is a reed, the broken reed
Which pierces thee ! whose throne a chair of scorn ?
For seest thou not beneath this crystal floor
The innumerable worlds of golden light
Which are my empire, and the least of them
which thou wouldst redeem from me ?
Know'st thou not them my portion ?
Or wouldst rekindle the strife
Which our great Father then did arbitrate
When he assigned to his competing sons
Each his apportioned realm ?

120

130

Thou Destiny,
Thou who art mailed in the omnipotence
Of Him who sends thee forth,—whate'er thy task,
Speed, spare not to accomplish ; and be mine
Thy trophies, whether Greece again become
The fountain in the desert whence the earth
Shall drink of freedom, which shall give it strength
To suffer, or a gulph of hollow death
To swallow all delight, all life, all hope.
Go, thou Vicegerent of my will, no less
Than of the Father's ; but less thou shouldst faint,
The wingèd hounds, Famine and Pestilence,
Shall wait on thee, the hundred-forkèd snake,
Insatiate Superstition, still shall
The earth behind thy steps, and War shall hover
Above, and Fraud shall gape below, and Change
Shall flit before thee on her dragon wings,
Convulsing and consuming ; and I add
Three vials of the tears which demons weep

140

150

When virtuous spirits through the gate of Death
 Pass triumphing over the thorns of life,—
 Sceptres and crowns, mitres and swords and snares,
 Trampling in scorn, like Him and Socrates.
 The first is Anarchy ; when Power and Pleasure,
 Glory and science and security,
 On Freedom hang like fruit on the green tree,
 Then pour it forth, and men shall gather ashes.
 The second, Tyranny—

CHRIST

Obdurate spirit!

160

Thou seest but the Past in the To-come.
 Pride is thy error and thy punishment.
 Boast not thine empire, dream not that thy worlds
 Are more than furnace-sparks or rainbow-drops
 Before the Power that welds and kindles them.
 True greatness asks not space, true excellence
 Lives in the Spirit of all things that live,
 Which lends it to the worlds thou callest thine.

* * * *

MAHOMET

* * * *

Haste thou and fill the waning crescent
 With beams as keen as those which pierced the shadow 170
 Of Christian night, rolled back upon the West,
 When the orient moon of Islam rode in triumph
 From Tmolus to the Acroceraunian snow.

* * * *

Wake, thou Word

Of God, and from the throne of Destiny
 Even to the utmost limit of thy way
 May Triumph

* * * *

Be thou a curse on them whose creed
 Divides and multiplies the most high God.

HELLAS
 (1821)
 A LYRICAL DRAMA
 ΜΑΝΤΙΣ 'ΕΙΜ' 'ΕΣΘΑΩΝ 'ΑΤΩΝΩΝ
ÆDIP. COLON.
 TO
 HIS EXCELLENCY
 PRINCE ALEXANDER MAVROCORDATO
 LATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
 TO THE HOSPODAR OF WALLACHIA
 THE DRAMA OF HELLAS
 IS INSCRIBED
 AS AN IMPERFECT TOKEN
 OF THE
 ADMIRATION, SYMPATHY, AND FRIENDSHIP
 OF
 THE AUTHOR.

PISA, November 1, 1821.

PREFACE

THE poem of *Hellas*, written at the suggestion of the events of the moment, is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the Author feels with the cause he would celebrate.

The subject, in its present state, is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the license is not greater than that which has been assumed by other-poets who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.

The *Persæ* of Æschylus afforded me the first model of my¹ conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilization and social improvement.

The drama (if drama it must be called) is, however, so artificial that I doubt whether, if recited on the Thespian waggon to an Athenian village at the Dionysiaea, it would have obtained the prize of the goat. I shall bear with equanimity any punishment greater than the loss of such a reward, which the Aristarchi of the hour may think fit to inflict.

The only *goat-song* which I have yet attempted has, I confess, in spite of the unfavourable nature of the subject, received a greater and a more valuable portion of applause than I expected or than it deserved.

Common fame is the only authority which I can allege for the details which form the basis of the poem, and I must trespass upon the forgiveness of my readers for the display of newspaper erudition to which I have been reduced. Undoubtedly, until the conclusion of the war, it will be impossible to obtain an account of it sufficiently authentic for historical materials; but poets have their privilege, and it is unquestionable that actions of the most exalted courage have been performed by the Greeks—that they have gained more than one naval victory, and that their defeat in Wallachia was signalized by circumstances of heroism more glorious even than victory.

The apathy of the rulers of the civilized world to the astonishing circumstance of the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilization—rising as it were from the ashes of their ruin, is something perfectly inexplicable to a mere spectator of the shews of this mortal scene. We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece. But for Greece—Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.

The human form and the human mind attained to a

perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our kind, and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm, and their courage. If in many instances he is degraded by moral and political slavery to the practice of the basest vices it engenders, and that below the level of ordinary degradation; let us reflect that the corruption of the best produces the worst, and that habits which subsist only in relation to a peculiar state of social institution may be expected to cease as soon as that relation is dissolved. In fact, the Greeks, since the admirable novel of *Anastasis* could have been a faithful picture of their manners, have undergone most important changes; the flower of their youth, returning to their country from the universities of Italy, Germany, and France, have communicated to their fellow-citizens the latest results of that social perfection of which their ancestors were the original source. The university of Chios contained before the breaking out of the revolution eight hundred students, and among them several Germans and Americans. The munificence and energy of many of the Greek princes and merchants, directed to the renovation of their country with a spirit and a wisdom which has few examples, is above all praise.

The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant, and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity and civilization.

Russia desires to possess, not to liberate Greece; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its intended slaves, enfeeble each other until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece, and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk;—but when was the oppressor generous or just?

Should the English people ever become free, they will reflect upon the part which those who presume to represent their will have played in the great drama of the

revival of liberty, with feelings which it would become them to anticipate. This is the age of the war of the oppressed against the oppressors; and every one of those ringleaders of the privileged gangs of murderers and swindlers called Sovereigns, look to each other for aid against the common enemy, and suspend their mutual jealousies in the presence of a mightier fear. Of this holy alliance all the despots of the earth are virtual members. But a new race has arisen throughout Europe, nursed in the abhorrence of the opinions which are its chains; and she will continue to produce fresh generations to accomplish that destiny which tyrants foresee and dread.

The Spanish Peninsula is already free. France is tranquil in the enjoyment of a partial exemption from the abuses which its unnatural and feeble government are vainly attempting to revive. The seed of blood and misery has been sown in Italy, and a more vigorous race is arising to go forth to the harvest. The world waits only the news of a revolution of Germany to see the tyrants who have pinnacled themselves on its supineness precipitated into the ruin from which they shall never arise. Well do these destroyers of mankind know their enemy, when they impute the insurrection in Greece to the same spirit before which they tremble throughout the rest of Europe; and that enemy well knows the power and the cunning of its opponents, and watches the moment of their approaching weakness and inevitable division to wrest the bloody sceptres from their grasp.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MAHMUD. HASSAN. DAOD. AHASUERUS, *a Jew*.
 PHANTOM OF MAHOMET THE SECOND.

CHORUS *of Greek Captive Women. Messengers, Slaves, and Attendants.*

SCENE.—*Constantinople. TIME.—Sunset.*

SCENE.—*a Terrace on the Seraglio.*

MAHMUD (*sleeping*); *an Indian Slave sitting beside his Couch.*

CHORUS OF GREEK CAPTIVE WOMEN

WE strew these opiate flowers
 On thy restless pillow;
 They were stript from Orient bowers,
 By the Indian billow.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Be thy sleep
 Calm and deep,
 Like theirs who fell—not ours who weep!

INDIAN

Away, unlovely dreams!
 Away, false shapes of sleep!
 Be his, as Heaven seems, 10
 Clear, and bright, and deep!
 Soft as love, and calm as death,
 Sweet as a summer night without a breath.

CHORUS

Sleep, sleep! our song is laden
 With the soul of slumber;
 It was sung by a Samian maiden,
 Whose lover was of the number
 Who now keep
 That calm sleep
 Whence none may wake, where none shall weep. 20

INDIAN

I touch thy temples pale!
 I breathe my soul on thee!
 And could my prayers avail,
 All my joy should be
 Dead, and I would live to weep,
 So thou mightst win one hour of quiet sleep.

CHORUS

Breathe low, low,
 The spell of the mighty mistress now!
 When *Conscience* lulls her sated *snake*,
 And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake. 30
 Breathe low—low,
 The words which, like secret fire, shall flow
 Through the veins of the frozen earth—low, low!

SEMICHORUS I

Life may change, but it may fly not;
 Hope may vanish, but can die not;
 Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;
 Love repulsed,—but it returneth!

HELLAS

51

SEMICHORUS II

Yet were life a charnel where
 Hope lay confined with Despair;
 Yet were truth a sacred lie,
 Love were lust—

40

SEMICHORUS I

If Liberty

Lent not life its soul of light,
 Hope its iris of delight,
 Truth its prophet's robe to wear,
 Love its power to give and bear.

CHORUS

In the great morning of the world,
 The Spirit of God with might unfurled
 The flag of Freedom over Chaos,
 And all its banded anarchy fled,
 Like vultures frightened from Imaus
 Before an earthquake's tread.—
 So from Time's tempestuous dawn
 Freedom's splendour burst and shone :—
 Thermopylæ and Marathon
 Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,
 The springing Fire.—The winged glory
 On Philippi half alighted,
 Like an eagle on a promontory.
 Its unwearied wings could fan
 The quenchless ashes of Milan.¹
 From age to age, from man to man,
 It lived ; and lit from land to land
 Florence, Albion, Switzerland.

50

60

Then night fell ; and, as from night,
 Re-assuming fiery flight,
 From the West swift Freedom came,
 Against the course of Heaven and doom,
 A second sun arrayed in flame,
 To burn, to kindle, to illumine.
 From far Atlantis its young beams
 Chased the shadows and the dreams.
 France, with all her sanguine steams,
 Hid, but quenched it not ; again
 Through clouds its shafts of glory rain
 From utmost Germany to Spain.

70

PERCÝ BYSSHE SHELLEY

As an eagle fed with morning
Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,
When she seeks her acie hanging.

In the mountain-cedar's hair,
And her brood expect the clanging 80

Of her wings through the wild air,

Sick with famine :—Freedom, so

To what of Greece remaineth now

Returns ; her hoary ruins glow

Like orient mountains lost in day ;

Beneath the safety of her wings

Her renovated nurslings prey,

And in the naked lightnings

Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.

Let Freedom leave—where'er she flies, 90

A Desert, or a Paradise :

Let the beautiful and the brave

Share her glory, or a grave.

SEMICHORUS I

With the gifts of gladness
Greece did thy cradle strew ;

SEMICHORUS II

With the tears of sadness
Greece did thy shroud bedew !

SEMICHORUS I

With an orphan's affection
She followed thy bier through time !

SEMICHORUS II

And at thy resurrection 100
Re-appeareth, like thou, sublime !

SEMICHORUS I

If Heaven should resume thee,
To Heaven shall her spirit ascend ;

SEMICHORUS II

If Hell should entomb thee,
To Hell shall her high hearts bend.

SEMICHORUS I

If Annihilation—

SEMICHORUS II

Dust let her glories be!
 And a name and a nation
 Be forgotten, Freedom, with thee!

INDIAN

His brow grows darker—breathe not—move not! 110
 He starts—he shudders: ye that love not,
 With your panting loud and fast
 Have awakened him at last.

MAHMUD (*starting from his sleep*)

Man the Seraglio-guard! make fast the gate.
 What! from a cannonade of three short hours?
 'Tis false! that breach towards the Bosphorus
 Cannot be practicable yet.—Who stirs?
 Stand to the match; that when the foe prevails;
 One spark may mix in reconciling ruin
 The conqueror and the conquered! Heave the tower 120
 Into the gap—wrench off the roof.

Enter HASSAN.

Ha! what!

The truth of day lightens upon my dream
 And I am Mahmud still.

HASSAN

Your Sublime Highness

Is strangely moved.

MAHMUD

The times do cast strange shadows
 On those who watch and who must rule their course,
 Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,
 Be whelmed in the fierce ebb:—and these are of them.
 Thrice has a gloomy vision hunted me,
 As thus, from sleep into the troubled day;
 It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea, 130
 Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.

Would that . . . No matter. Thou didst say thou knewest
 A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle
 Of strange and secret and forgotten things.
 I bade thee summon him :—'tis said his tribe
 Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

HASSAN

The Jew of whom I spake is old,—so old
 He seems to have outlived a world's decay ;
 The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean
 Seem younger still than he ;—his hair and beard 140
 Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow ;
 His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries
 Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct
 With light, and to the soul that quickens them
 Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift
 To the winter wind :—but from his eye looks forth
 A life of unconsumed thought which pierces
 The present, and the past, and the to-come.
 Some say that this is he whom the great prophet
 Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery 150
 Mocked with the curse of immortality.
 Some feign that he is Enoch : others dream
 He was pre-adamite and has survived
 Cycles of generation and of ruin.
 The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence
 And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,
 Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,
 In years outstretched beyond the date of man,
 May have attained to sovereignty and science
 Over those strong and secret things and thoughts 160
 Which others fear and know not.

MAHMUD

I would talk
 With this old Jew.

HASSAN

Thy will is even now
 Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern
 'Mid the Demonesi, less accessible
 Than thou or God ! He who would question him
 Must sail alone at sunset, where the stream
 Of Ocean sleeps around those foamless isles,
 When the young moon is westering as now,
 And evening airs wander upon the wave ;

HELLAS

55

And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle,
 Green Erebi¹thus, quench the fiery shadow
 Of his gill, prow within the sapphire water,
 Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud
 "Ahasuerus!" and the caverns round
 Will answer "Ahasuerus!" If his prayer
 Be granted, a faint meteor will arise
 Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind
 Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest,
 And with the wind a storm of harmony
 Unutterably sweet, and pilot him
 Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus :
 Thence, at the hour and place and circumstance
 Fit for the matter of their conference,
 The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare
 Win the desired communion . . . But that shout
 Bodes—— 170
180 *[A shout within.*

MAHMUD

Evil, doubtless ; like all human sounds.
 Let me converse with spirits.

HASSAN

That shout again.

MAHMUD

This Jew whom thou hast summoned—

HASSAN

Will be here—

MAHMUD

When the omnipotent Hour to which are yoked
 He, I, and all things, shall compel . . . Enough. 190
 Silence those mutineers—that drunken crew,
 That crowd about the pilot in the storm.
 Ay! strike the foremost shorter by a head!
 They weary me, and I have need of rest.
 Kings are like stars : they rise and set, they have
 The worship of the world, but no repose.
200 *[Exeunt severally.*

CHORUS.²

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
 From creation to decay;
 Like the bubbles on a river,
 Sparkling, bursting, borne away.

But they are still immortal
 Who, through birth's orient portal
 And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
 Clothe their unceasing flight
 In the brief dust and light
 Gathered around their chariots as they go;
 New shapes they still may weave,
 New gods, new laws receive;
 Bright or dim are they, as the robes they last
 On Death's bare ribs had cast.

210

A Power from the unknown God,
 A Promethean conqueror came;
 Like a triumphal path he trod
 The thorns of death and shame.
 A mortal shape to him
 Was like the vapour dim
 Which the orient planet animates with light;
 Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,
 Like bloodhounds mild and tame,
 Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight;
 The moon of Mahomet
 Arose, and it shall set:
 While blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon
 The cross leads generations on.

220

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep
 From one whose dreams are Paradise
 Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
 And Day peers forth with her blank eyes;
 So fleet, so faint, so fair,
 The Powers of earth and air
 Fled from the folding-star of Bethlehem:
 Apollo, Pan, and Love,
 And even Olympian Jove
 Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them;
 Our hills and seas and streams,
 Dispeopled of their dreams,
 Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,
 Wailed for the golden years.

230

Enter MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, and others.

MAHMUD

More gold? Our ancestors bought gold with victory,
 And shall I sell it for defeat?

DAAOD

The Janizars

240

Clamour for pay.

MAHMUD

Go! bid them pay themselves
 With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins
 Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy?
 No infidel children to impale on spears?
 No hoary priests after that Patriarch³
 Who bent the curse against his country's heart,
 Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill;
 Blood is the seed of gold.

DAAOD

It has been sown,
 And yet the harvest to the sicklemen
 Is as a grain to each.

MAHMUD

Then, take this signet;

250

Unlock the seventh chamber, in which lie
 The treasures of victorious Solymán—
 An empire's spoils stored for a day of ruin.
 O spirit of my sires! is it not come?
 The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged and sleep;
 But these, who spread their feast on the red earth,
 Hunger for gold, which fills not.—See them fed;
 Then, lead them to the rivers of fresh death. [*Exit DAAOD.*
 Oh, miserable dawn, after a night
 More glorious than the day which it usurped! 260
 O faith in God! O power on earth! O word
 Of the great Prophet, whose o'ershadowing wings
 Darkened the thrones and idols of the West,
 Now bright!—for thy sake curs'd be the hour,
 Even as a father by an evil child,
 When the orient moon of Islam rolled in triumph
 From Caucasus to white Ceraunia!
 Ruin above, and anarchy below;
 Terror without, and treachery within;
 The Chalice of Destruction full, and all 270
 Thirsting to drink; and who among us dares
 To dash it from his lips? and where is Hope?

HASSAN

The lamp of our dominion still rides high ;
 One God is God—Mahomet is his Prophet.
 Four hundred thousand Moslems from the limits
 Of utmost Asia, irresistibly
 Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry ;
 But not like them to weep their strength in tears :
 They bear destroying lightning, and their step
 Wakes earthquake to consume and overwhelm, 280
 And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,
 Tmolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen
 With horrent arms ; and lofty ships even now,
 Like vapours anchored to a mountain's edge,
 Freight with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala
 The convoy of the ever-veering wind.
 Samos is drunk with blood ;—the Greek has paid
 Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.
 The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far,
 When the fierce shout of " Allah-illa-Allah ! " 290
 Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind
 Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock
 Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.
 So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day !
 If night is mute, yet the returning sun
 Kindles the voices of the morning birds ;
 Nor at thy bidding less exultingly
 Than birds rejoicing in the golden day,
 The Anarchies of Africa unleash
 Their tempest-winged cities of the sea, 300
 To speak in thunder to the rebel world.
 Like sulphurous clouds, half-shattered by the storm,
 They sweep the pale Ægean, while the Queen
 Of Ocean, bound upon her island-throne,
 Far in the West, sits mourning that her sons
 Who frown on Freedom spare a smile for thee :
 Russia still hovers, as an eagle might
 Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane
 Hang tangled in inextricable fight,
 To stoop upon the victor ;—for she fears 310
 The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine.
 But recreant Austria loves thee as the Grave
 Loves Pestilence, and her slow dogs of war,
 Fleshed with the chase, come up from Italy,
 And howl upon their limits ; for they see
 The panther, Freedom, fled to her old cover,
 ' Mid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood

Crouch round. What Anarch wears a crown or mitre,
 Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,
 Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes? 320
 Our arsenals and our armouries are full;
 Our forts defy assault; ten thousand cannon
 Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour
 Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city;
 The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale
 The Christian merchant, and the yellow Jew
 Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.
 Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds,
 Over the hills of Anatolia,
 Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry 330
 Sweep;—the far flashing of their starry lances
 Reverberates the dying light of day.
 We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law;
 But many-headed Insurrection stands
 Divided in itself, and soon must fall.

MAHMUD

Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable:
 Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazoned
 Upon that shattered flag of fiery cloud
 Which leads the rear of the departing day;
 Wan emblem of an empire fading now! 340
 See how it trembles in the blood-red air,
 And like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent
 Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,
 One star with insolent and victorious light
 Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams,
 Like arrows through a fainting antelope,
 Strikes its weak form to death.

HASSAN

Even as that moon

Renews itself——

MAHMUD

Shall we be not renewed!

Far other bark than ours were needed now
 To stem the torrent of descending time: 350
 The spirit that lifts the slave before his lord
 Stalks through the capitals of armed kings,
 And spreads his ensign in the wilderness:
 Exults in chains; and, when the rebel falls,

Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust ;
 And the inheritors of the earth, like beasts
 When earthquake is unleashed, with idiot fear
 Cower in their kingly dens—as I do now.
 What were Defeat, when Victory must appal !
 Or Danger, when Security looks pale !
 How said the messenger—who, from the fort
 Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle
 Of Bucharest ?—that—

360

HASSAN

Ibrahim's scimitar
 Drew with its gleam swift victory from Heaven,
 To burn before him in the night of battle—
 A light and a destruction.

MAHMUD

Ay ! the day
 Was ours ; but how ?—

HASSAN

The light Wallachians,
 The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies
 Fled from the glance of our artillery
 Almost before the thunderstone alit.
 One half the Grecian army made a bridge
 Of safe and slow retreat, with Moslem dead ;
 The other—

370

MAHMUD

Speak—tremble not—

HASSAN

Islanded
 By victor myriads, formed in hollow square
 With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back
 The deluge of our foaming cavalry ;
 Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines.
 Our baffled army trembled like one man
 Before a host, and gave them space ; but soon,
 From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed,
 Kneading them down with fire and iron rain :
 Yet none approached ; till, like a field of corn
 Under the hook of the swart sickleman,
 The band, intrenched in mounds of Turkish dead,

380

Grew weak and few.—Then said the Pacha, "Slaves,
 Render yourselves—they have abandoned you—
 What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid?
 We grant your lives."—"Grant that which is thine own!"
 Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died!
 Another—"God, and man, and hope abandon me; 390
 But I to them, and to myself, remain
 Constant;"—he bowed his head, and his heart burst
 A third exclaimed, "There is a refuge, tyrant,
 Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm,
 Shouldst thou pursue; there we shall meet again."
 Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,
 The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment
 Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth!
 So these survivors, each by different ways,
 Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable, 400
 Met in triumphant death; and when our army
 Closed in, while yet wonder, and awe, and shame,
 Held back the base hyænas of the battle
 That feed upon the dead and fly the living,
 One rose out of the chaos of the slain:
 And if it were a corpse which some dread spirit
 Of the old saviours of the land we rule
 Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;—
 Or if there burned within the dying man
 Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith 410
 Creating what it feigned;—I cannot tell:
 But he cried, "Phantoms of the free, we come!
 Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike
 To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,
 And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts,
 And thaw their frost-work diadems like dew;—
 O ye who float around this clime, and weave
 The garment of the glory which it wears;
 Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasped,
 Lies sepulchred in monumental thought;— 420
 Progenitors of all that yet is great,
 Ascribe to your bright senate, oh, accept
 In your high ministrations, us, your sons—
 Us first, and the more glorious yet to come!
 And ye, weak conquerors! giants who look pale
 When the crushed worm rebels beneath your tread,—
 The vultures and the dogs, your pensioners tame,
 Are overgorged; but, like oppressors, still
 They crave the relic of Destruction's feast.
 The exhalations and the thirsty winds 430
 Are sick with blood; the dew is foul with death;

Heaven's light is quenched in slaughter : thus, where'er
 Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,
 The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast
 Of these dead limbs,—upon your streams and mountains,
 Upon your fields, your gardens, and your house-tops,
 Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,
 Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down
 With poisoned light—Famine and Pestilence,
 And Panic, shall wage war upon our side ! 440
 Nature from all her boundaries is moved
 Against ye : Time has found ye light as foam.
 The Earth rebels ; and Good and Evil stake
 Their empire o'er the unborn world of men
 On this one cast ;—but ere the die be thrown,
 The renovated genius of our race,
 Proud umpire of the impious game, descends
 A seraph-wingèd Victory, bestriding
 The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,
 Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom, 450
 And you to oblivion ! ”—More he would have said,
 But—

MAHMUD

Died—as thou shouldst ere thy lips had painted
 Their ruin in the hues of our success.
 A rebel's crime, guilt with a rebel's tongue !
 Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

HASSAN

It may be so :
 A spirit not my own wrenched me within,
 And I have spoken words I fear and hate ;
 Yet would I die for—

MAHMUD

Live ! Oh live ! outlive
 Me and this sinking empire. But the fleet—

HASSAN

Alas !—

MAHMUD

The fleet which, like a flock of clouds 460
 Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner—
 Our winged castles from their merchant-ships !

Our myriads before their weak pirate-bands !
 Our arms before their chains ! our years of empire
 Before their centuries of servile fear !
 Death is awake ! Repulse is on the waters ;
 They own no more the thunder-bearing banner
 Of Mahmud ; but, like hounds of a base breed,
 Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

HASSAN

Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanae, saw
 The wreck—

470

MAHMUD

The caves of the Icarian isles
 Told each to the other in loud mockery,
 And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes,
 First of the sea-convulsing fight—and, then,—
 Thou darest to speak : senseless are the mountains ;
 Interpret thou their voice !

HASSAN

My presence bore
 A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet
 Bore down at day-break from the North, and hung
 As multitudinous on the ocean line,
 As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind.
 Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,
 Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle
 Was kindled.—

480

First through the hail of our artillery
 The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail
 Dashed :—ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man
 To man were grappled in the embrace of war,
 Inextricable but by death or victory.
 The tempest of the raging fight convulsed
 To its crystalline depths that stainless sea,
 And shook Heaven's roof of golden morning clouds,
 Poised on an hundred azure mountain-isles.
 In the brief of trances of the artillery,
 One cry from the destroyed and the destroyer
 Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapt
 The unforeseen event, till the north wind
 Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil
 Of battle-smoke—then "Victory—Victory!"

490

For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers
 Bore down from Naxos to our aid ; but soon , 500
 The abhorred cross glimmered behind, before,
 Among, around us ; and that fatal sign
 Dried with its beams the strength in Moslem hearts,
 As the sun drinks the dew.—What more ? We fled !—
 Our noonday path over the sanguine foam
 Was beacons, —and the glare struck the sun pale, —
 By our consuming transports : the fierce light
 Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,
 And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding
 The ravening fire, even to the water's level ; 510
 Some were blown up ; some, settling heavily,
 Sunk ; and the shrieks of our companions died
 Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far,
 Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perished !
 We met the vultures legioned in the air,
 Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind ;
 They, screaming from their cloudy mountain-peaks,
 Stooped thro' the sulphurous battle-smoke and perched
 Each on the weltering carcase that we loved,
 Like its ill angel or its damned soul, 520
 Riding upon the bosom of the sea.
 We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast.
 Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea,
 And ravening Famine left his ocean cave
 To dwell with War, with us, and with Despair.
 We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,
 And with night, tempest——

MAHMUD

Cease !

Enter a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

Your Sublime Highness,

That Christian hound, the Muscovite ambassador,
 Has left the city.—If the rebel fleet
 Had anchored in the port ; had victory 530
 Crowned the Greek legions in the Hippodrome,—
 Panic were tamer.—Obedience and Mutiny,
 Like giants in contention planet-struck,
 Stand gazing on each other.—There is peace
 In Stamboul——

MAHMUD

Is the grave not calmer still?
Its ruins shall be mine.

HASSAN

Fear not the Russian :
The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay
Against the hunter.—Cunning, base, and cruel,
He crouches, watching till the spoil be won,
And must be paid for his reserve in blood. 540
After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian
That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion
Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields,
Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,
But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves !

Enter SECOND MESSENGER.

SECOND MESSENGER

Nauplia, Tripolizza, Mothon, Athens,
Navarin, Artas, Monembasia,
Corinth and Thebes are carried by assault,
And every Islamite who made his dogs
Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves 550
Past at the edge of the sword : the lust of blood
Which made our warriors drunk, is quenched in death ;
But like a fiery plague breaks out anew
In deeds which made the Christian cause look pale
In its own light. The garrison of Patras
Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope
But from the Briton : at once slave and tyrant,
His wishes still are weaker than his fears,
Or he would sell what faith may yet remain
From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway ; 560
And if you buy him not, your treasury
Is empty even of promises—his own coin.
The freedman of a western poet-chief⁴
Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels,
And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont :
The aged Ali sits in Yanina
A crownless metaphor of empire ;
His name, that shadow of his withered might,
Holds our besieging army like a spell
In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny ; 570
He, bastioned in his citadel, looks forth

Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors
 The ruins of the city where he reigned
 Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reaped
 The costly harvest his own blood matured ;
 Not the sower, Ali—who has bought a truce
 From Ypsilanti, with ten camel-loads
 Of Indian gold.

Enter a THIRD MESSENGER.

MAHMUD

What more ?

THIRD MESSENGER

The Christian tribes

Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness
 Are in revolt ;—Damascus, Hems, Aleppo, 580
 Tremble ;—the Arab menaces Medina ;
 The Æthiop has intrenched himself in Sennaar,
 And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employed,
 Who denies homage, claims investiture
 As price of tardy aid. Persia demands
 The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians
 Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,
 Like mountain-twins that from each other's veins
 Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake-spasm,
 Shake in the general fever. Through the city, 590
 Like birds before a storm, the Santons shriek,
 And prophesyings horrible and new
 Are heard among the crowd : that sea of men
 Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still.
 A Dervise, learned in the Koran, preaches
 That it is written how the sins of Islam
 Must raise up a destroyer even now.
 The Greeks expect a Saviour from the west,⁵
 Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,
 But in the omnipresence of that Spirit 600
 In which all live and are. Ominous signs
 Are blazoned broadly on the noonday sky :
 One saw a red cross stamped upon the sun ;
 It has rained blood ; and monstrous births declare
 The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord.
 The army encamped upon the Cydaris
 Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,
 And saw two hosts conflicting in the air,—
 The shadows doubtless of the unborn time

HELLAS

67

Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet
The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm
Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.
At the third watch the Spirit of the Plague
Was heard abroad flapping among the tents ;
Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead.
The last news from the camp is, that a thousand
Have sickened, and——

610

Enter a FOURTH MESSENGER.

MAHMUD

And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow
Of some untimely rumour, speak !

FOURTH MESSENGER

One comes

Fainting with toil, covered with foam and blood :
He stood, he says, upon Chelonites'
Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan
Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters
Then trembling in the splendour of the moon ;
When, as the wandering clouds unveiled or hid
Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets
Stalk thro' the night in the horizon's glimmer,
Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,
And smoke which strangled every infant wind
That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air.
At length the battle slept, but the Sirocco
Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds
Over the sea-horizon, blotting out
All objects—save that in the faint moon-glimpse
He saw, or dreamed he saw, the Turkish admiral
And two the loftiest of our ships of war,
With the bright image of that Queen of Heaven,
Who hid perhaps her face for grief, reversed ;
And the abhorred cross——

620

630

Enter an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT

Your Sublime Highness,
The Jew who——

MAHMUD

Could not come more seasonably :
Bid him attend. I'll hear no more ! too long

640

We gaze on danger through the mist of fear,
 And multiply upon our shattered hopes
 The images of ruin. Come what will!
 To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps
 Set in our path to light us to the edge
 Through rough and smooth, nor can we suffer aught
 Which He inflicts not in whose hand we are. [*Exeunt.*]

SEMICHORUS I

Would I were the wingèd cloud
 Of a tempest swift and loud!
 I would scorn
 The smile of morn,
 And the wave where the moonrise is born!
 I would leave
 The spirits of eve
 A shroud for the corpse of the Day to weave
 From other threads than mine!
 Bask in the deep-blue noon divine
 Who would?—Not I.

650

SEMICHORUS II

Whither to fly?

SEMICHORUS I

Where the rocks that gird th' Ægean
 Echo to the battle pæan
 Of the free—
 I would flee,
 A tempestuous herald of victory!
 My golden rain
 For the Grecian slain
 Should mingle in tears with the bloody main;
 And my solemn thunder-knell
 Should ring to the world the passing bell
 Of Tyranny!

660

670

SEMICHORUS II

Ah king! wilt thou chain
 The rack and the rain?
 Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane?
 The storms are free,
 But we——

CHORUS

O Slavery! thou fiend of the world's prime,
 Killing its flowers and leaving its thorns bare!
 Thy touch has stamped these limbs with crime,
 These brows thy branding garland bear,
 But the free heart, the impassive soul, 680
 Scorn thy controul!

SEMICHORUS I

"Let there be light!" said Liberty,
 And like sunrise from the sea,
 Athens arose!—Around her born,
 Shone like mountains in the morn
 Glorious states;—and are they now
 Ashes, wrecks, oblivion?

SEMICHORUS II

Go

Where Thermæ and Asopus swallowed
 Persia, as the sand does foam.
 Deluge upon deluge followed, 690
 Discord, Macedon, and Rome:
 And lastly thou!

SEMICHORUS I

Temples and towers,
 Citadels and marts, and they
 Who live and die there, have been ours,
 And may be thine, and must decay;
 But Greece and her foundations are
 Built below the tide of war,
 Based on the crystalline sea
 Of thought and its eternity;
 Her citizens, imperial spirits, 700
 Rule the present from the past,
 On all this world of men inherits
 Their seal is set.

SEMICHORUS II

Hear ye the blast,
 Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls
 From ruin her Titanian walls?

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones
 Of Slavery? Argos, Corinth, Crete
 Hear, and from their mountain-thrones
 The dæmons and the nymphs repeat
 The harmony.

SEMICHORUS I

I hear! I hear!

710

SEMICHORUS II

The world's eyeless charioteer,
 Destiny, is hurrying by!
 What faith is crushed, what empire bleeds
 Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds?
 What eagle-winged Victory sits
 At her right hand? what Shadow flits
 Before? what Splendour rolls behind?
 Ruin and Renovation cry
 "Who but we?"

SEMICHORUS I

I hear! I hear!

The hiss as of a rushing wind,
 The roar as of an ocean foaming,
 The thunder as of earthquake coming.

720

I hear! I hear!

The crash as of an empire falling,
 The shrieks as of a people calling
 "Mercy! Mercy!"—How they thrill!
 Then a shout of "Kill! kill! kill!"
 And then a small still voice, thus—

SEMICHORUS II

For
 Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind,
 The foul cubs like their parents are;
 Their den is in the guilty mind,
 And Conscience feeds them with despair.

730

SEMICHORUS I

In sacred Athens, near the fane
 Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood;
 Serve not the unknown God in vain,
 But pay that broken shrine again
 Love for hate and tears for blood.

• *Enter MAHMUD and AHASUERUS.*

MAHMUD

Thou art a man, thou sayest, even as we.

AHASUERUS

No more!

MAHMUD

But raised above thy fellow men
By thought, as I by power.

AHASUERUS

Thou sayest so.

740

MAHMUD

Thou art an adept in the difficult lore
Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest
The flowers, and thou measurest the stars;
Thou severest element from element;
Thy spirit is present in the past, and sees
The birth of this old world through all its cycles
Of desolation and of loveliness;
And when man was not, and how man became
The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,
And all its narrow circles: it is much.
I honour thee, and would be what thou art
Were I not what I am; but the unborn Hour,
Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms,
Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any
Mighty or wise. I apprehended not
What thou hast taught me, but I now perceive
That thou art no interpreter of dreams;
Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,
Can make the future present . . . let it come!
Moreover thou disdainest us and ours;
Thou art as God, whom thou contemplatest.

750

760

AHASUERUS

Disdain thee?—not the worm beneath thy feet!
The Fathomless has care for meaner things
Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those
Who would be what they may not, or would seem

That which they are not. Sultan ! talk no more
 Of thee and me, the future and the past ;
 But look on that which cannot change—the One,
 The unborn and the undying. Earth and ocean,
 Space, and the isles of life or light that gem 770
 The sapphire floods of interstellar air,—
 This firmament pavilioned upon chaos,
 With all its cressets of immortal fire,
 Whose outwall, bastioned impregnably
 Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them
 As Calpe the Atlantic clouds : this whole
 Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,
 With all the silent or tempestuous workings
 By which they have been, are, or cease to be,
 Is but a vision ;—all that it inherits 780
 Are notes of a sick eye, bubbles, and dreams ;
 Thought is its cradle and its grave ; nor less
 The future and the past are idle shadows
 Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being :
 Nought is, but that which feels itself to be.

MAHMUD

What meanest thou ? Thy words stream like a tempest
 Of dazzling mist within my brain—they shake
 The earth on which I stand, and hang like night
 On Heaven above me. What can they avail ?
 They cast on all things surest, brightest, best, 790
 Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

AHASUERUS

Mistake me not ! All is contained in each.
 Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup
 Is that which has been, or will be, to that
 Which is—the absent to the present. Thought
 Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,
 Reason, Imagination, cannot die ;
 They are—what that which they regard appears—
 The stuff whence mutability can weave
 All that it hath dominion o'er, worlds, worms, 800
 Empires, and superstitions. What has Thought
 To do with time, or place, or circumstance ?
 Wouldst thou behold the future ?—ask and have !
 Knock and it shall be opened :—look and, lo !
 The coming age is shadowed on the past
 As on a glass.

MAHMUD

Wild, wilder thoughts convulse
My spirit.—Did not Mahomet the Second
Win Stamboul?

AHASUERUS

Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit
The written fortunes of thy house and faith?
Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell 810
How what was born in blood must die?

MAHMUD

Thy words
Have power on me! I see——

AHASUERUS

What hearest thou?

MAHMUD

A far whisper——
Terrible silence.

AHASUERUS

What succeeds?

MAHMUD

The sound⁶

As of the assault of an Imperial City,
The hiss of inextinguishable fire,
The roar of giant cannon; the earthquaking
Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,
The shock of crags shot from strange enginery,
The clash of wheels, and clang of armed hoofs, 820
And crash of brazen mail, as of the wreck
Of adamantine mountains—the mad blast
Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,
And shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,
And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear,
As of a joyous infant waked and playing
With its dead mother's breast; and now more loud
The mingled battle-cry,—ha! hear I not
“Εν τούτῳ νίκη” —“Allah-illa-Allah”?

AHASUERUS

The sulphurous mist is raised—thou seest—.

MAHMUD

A chasm, 830

As of two mountains, in the wall of Stamboul;
 And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,
 Like giants on the ruins of a world,
 Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust
 Glimmers a kingly diadem, and one
 Of regal port has cast himself beneath
 The stream of war. Another proudly clad
 In golden arms spurs a Tartarian barb
 Into the gap, and with his iron mace
 Directs the torrent of that tide of men,
 And seems—he is—Mahomet! 840

AHASUERUS

What thou seest

Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream.
 A dream itself,—yet less, perhaps, than that
 Thou call'st reality. Thou mayst behold
 How cities, on which Empire sleeps enthroned,
 Bow their towered crests to mutability.
 Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,
 Thou mayst now learn how the full tide of power
 Ebbs to its depths.—Inheritor of glory,
 Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourished 850
 With tears and toil, thou seest the mortal throes
 Of that whose birth was but the same. The Past
 Now stands before thee like an Incarnation
 Of the To-come; yet, wouldst thou commune with
 That portion of thyself which was ere thou
 Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death,—
 Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion
 Which called it from the uncreated deep,
 Yon cloud of war, with its tempestuous phantoms
 Of raging death; and draw with mighty will 860
 The Imperial Shade hither. [*Exit AHASUERUS.*]

MAHMUD

Approach!

PHANTOM

I come

Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter
 To take the living than give up the dead;
 Yet has thy faith prevailed, and I am here.

The heavy fragments of the power which fell
 When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,
 Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices
 Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,
 Wailing for glory never to return.—

A later Empire nods in its decay : 870
 The Autumn of a greener faith is come,
 And wolfish Change, like Winter, howls to strip
 The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built
 Her *aërie*, while Dominion whelped below.
 The storm is in its branches, and the frost
 Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects
 Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,
 Ruin on ruin.—Thou art slow, my son ;
 The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep
 A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies 880
 Boundless and mute ; and for thy subjects thou,
 Like us, shalt rule the ghosts of murdered life,
 The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now—
 Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears,
 And hopes that sate themselves on dust and die—
 Stript of their mortal strength, as thou of thine.
 Islam must fall, but we will reign together
 Over its ruins in the world of death :—
 And if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed
 Unfold itself even in the shape of that 890
 Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe ! woe !
 To the weak people tangled in the grasp
 Of its last spasms.

MAHMUD

Spirit, woe to all !

Woe to the wronged and the avenger ! Woe
 To the destroyer, woe to the destroyed !
 Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver !
 Woe to the oppressed, and woe to the oppressor !
 Woe both to those that suffer and inflict ;
 Those who are born and those who die ! But say,
 Imperial shadow of the thing I am, 900
 When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish
 Her consummation ?

PHANTOM

Ask the cold, pale Hour,
 Rich in reversion of impending death,
 When *he* shall fall upon whose ripe grey hairs
 Sit Care, and Sorrow, and Infirmary—

The weight which Crime, whose wings are plumed with years,
 Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart
 Over the heads of men, under which burthen
 They bow themselves unto the grave. Fond wretch!
 He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years 910
 To come, and how in hours of youth renewed
 He will renew lost joys, and——

VOICE without

Victory! Victory!
 [*The Phantom vanishes.*]

MAHMUD

What sound of the importunate earth has broken
 My mighty trance?

VOICE without

Victory! Victory!

MAHMUD

Weak lightning before darkness! poor faint smile
 Of dying Islam! Voice which art the response
 Of hollow weakness!—Do I wake and live?
 Were there such things, or may the unquiet brain,
 Vexed by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,
 Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear? 920
 It matters not!—for nought we see or dream,
 Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth
 More than it gives or teaches. Come what may,
 The future must become the past, and I
 As they were, to whom once this present hour,
 This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,
 Seemed an Elysian isle of peace and joy
 Never to be attained.—I must rebuke
 This drunkenness of triumph ere it die,
 And dying, bring despair.—“Victory”!—Poor slaves! 930
 [*Exit MAHMUD.*]

VOICE without

Shout in the jubilee of death! The Greeks
 Are as a brood of lions in the net
 Round which the kingly hunters of the earth
 Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food
 Are cursés, groans, and gold, the fruit of death
 From Thulé to the girdle of the world,

Come, feast! the board groans with the flesh of men;
 The cup is foaming with a nation's blood;
 Famine and Thirst await! eat, drink, and die!

SEMICHORUS I

Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream, 940
 Salutes the risen sun, pursues the flying day!
 I saw her, ghastly as a tyrant's dream,
 Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,
 Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilioned lay
 In visions of the dawning undelight.
 Who shall impede her flight?
 Who rob her of her prey?

VOICE *without*

Victory! Victory! Russia's famished eagles
 Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.
 Impale the remnant of the Greeks! despoil! 950
 Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust!

SEMICHORUS II

Thou voice which art
 The herald of the ill in splendour hid!
 Thou echo of the hollow heart
 Of Monarchy, bear me to thine abode
 When desolation flashes o'er a world destroyed:
 Oh, bear me to those isles of jagged cloud
 Which float like mountains on the earthquake, 'mid
 The momentary oceans of the lightning;
 Or to some toppling promontory proud 960
 Of solid tempest whose black pyramid,
 Riven, overhangs the founts intensely brightning
 Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire,
 Before their waves expire,
 When Heaven and earth are light, and only light
 In the thunder-night!

VOICE *without*

Victory! Victory! Austria, Russia, England,
 And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,
 Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak.
 Ho, there! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes! 970
 These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners
 Than Greeks. Kill! plunder! burn! let none remain.

SEMICHORUS I

Alas! for Liberty!
 If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years,
 Or fate, can quell the free!
 Alas! for Virtue! when
 Torments, or contumely, or the sneers
 Of erring-judging men
 Can break the heart where it abides.
 Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure world
 splendid, 980
 Can change with its false times and tides,
 Like Hope and Terror,—
 Alas for Love!
 And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,
 If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror
 Before the dazzled eyes of Error,
 Alas for thee! Image of the Above.

SEMICHORUS II

Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn,
 Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn
 Through many an hostile Anarchy! 990
 At length they wept aloud, and cried, "The Sea! the Sea!"
 Through exile, persecution, and despair,
 Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become
 The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb
 Of all whose step wakes Power lulled in her savage lair:
 But Greece was as a hermit child,
 Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built
 To woman's growth, by dreams so mild
 She knew not pain or guilt;
 And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble 1000
 When ye desert the free,
 If Greece must be
 A wreck, yet shall its fragments re-assemble,
 And build themselves again impregnably
 In a diviner clime,
 To Amphionic music, on some Cape sublime
 Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

SEMICHORUS I

Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made;
 Let the free possess the paradise they claim;
 Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weighed 1010
 With our ruin, our resistance, and our name!

SEMICHORUS II

Our dead shall be the seed of their decay,
 Our survivors be the shadow of their pride,
 Our adversity a dream to pass away—
 Their dishonour a remembrance to abide!

VOICE *without*

Victory! Victory! The bought Briton sends
 The keys of ocean to the Islamite.—
 Now shall the blazon of the cross be veiled,
 And British skill, directing Othman might,
 Thunder-strike rebel Victory. Oh keep holy 1020
 This jubilee of unrevenge'd blood—
 Kill! crush! despoil! Let not a Greek escape!

SEMICHORUS I

Darkness has dawned in the East
 On the noon of time:
 The death-birds descend to their feast,
 From the hungry clime.
 Let Freedom and Peace flee far
 To a sunnier strand,
 And follow Love's folding-star
 To the Evening land! 1030

SEMICHORUS II

The young moon has fed
 Her exhausted horn,
 With the sunset's fire:
 The weak day is dead,
 But the night is not born;
 And, like loveliness panting with wild desire
 While it trembles with fear and delight,
 Hesperus flies from awakening night,
 And pants in its beauty and speed with light
 Fast-flashing, soft, and bright. 1040
 Thou beacon of love! thou lamp of the free!
 Guide us far, far away,
 To climes where now veiled by the ardour of day,
 Thou art hidden
 From waves on which weary Noon
 Faints in her summer swoon,
 Between kingless continents sinless as Eden,
 Around mountains and islands inviolably
 Prankt on the sapphire sea.

SEMICHORUS I

Through the sunset of hope, 1050
 Like the shapes of a dream,
 What Paradise islands of glory gleam !
 Beneath Heaven's cope,
 Their shadows more clear float by—
 The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky,
 The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe
 Burst, like morning on dream, or like Heaven on death,
 Through the walls of our prison ;
 And Greece, which was dead, is arisen !

CHORUS

The world's great age begins anew,⁷ 1060
 The golden years return,
 The earth doth like a snake renew
 Her winter weeds outworn :
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
 From waves serener far ;
 A new Peneus rolls his fountains
 Against the morning-star.
 Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep 1070
 Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
 Fraught with a later prize ;
 Another Orpheus sings again,
 And loves, and weeps, and dies.
 A new Ulysses leaves once more
 Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,
 If earth Death's scroll must be !
 Nor mix with Laian rage the joy 1080
 Which dawns upon the free :
 Although a subtler Sphinx renew
 Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
 And to remoter time
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
 The splendour of its prime ;
 And leave, if nought so bright may live,
 All earth can take or Heaven can give.

HELLAS

81

Saturn and Love their long repose⁸ 1090
 Shall burst, more bright and good
 Than all who fell, than One who rose,
 Than many unsubdued ;
 Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
 But votive tears and symbol flowers.

Oh cease! must hate and death return?
 Cease! must men kill and die?
 Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
 Of bitter prophecy.
 The world is weary of the past,— 1100
 Oh, might it die or rest at last!

FRAGMENTS WRITTEN FOR HELLAS

(1)

FAIREST of the Destinies,
 Disarray thy dazzling eyes :
 Keener far their lightnings are
 Than the winged thou bearest,
 And the smile thou wearest
 Wraps thee as a star
 Is wrapt in light.

(2)

COULD Arethuse to her forsaken urn
 From Alpheus and the bitter Doris run,
 Or could the morning shafts of purest light
 Again into the quivers of the Sun
 Be gathered: could one thought from its wild flight
 Return into the temple of the brain
 Without a change, without a stain,—
 Could aught that is, ever again
 Be what it once has ceased to be,—
 Greece might again be free! 10

(3)

A STAR has fallen upon the Earth
 'Mid the benighted nations,
 A quenchless atom of immortal light,
 A living spark of Night,
 A cresset shaken from the constellations,—

Swifter than the thunder fell
 To the heart of Earth, the well
 Where its pulses flow and beat ;
 And unextinct in that cold source
 Burns, and on course 10
 Guides the sphere which is its prison,
 Like an angelic spirit pent
 In a form of mortal birth ;—
 Till, as a spirit half arisen
 Shatters its charnel, it has rent,
 In the rapture of its mirth,
 The thin and painted garment of the Earth,
 Ruining its chaos : a fierce breath
 Consuming all its forms of living death.

SHELLEY'S NOTES ON HELLAS

¹ *The quenchless ashes of Milan.* [line 60].

Milan was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederick Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin. See Sismondi's *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors.

² *The Chorus.* [line 197 et seq.].

The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as true in their relation to the worship they superseded, and that which in all probability they will supersede, without considering their merits in a relation more universal. The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and to use a common and inadequate phrase, *clothe themselves in matter*, with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world.

The concluding verses indicate a progressive state of more or less exalted existence, according to the degree of perfection which every distinct intelligence may have attained. Let it not be supposed that I mean to dogmatize upon a subject, concerning which all men are equally ignorant, or that I think the Gordian knot of the origin of evil can be disentangled by that or any similar assertions. The received hypothesis of a Being resembling men in the moral attributes of his nature, having called us out of non-existence, and after inflicting on us the misery of the commission of error, should superadd that of the punishment and the privations consequent upon it, still would remain inexplicable and incredible. That there is a true solution of the riddle, and that in our present state that solution is unattainable by us, are propositions which may be regarded as equally certain ; meanwhile, as it is the province of the poet to attach himself to those ideas which exalt and ennoble humanity, let him be permitted to have conjectured the condition of that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for immortality. Until better arguments can be produced than sophisms which disgrace the cause, this desire itself must remain the strongest and the only presumption that eternity is the inheritance of every thinking being.

³ *No hoary priests after that Patriarch.* [line 245].

The Greek Patriarch, after having been compelled to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents, was put to death by the Turks.

Fortunately the Greeks have been taught that they cannot buy security by degradation; and the Turks, though equally cruel, are less cunning than the smooth-faced tyrants of Europe.

As to the anathema, his Holiness might as well have thrown his mitre at Mount Athos for any effect that it produced. The chiefs of the Greeks are almost all men of comprehension and enlightened views on religion and politics.

⁴ *The freedman of a western poet-chief.* [line 563].

A Greek who had been Lord Byron's servant commands the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or of greatness, whose connexion with our character is determined by events.

⁵ *The Greeks expect a Saviour from the west.* [line 598].

It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a sea-port near Lacedæmon in an American brig. The association of names and ideas is irresistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in Greece.

⁶ *The sound
As of the assault of an Imperial City.* [line 815].

For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1453, see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. xii. p. 223.

The manner of the invocation of the spirit of Mahomet the Second will be censured as over-subtle. I could easily have made the Jew a regular conjuror, and the Phantom an ordinary ghost. I have preferred to represent the Jew as disclaiming all pretension, or even belief, in supernatural agency, and as tempting Mahmud to that state of mind in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensations, through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and the excess of passion animating the creations of imagination.

It is a sort of natural magic, susceptible of being exercised in a degree by any one who should have made himself master of the secret associations of another's thoughts.

⁷ *The Chorus.* [line 1060 et seq.].

The final Chorus is indistinct and obscure, as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells.

Prophecies of wars, and rumours of wars, etc., may safely be made by poet or prophet in any age; but to anticipate, however darkly, a period of regeneration and happiness is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign. It will remind the reader, "*magno nec proximus intervallo*" of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits, overleaping the actual reign of evil which we endure and bewail, already saw the possible and perhaps approaching state of society in which the "*lion shall lie down with the lamb*," and "*omnis feret omnia tellus*." Let these great names be my authority and my excuse.

⁸ *Saturn and Love their long repose Shall burst.* [line 109c].

Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. *All those who fell*, or the Gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; the *One who rose*, or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the Pagan World were amerced of their worship; and *the many unsubdued*, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually increasing activity. The Grecian gods seem indeed to have been personally more innocent, although it cannot be said, that as far as temperance and chastity are concerned, they gave so edifying an example as their successor. The sublime human character of Jesus Christ was deformed by an imputed identification with a power who tempted, betrayed, and punished the innocent beings who were called into existence by his sole will; and for the period of a thousand years, the spirit of this most just, wise, and benevolent of men, has been propitiated with myriads of hecatombs of those who approached the nearest to his innocence and wisdom, sacrificed under every aggravation of atrocity and variety of torture. The horrors of the Mexican, the Peruvian, and the Indian superstitions are well known.

GINEVRA

(1821)

WILD, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one
Who staggers forth into the air and sun
From the dark chamber of a mortal fever,—
Bewildered, and incapable, and ever
Fancying strange comments in her dizzy brain
Of usual shapes, till the familiar train
Of objects and of persons past like things
Strange as a dreamer's mad imaginings,—
Ginevra from the nuptial altar went ;
The vows to which her lips had sworn assent 10
Rung in her brain still with a jarring din,
Deafening the lost intelligence within.

And so she moved under the bridal veil,
Which made the paleness of her cheek more pale,
And deepened the faint crimson of her mouth,
And darkened her dark locks, as moonlight doth,—
And of the gold and jewels glittering there
She scarce felt conscious,—but the weary glare
Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light,
Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight. 20
A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud
Was less heavenly fair : her face was bowed,
And as she past, the diamonds in her hair
Were mirrored in the polished marble stair
Which led from the cathedral to the street ;
And ever as she went her light fair feet
Erased these images.

* * * *

The bride-maidens who round her thronging came,
Some with a sense of self-rebuke and shame,
Envyng the unenviable ; and others 30
Making the joy which should have been another's
Their own by gentle sympathy ; and some
Sighing to think of an unhappy home :

Some few admiring what can ever lure
 Maidens to leave the Heaven serene and pure
 Of parents' smiles for life's great cheat—a thing
 Bitter to taste, sweet in imagining.

But they are all dispersed—and, lo! she stands
 Looking in idle grief on her white hands,
 Alone within the garden now her own; 40
 And through the sunny air, with jangling tone,
 The music of the merry marriage-bells,
 Killing the azure silence, sinks and swells;—
 Absorbed like one within a dream, who dreams
 That he is dreaming, until slumber seems
 A mockery of itself;—when suddenly
 Antonio stood before her, pale as she.
 With agony, with sorrow, and with pride,
 He lifted his wan eyes upon the bride,
 And said—“Is this thy faith?” And then as one 50
 Whose sleeping face is stricken by the sun
 With light, like a harsh voice which bids him rise
 And look upon his day of life with eyes
 Which weep in vain that they can dream no more,
 Ginevra saw her lover, and forbore
 To shriek or faint, and checked the stifling blood
 Rushing upon her heart, and unsubdued
 Said—“Friend, if earthly violence or ill,
 Suspicion, doubt, or the tyrannic will
 Of parents, chance or custom, time or change, 60
 Or circumstance, or terror, or revenge,
 Or wildered looks or words, or evil speech,
 With all their stings and venom can impeach
 Our love,—we love not:—if the grave which hides
 The victim from the tyrant, and divides
 The cheek that whitens from the eyes that dart
 Imperious inquisition to the heart
 That is another's, could dis sever ours,
 We love not.”—“What! do not the silent hours
 Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal bed? 70
 Is not that ring”—a pledge, he would have said,
 Of broken vows; but she with patient look
 The golden circle from her finger took,
 And said—“Accept this token of my faith,
 The pledge of vows to be absolved by death;
 And I am dead or shall be soon—my knell
 Will mix its music with that merry bell;
 Does it not sound as if they sweetly said
 ‘We toll a corpse out of the marriage-bed’?”

The flowers upon my bridal chamber strewn
 Will serve unfaded for my bier—so soon
 That even the dying violet will not die
 Before Ginevra.” The strong fantasy
 Had made her accents weaker and more weak,
 And quenched the crimson life upon her cheek,
 And glazed her eyes, and spread an atmosphere
 Round her, which chilled the burning noon with fear,
 Making her but an image of the thought,
 Which, like a prophet or a shadow, brought
 News of the terrors of the coming time. 90

Like an accuser branded with the crime
 He would have cast on a beloved friend,
 Whose dying eyes reproach not to the end
 The pale betrayer—he then with vain repentance
 Would share, he cannot now avert, the sentence—
 Antonio stood and would have spoken, when
 The compound voice of women and of men
 Was heard approaching; he retired, while she
 Was led amid the admiring company
 Back to the palace,—and her maidens soon 100
 Changed her attire for the afternoon,
 And left her at her own request to keep
 An hour of quiet and rest :—like one asleep
 With open eyes and folded hands she lay,
 Pale in the light of the declining day.

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set,
 And in the lighted hall the guests are met;
 The beautiful looked lovelier in the light
 Of love, and admiration, and delight
 Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes 110
 Kindling a momentary Paradise.
 This crowd is safer than the silent wood,
 Where love’s own doubts disturb the solitude;
 On frozen hearts the fiery rain of wine
 Falls, and the dew of music more divine
 Tempers the deep emotions of the time
 To spirits cradled in a sunny clime :—
 How many meet, who never yet have met,
 To part too soon, but never to forget!
 How many saw the beauty, power and wit 120
 Of looks and words which ne’er enchanted yet!
 But life’s familiar veil was now withdrawn.
 As the world leaps before an earthquake’s dawn,

And, unprophetic of the coming hours,
 The matin winds from the expanded flowers
 Scatter their hoarded incense, and awaken
 The earth, until the dewy sleep is shaken
 From every living heart which it possesses,
 Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses,—
 As if the future and the past were all 130
 Treasured i' the instant;—so Gherardi's hall
 Laughed in the mirth of its lord's festival,
 Till some one asked—"Where is the Bride?" And then
 A bride's-maid went,—and ere she came again
 A silence fell upon the guests—a pause
 Of expectation, as when beauty awes
 All hearts with its approach, though unbeheld;
 Then wonder, and then fear that wonder quelled;—
 For whispers past from mouth to ear which drew
 The colour from the hearer's cheeks, and flew 140
 Louder and swifter round the company;
 And then Gherardi entered with an eye
 Of ostentatious trouble, and a crowd
 Surrounded him, and some were weeping loud.

They found Ginevra dead! if it be death
 To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath,
 With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff, and white,
 And open eyes, whose fixed and glassy light
 Mocked at the speculation they had owned.
 If it be death, when there is felt around 150
 A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare,
 And silence, and a sense that lifts the hair
 From the scalp to the ankles, as it were
 Corruption from the spirit passing forth,
 And giving all it shrouded to the earth,
 And leaving as swift lightning in its flight
 Ashes, and smoke, and darkness: in our night
 Of thought we know thus much of death,—no more
 Than the unborn dream of our life, before
 Their barks are wrecked on its inhospitable shore. 160

The marriage-feast and its solemnity
 Was turned to funeral pomp—the company
 With heavy hearts and looks, broke up; nor they
 Who loved the dead went weeping on their way
 Alone, but sorrow, mixed with sad surprise,
 Loosened the springs of pity in all eyes,
 In which that form, whose fate they weep in vain,
 Will never, thought they, kindle smiles again.

The lamps which, half extinguished in their haste,
 Gleamed few and faint o'er the abandoned feast, 170
 Shewed as it were within the vaulted room
 A cloud of sorrow hanging, as if gloom
 Had past out of men's minds into the air.
 Some few yet stood around Gherardi there,
 Friends and relations of the dead,—and he,
 A loveless man, accepted torpidly
 The consolation that he wanted not ;
 Awe in the place of grief within him wrought.
 Their whispers made the solemn silence seem
 More still—some wept, 180
 Some melted into tears without a sob,
 And some with hearts that might be heard to throb
 Lcant on the table, and at intervals
 Shuddered to hear through the deserted halls
 And corridors the thrilling shrieks which came
 Upon the breeze of night, that shook the flame
 Of every torch and taper, as it swept
 From out the chamber where the women kept ;—
 Their tears fell on the dear companion cold
 Of pleasures now departed ; then was knolled 190
 The bell of death, and soon the priests arrived,
 And finding Death their penitent had shrived,
 Returned like ravens from a corpse whereon
 A vulture has just feasted to the bone.
 And then the mourning women came

* * * *

THE DIRGE

Old Winter was gone ,
 In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,
 And the Spring came down
 From the planet that hovers upon the shore
 Where the sea of sunlight encroaches 200
 On the limits of wintry night ;—
 If the land, and the air, and the sea
 Rejoice not when Spring approaches,
 We did not rejoice in thee,
 Ginevra !

She is still, she is cold
 On the bridal couch.
 One step to the white death-bed,
 And one to the bier,

And one to the charnel—and one, oh where?
The dark arrow fled
In the noon.

210

Ere the sun through Heaven once more has rolled,
The rats in her heart
Will have made their nest,
And the worms be alive in her golden hair;
While the Spirit that guides the sun,
Sits throned in his flaming chain,
She shall sleep.

FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED DRAMA

SCENE.—*Before the Cavern of the INDIAN ENCHANTRESS.
The ENCHANTRESS comes forth.*

ENCHANTRESS

HE came like a dream in the dawn of life,
He fled like a shadow before its noon;
He is gone, and my peace is turned to strife,
And I wander and wane like the weary moon.
O sweet Echo, wake,
And for my sake
Make answer the while my heart shall break!

But my heart has a music which Echo's lips,
Though tender and true, yet can answer not,
And the shadow that moves in the soul's eclipse 10
Can return not the kiss by his now forgot;
Sweet lips! he who hath
On my desolate path
Cast the darkness of absence, worse than death!

*The ENCHANTRESS makes her spell: she is answered by
a Spirit.*

SPIRIT

Within the silent centre of the Earth
My mansion is; where I have lived insphered
From the beginning, and around my sleep
Have woven all the wondrous imagery
Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world;
Infinite depths of unknown elements 20
Massed into one impenetrable mask;
Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins
Of gold and stone, and adamant iron.
And as a veil in which I walk through Heaven
I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves, and clouds,
And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns
In the dark space of interstellar air.

ANOTHER SCENE

INDIAN YOUTH *and* LADY.

INDIAN

And if my grief should still be dearer to me
Than all the pleasures in the world beside,
Why would you lighten it?—

LADY

I offer only
That which I seek, some human sympathy
In this mysterious island.

30

INDIAN

Oh! my friend,
My sister, my beloved!—What do I say?
My brain is dizzy, and I scarce know whether
I speak to thee or her.

LADY

Peace, perturbed heart
I am to thee only as thou to mine,
The passing wind which heals the brow at noon,
And may strike cold into the breast at night,
Yet cannot linger where it soothes the most,
Or long soothe could it linger.

INDIAN

But you said
You also loved?

40

LADY

Loved! Oh, I love. Methinks
This word of "love" is fit for all the world,
And that for gentle hearts another name
Would speak of gentler thoughts than the world owns.
I have loved.

INDIAN

And thou lovest not? If so,
Young as thou art thou canst afford to weep.

LADY

Oh! would that I could claim exemption
From all the bitterness of that sweet name.

FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED DRAMA 93

I loved, I love, and when I love no more
 Let joys and grief perish, and leave despair 50
 To ring the knell of youth. He stood beside me,
 The embodied vision of the brightest dream,
 Which like a dawn heralds the day of life ;
 The shadow of his presence made my world
 A paradise. All familiar things he touched,
 All common words he spoke, became to me
 Like forms and sounds of a diviner world.
 He was as is the sun in his fierce youth,
 As terrible and lovely as a tempest ;
 He came, and went, and left me what I am. 60
 Alas ! Why must I think how oft we two
 Have sate together near the river-springs,
 Under the green pavilion which the willow
 Spreads on the floor of the unbroken fountain,
 Strewn by the nurselings that linger there,
 Over that islet paved with flowers and moss,
 While the musk-rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
 Showered on us, and the dove mourned in the pine,
 Sad prophetess of sorrows not her own ?
 The crane returned to her unfrozen haunt, 70
 And the false cuckoo bade the spray good morn ;
 And on a wintry bough the widowed bird,
 Hid in the deepest night of ivy-leaves,
 Renewed the vigils of a sleepless sorrow.
 I, left like her, and leaving one like her,
 Alike abandoned and abandoning
 (Oh ! unlike her in this !) the gentlest youth,
 Whose love had made my sorrows dear to him,
 Even as my sorrow made his love to me !

INDIAN

One curse of Nature stamps in the same mould 80
 The features of the wretched ; and they are
 As like as violet to violet,
 When memory, the ghost, their odours keeps
 'Mid the cold relics of abandoned joy.—
 Proceed.

LADY

He was a simple innocent boy.
 I loved him well, but not as he desired ;
 Yet even thus he was content to be :—
 A short content, for I was . . .

INDIAN (*aside*)

God of Heaven!

From such an islet, such a river-spring . . . !
 I dare not ask her if there stood upon it 90
 A pleasure-dome surmounted by a crescent,
 With steps to the blue water. [*Aloud.*] It may be
 That Nature masks in life several copies
 Of the same lot, so that the sufferers
 May feel another's sorrow as their own,
 And find in friendship what they lost in love.
 That cannot be: yet it is strange that we,
 From the same scene, by the same path to this
 Realm of abandonment . . . But speak! your breath—
 Your breath is like soft music, your words are 100
 The echoes of a voice which on my heart
 Sleeps like a melody of early days.
 But as you said—

LADY

He was so awful, yet

So beautiful in mystery and terror,
 Calming me as the loveliness of Heaven
 Soothes the unquiet sea:—and yet not so,
 For he seemed stormy, and would often seem
 A quenchless sun masked in portentous clouds;
 For such his thoughts, and even his actions were;
 But he was not of them, nor they of him, 110
 But as they hid his splendour from the earth.
 Some said he was a man of blood and peril,
 And steeped in bitter infamy to the lips.
 More need was there I should be innocent,
 More need that I should be most true and kind,
 And much more need that there should be found one
 To share remorse, and scorn and solitude,
 And all the ills that wait on those who do
 The tasks of ruin in the world of life.
 He fled, and I have followed him.

INDIAN

Such a one

Is he who was the winter of my peace. 120
 But, fairest stranger, when didst thou depart
 From the far hills where rise the springs of India?
 How didst thou pass the intervening sea?

LADY

If I be sure I am not dreaming now,
I should not doubt to say it was a dream.

Methought a star came down from Heaven,
And rested 'mid the plants of India,
Which I had given a shelter from the frost,
Within my chamber. There the meteor lay, 130
Panting forth light among the leaves and flowers,
As if it lived, and was outworn with speed ;
Or that it loved, and passion made the pulse
Of its bright life throb like an anxious heart,
Till it diffused itself, and all the chamber
And walls seemed melted into emerald fire
That burned not ; in the midst of which appeared
A Spirit like a child, and laughed aloud
A thr-ang peal of such sweet merriment
As made the blood tingle in my warm feet . 140
Then bent over a vase, and murmuring
Low, unintelligible melodies,
Placed something in the mould like melon-seeds,
And slowly faded ; and in place of it
A soft hand issued from the veil of fire,
Holding a cup like a magnolia-flower,
And poured upon the earth within the vase
The element with which it overflowed,
Brighter than morning light, and purer than
The water of the springs of Himalah. 150

INDIAN

You waked not ?

LADY

Not until my dream became
Like a child's legend on the tideless sand,
Which the first foam erases half, and half
Leaves legible. At length I rose, and went,
Visiting my flowers from pot to pot, and thought
To set new cuttings in the empty urns ;
And when I came to that beside the lattice,
I saw two little dark-green leaves
Lifting the light mould at their birth, and then 160
I half remembered my forgotten dream.
And day by day, green as a gourd in June,
The plant grew fresh and thick, yet no one knew
What plant it was ; its stem and tendrils seemed

Like emerald snakes, mottled and diamonded
 With azure mail and streaks of woven silver ;
 And all the sheaths that folded the dark buds
 Rose like the crest of cobra-di-capel,
 Until the golden eye of the bright flower
 Through the dark lashes of those veined lids,
 disencumbered of their silent sleep, 170
 Gazed like a star into the morning light.
 Its leaves were delicate,—you almost saw
 The pulses
 With which the purple velvet flower was fed
 To overflow, and like a poet's heart
 Changing bright fancy to sweet sentiment,
 Changed half the light to fragrance. It soon fell,
 And to a green and dewy embryo-fruit
 Left all its treasured beauty. Day by day
 I nursed the plant, and on the double flute 180
 Played to it on the sunny winter days
 Soft melodies, as sweet as April rain
 On silent leaves, and sang those words in which
 Passion makes Echo taunt the sleeping strings ;
 And I would send tales of forgotten love
 Late into the lone night, and sing wild songs
 Of maids deserted in the olden time,
 And weep like a soft cloud in April's bosom
 Upon the sleeping eyelids of the plant,
 So that perhaps it dreamed that Spring was come, 190
 And crept abroad into the moonlight air,
 And loosened all its limbs, as, noon by noon,
 The sun averted less his oblique beam.

INDIAN

And the plant died not in the frost ?

LADY

 It grew ;
 And went out of the lattice which I left
 Half open for it, trailing its quaint spires
 Along the garden and across the lawn,
 And down the slope of moss and through the tufts
 Of wild-flower roots, and stumps of trees o'ergrown
 With simple lichens, and old hoary stones, 200
 On to the margin of the glassy pool,
 Even to a nook of unblown violets
 And lilies-of-the-valley yet unborn,
 Under a pine with ivy overgrown.

And there its fruit lay like a sleeping lizard
 Under the shadows ; but when Spring indeed
 Came to unswathe her infants, and the lilies
 Peeped from their bright-green masks to wonder at
 This shape of Autumn couched in their recess,
 Then it dilated, and it grew until 210
 One half lay floating on the fountain wave,
 Whose pulse, elapsed in unlike sympathies,
 Kept time
 Among the snowy water-lily buds.
 Its shape was such as summer melody
 Of the south wind in spicy vales might give
 To some light cloud, bound from the golden dawn
 To fairy isles of evening ; and it seemed
 In hue and form that it had been a mirror
 Of all the hues and forms around it and 220
 Upon it pictured by the sunny beams,
 Which, from the bright vibrations of the pool,
 Were thrown upon the rafters and the roof
 Of boughs and leaves, and on the pillared stems
 Of the dark sylvan temple, and reflections
 Of every infant flower and star of moss
 And veined leaf in the azure odorous air.
 And thus it lay in the Elysian calm
 Of its own beauty, floating on the line
 Which, like a film in purest space, divided 230
 The Heaven beneath the water from the Heaven
 Above the clouds ; and every day I went
 Watching its growth and wondering ;
 And as the day grew hot, methought I saw
 A glassy vapour dancing on the pool,
 And on it little quaint and filmy shapes,
 With dizzy motion, wheel and rise and fall,
 Like clouds of gnats with perfect lineaments.

* * * *

O friend, sleep was a veil uplift from Heaven—
 As if Heaven dawned upon the world of dream— 240
 When darkness rose on the extinguished day
 Out of the eastern wilderness.

INDIAN

* I too

Have found a moment's paradise in sleep
 Half compensate a hell of waking sorrow.

CHARLES THE FIRST

(1619-1629)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING CHARLES I.	ST. JOHN.
QUEEN HENRIETTA	ARCHY, <i>the Court Fool.</i>
LAUD, <i>Archbishop of Canterbury.</i>	HAMPDEN.
WENTWORTH, <i>Earl of Strafford.</i>	PYM.
LORD COTTINGTON.	CROMWELL.
LORD WESTON.	CROMWELL'S DAUGHTER.
LORD COVENTRY	SIR HARRY VANE <i>the younger.</i>
WILLIAMS, <i>Bishop of Lincoln.</i>	LEIGHTON.
Secretary LYTTLETON.	BASTWICK.
JUXON.	PRYNNE.

*Gentlemen of the Inns of Court, Citizens, Pursuivants, Marshalsmen,
Law Students, Judges, Clerk.*

ACT I

SCENE I.—*The Masque of the Inns of Court.*

A PURSUIVANT

PLACE, for the Marshal of the Masque!

FIRST CITIZEN

What thinkest thou of this quaint masque, which turns,
Like morning from the shadow of the night,
The night to day, and London to a place
Of peace and joy?

SECOND CITIZEN

And Hell to Heaven.

Eight years are gone,
And they seem hours, since in this populous street
I trod on grass made green by Summer's rain;
For the red plague kept state within that palace
Where now that vanish reigns. In nine years more 10
The roots will be refreshed with civil blood;
And thank the mercy of insulted Heaven

That sin and wrongs wound, as an orphan's cry,
The patience of the great Avenger's ear.

A YOUTH

Yet, father, 'tis a happy sight to see,—
Beautiful, innocent, and unforbidden
By God or man ;—'tis like the bright procession
Of skiey visions in a solemn dream
From which men wake as from a paradise,
And draw new strength to tread the thorns of life. 20
If God be good, wherefore should this be evil?
And if this be not evil, dost thou not draw
Unseasonable poison from the flowers
Which bloom so rarely in this barren world?
Oh, kill these bitter thoughts which make the present
Dark as the future !—

* * * *

When Avarice and Tyranny, vigilant Fear,
And open-eyed Conspiracy lie sleeping
As on Hell's threshold ; and all gentle thoughts
Waken to worship Him who giveth joys, 30
With his own gift.

SECOND CITIZEN

How young art thou in this old age of time !
How green in this grey world ! Canst thou discern
The signs of seasons, yet perceive no hint
Of change in that stage-scene in which thou art
Not a spectator but an actor ? or
Art thou a puppet moved by
The day that dawns in fire will die in storms,
Even though the noon be calm. My travel's done ;
Before the whirlwind wakes I shall have found 40
My inn of lasting rest, but thou must still
Be journeying on in this inclement air.
Wrap thy old cloak about thy back ;
Nor leave the broad and plain and beaten road,
Although no flowers smile on the trodden dust,
For the violet paths of pleasure. This Charles the First
Rose like the equinoctial sun
By vapours, through whose threatening ominous veil
Darting his altered influence he has gained
This height of noon—from which he must decline 50
Amid the darkness of conflicting storms,
To dank extinction and to latest night..

LEIGHTON

I *was* Leighton: what
I *am* thou seest. And yet turn thine eyes,
And with thy memory look on thy friend's mind,
Which is unchanged, and where is written deep 90
The sentence of my judge

THIRD CITIZEN

Are these the marks with which
Laud thinks to improve the image of his Maker
Stamped on the face of man? Curses upon him,
The impious tyrant!

SECOND CITIZEN

It is said besides
That lewd and papist drunkards may profane
The Sabbath with their
And has permitted that most heathenish custom
Of dancing round a pole dressed up with wreaths
On May-day.
A man who thus twice crucifies his God 100
May well his brother.--In my mind, friend,
The root of all this ill is prelacy.
I would cut up the root.

THIRD CITIZEN

And by what means?

SECOND CITIZEN

Smiting each Bishop under the fifth rib.

THIRD CITIZEN

You seem to know the vulnerable place
Of these same crocodiles.

SECOND CITIZEN

I learnt it in
Egyptian bondage, sir. Your worm of Nile
Betrays not with its flattering tears like they;
For, when they cannot kill, they whine and weep.
Nor is it half so greedy of men's bodies 110
As they of soul and all; nor does it wallow
In slime as they in simony and lies
And close lusts of the flesh.

A MARSHALSMAN

Give place, give place!—
 You torch-bearers, advance to the great gate,
 And then attend the Marshal of the Masque
 Into the Royal presence.

A LAW STUDENT

What thinkest thou
 Of this quaint shew of ours, my aged friend?
 Even now we see the redness of the torches
 Inflame the night to the eastward, and the clarions
 Gasp to us on the wind's wave. It comes! 120
 And their sounds, floating hither round the pageant,
 Rouse up the astonished air.

FIRST CITIZEN

I will not think but that our country's wounds
 May yet be healed. The king is just and gracious,
 Though wicked counsels now pervert his will:
 These once cast off—

SECOND CITIZEN

As adders cast their skins
 And keep their venom, so kings often change;
 Councils and counsellors hang on one another,
 Hiding the loathsome
 Like the base patchwork of a leper's rags. 130

THE YOUTH

Oh, still those dissonant thoughts. List how the music
 Grows on the enchanted air! And see, the torches
 Restlessly flashing, and the crowd divided
 Like waves before an Admiral's prow.

A MARSHALSMAN

Give place
 To the Marshal of the Masque!

A PURSUIVANT

Room for the King!

THE YOUTH

How glorious! See those thronging chariots
 Rolling like painted clouds before the wind,

Behind their solemn steeds : how some are shaped
 Like curved sea-shells dyed by the azure depths
 Of Indian seas ; some like the new-born moon ; 140
 And some like cars in which the Romans climbed
 (Canopied by Victory's eagle wings outspread)
 The Capitolian. See how gloriously
 The mottled horses in the torchlight stir
 Their gallant riders, while they check their pride,
 Like shapes of some diviner element
 Than English air, and beings nobler than
 The envious and admiring multitude.

SECOND CITIZEN

Ay, there they are—
 Nobles, and sons of nobles, patentees, 150
 Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm,
 On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows.
 Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan,
 Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart.
 These are the lilies glorious as Solomon,
 Who toil not, neither do they spin,—unless
 It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal.
 Here is the surfeit which to them who earn
 The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves
 The tithe that will support them till they crawl 160
 Back to her cold hard bosom. Here is health
 Followed by grim disease, glory by shame,
 Waste by lame famine, wealth by squalid want,
 And England's sin by England's punishment.
 And, as the effect pursues the cause foregone,
 Lo, giving substance to my words, behold
 At once the sign and the thing signified—
 A troop of cripples, beggars, and lean outcasts,
 Horsed upon stumbling jades, carted with dung,
 Dragged for a day from cellars and low cabins 170
 And rotten hiding-holes, to point the moral
 Of this presentment, and bring up the rear
 Of painted pomp with misery !

THE YOUTH

'Tis but
 The anti-masque, and serves as discords do
 In sweetest music. Who would love May flowers
 If they succeeded not to Winter's flaw ;
 Or day unchanged by night ; or joy itself
 Without the touch of sorrow ?

SECOND CITIZEN

I and thou——

A MARSHALSMAN

Place, give place!

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in Whitehall. Enter the KING, QUEEN, LAUD, LORD STRAFFORD, LORD COTTINGTON, and other Lords; ARCHY; also ST. JOHN, with some Gentlemen of the Inns of Court.*

KING

Thanks, gentlemen. I heartily accept
 This token of your service: your gay masque
 Was performed gallantly. And it shews well
 When subjects twine such flowers of observance
 With the sharp thorns that deck the English crown.
 A gentle heart enjoys what it confers,
 Even as it suffers that which it inflicts,
 Though Justice guides the stroke.
 Accept my hearty thanks.

QUEEN

And, gentlemen,
 Call your poor Queen your debtor. Your quaint pageant 10
 Rose on me like the figures of past Years,
 Treading their still path back to infancy,
 More beautiful and mild as they draw nearer
 The quiet cradle. I could have almost wept
 To think I was in Paris, where these shews
 Are well devised—such as I was ere yet
 My young heart shared a portion of the burthen,
 The careful weight, of this great monarchy.
 There, gentlemen, between the sovereign's pleasure
 And that which it regards, no clamour lifts 20
 Its proud interposition.
 In Paris ribald censurers dare not move
 Their poisonous tongues against these sinless sports;
 And *his* smile
 Warms those who bask in it, as ours would do
 If... Take my heart's thanks: add them, gentlemen,
 To those good words which, were he King of France,
 My royal lord would turn to golden deeds.

ST. JOHN

Madam, the love of Englishmen can make
 The lightest favour of their lawful king 30
 Outweigh a despot's.—We humbly take our leaves,
 Enriched by smiles which France can never buy.

[*Exeunt* ST. JOHN and the Gentlemen of the Inns of Court.]

KING

My Lord Archbishop,
 Mark you what spirit sits in St. John's eyes?
 Methinks it is too saucy for this presence.

ARCHY

Yes, pray your Grace look: for, like an unsophisticated
 sees everything upside down, you who are
 wise will discern the shadow of an idiot in lawn sleeves
 and a rochet setting springes to catch woodcocks in hay-
 making time. Poor Archy, whose owl-eyes are tempered 40
 to the error of his age, and because he is a fool, and by
 special ordinance of God forbidden ever to see himself
 as he is, sees now in that deep eye a blindfold devil
 sitting on the ball, and weighing words out between king
 and subjects. One scale is full of promises, and the other
 full of protestations: and then another devil creeps be-
 hind the first out of the dark windings <of a> pregnant
 lawyer's brain, and takes the bandage from the other's
 eyes, and throws a sword into the left-hand scale, for
 all the world like my Lord Essex's there. 50

STRAFFORD

A rod in pickle for the Fool's back!

ARCHY

Ay, and some are now smiling whose tears will make
 the brine; for the Fool sees——

STRAFFORD

Insolent! You shall have your coat turned and be
 whipped out of the palace for this.

ARCHY

when all the fools are whipped, and all
 the Protestant writers, while the knaves are whipping the

fools ever since a thief was set to catch a thief. If all
 turncoats were whipped out of palaces, poor Archy would
 be disgraced in good company. Let the knaves whip 60
 the fools, and all the fools laugh at it. <Let the> wise
 and godly slit each other's noses and ears (having no
 need of any sense of discernment in their craft); and the
 knaves, to marshal them, join in a procession to Bedlam,
 to entreat the madmen to omit their sublime Platonic
 contemplations, and manage the state of England. Let
 all the honest men who lie penned up at the prisons or
 the pillories, in custody of the pursuivants of the High-
 Commission Court, marshal them.

Enter Secretary LYTTLETON, with papers.

KING (*looking over the papers*)

These stiff Scots 70
 His Grace of Canterbury must take order
 To force under the Church's yoke.—You, Wentworth,
 Shall be myself in Ireland, and shall add
 Your wisdom, gentleness, and energy,
 To what in me were wanting.—My Lord Weston,
 Look that those merchants draw not without loss
 Their bullion from the Tower; and, on the payment
 Of shipmoney, take fullest compensation
 For violation of our royal forests,
 Whose limits, from neglect, have been o'ergrown 80
 With cottages and cornfields. The uttermost
 Farthing exact from those who claim exemption
 From knighthood: that which once was a reward
 Shall thus be made a punishment, that subjects
 May know how majesty can wear at will
 The rugged mood.—My Lord of Coventry,
 Lay my command upon the Courts below
 That bail be not accepted for the prisoners
 Under the warrant of the Star Chamber.
 The people shall not find the stubbornness 90
 Of Parliament a cheap or easy method
 Of dealing with their rightful sovereign:
 And doubt not this, my Lord of Coventry,
 We will find time and place for fit rebuke.—
 My Lord of Canterbury—

ARCHY

The fool is here.

LAUD

I crave permission of your Majesty
To order that this insolent fellow be
Chastised : he mocks the sacred character,
Scoffs at the state, and——

KING

What, my Archy?

He mocks and mimics all he sees and hears, 100
Yet with a quaint and graceful license. Prithee
For this once do not as Prynne would, were he
Primate of England. With your Grace's leave,
He lives in his own world ; and, like a parrot
Hung in his gilded prison from the window
Of a queen's bower over the public way,
Blasphemes with a bird's mind :—his words, like arrows
Which know no aim beyond the archer's wit,
Strike sometimes what eludes philosophy.

(To ARCHY)

Go, sirrah, and repent of your offence 110
Ten minutes in the rain : be it your penance
To bring news how the world goes there. [*Exit* ARCHY.
Poor Archy !

He weaves about himself a world of mirth
Out of the wreck of ours.

LAUD

I take with patience, as my Master did,
All scoffs permitted from above.

KING

My lord,

Pray overlook these papers. Archy's words
Had wings, but these have talons.

QUEEN

And the lion

That wears them must be tamed. My dearest lord, 120
I see the new-born courage in your eye
Armed to strike dead the spirit of the time,
Which spurs to rage the many-headed beast.
Do thou persist : for, faint but in resolve,
And it were better thou hadst still remained
The slave of thine own slaves, who tear like curs

The fugitive, and flee from the pursuer ;
 And Opportunity, that empty wolf,
 Flies at his throat who falls. Subdue thy actions
 Even to the disposition of thy purpose,
 And be that tempered as the Ebro's steel ;
 And banish weak-eyed Mercy to the weak,
 Whence she will greet thee with a gift of peace,
 And not betray thee with a traitor's kiss,
 As when she keeps the company of rebels,
 Who think that she is Fear. This do, lest we
 Should fall as from a glorious pinnacle
 In a bright dream, and wake, as from a dream,
 Out of our worshipped state.

KING

Belovèd friend,
 God is my witness that this weight of power,
 Which he sets me my earthly task to wield
 Under his law, is my delight and pride
 Only because thou lovest that and me.
 For a king bears the office of a God
 To all the under-world ; and to his God
 Alone he must deliver up his trust,
 Unshorn of its permitted attributes.
 <It seems> now as the baser elements
 Had mutinied against the golden sun
 That kindles them to harmony, and quells
 Their self-destroying rapine. The wild million
 Strike at the eye that guides them ; like as humours
 Of the distempered body that conspire
 Against the spirit of life throned in the heart,—
 And thus become the prey of one another,
 And last of death.

STRAFFORD

That which would be ambition in a subject
 Is duty in a sovereign ; for on him,
 As on a keystone, hangs the arch of life,
 Whose safety is its strength. Degree and form,
 And all that makes the age of reasoning man
 More memorable than a beast's, depend
 On this—that Right should fence itself inviolably
 With power ; in which respect the state of England,
 From usurpation by the insolent commons,
 Cries for reform.
 Get treason, and spare treasure. Fee with coin

The loudest murmurers ; feed with jealousies
 Opposing factions,—be thyself of none ;
 And borrow gold of many, for those who lend
 Will serve thee till thou payest them ; and thus 170
 Keep the fierce spirit of the hour at bay,
 Till Time, amid its coming generations
 Of nights and days unborn, bring some one chance,

* * * *

Or war or pestilence or Nature's self,
 By some distemperature or terrible sign,
 Be as an arbiter betwixt themselves.
 Nor let your Majesty
 Doubt here the peril of the unseen event.
 How did your brother kings, coheritors
 In your high interest in the subject earth, 180
 Rise past such troubles to that height of power
 Where now they sit, and awfully serene
 Smile on the trembling world ? Such popular storms
 Philip the second of Spain, this Lewis of France,
 And late the German head of many bodies,
 And every petty lord of Italy,
 Quelled or by arts or arms. Is England poorer
 Or feebler ? or art thou who wield'st her power
 Tamer than they ? or shall this island be—
 by its inviolable waters— 190
 To the world present and the world to come
 Sole pattern of extinguished monarchy ?
 Not if thou dost as I would have thee do.

KING

Your words shall be my deeds :
 You speak the image of my thought. My friend
 (If kings can have a friend, I call thee so),
 Beyond the large commission which
 Under the great seal of the realm, take this :
 And, for some obvious reasons, let there be
 No seal on it, except my kingly word 200
 And honour as I am a gentleman.
 Be—as thou art within my heart and mind—
 Another self, here and in Ireland :
 Do what thou judgest well, take amplest license,
 And stick not even at questionable means.
 Hear me, Wentworth. My word is as a wall
 Between thee and this world thine enemy—
 That hates thee, for thou lovest me.

STRAFFORD

I own

No friend but thee, no enemies but thine :
 Thy lightest thought is my eternal law.
 How weak, how short, is life to pay—

210

KING

Peace, peace !

Thou ow'st me nothing yet.—

(To LAUD)

My lord, what say

Those papers ?

LAUD

Your Majesty has ever interposed,
 In lenity towards your native soil,
 Between the heavy vengeance of the Church
 And Scotland. Mark the consequence of warming
 This brood of northern vipers in your bosom.
 The rabble, instructed no doubt
 By Loudon, Lindsay, Hume, and false Argyll 220
 (For the waves never menace Heaven until
 Scourged by the wind's invisible tyranny),
 Have in the very temple of the Lord
 Done outrage to his chosen ministers.
 They scorn the liturgy of the holy Church,
 Refuse to obey her canons, and deny
 The apostolic power with which the Spirit
 Has filled its elect vessels, even from him
 Who held the keys with power to loose and bind,
 To him who now pleads in this royal presence.— 230
 Let ampler powers and new instructions be
 Sent to the High Commissioners in Scotland.
 To death, imprisonment, and confiscation,
 Add torture, add the ruin of the kindred
 Of the offender, add the brand of infamy,
 Add mutilation : and if this suffice not,
 Unleash the sword and fire, that in their thirst
 They may lick up that scum of schismatics.
 I laugh at those weak rebels who, desiring
 What we possess, still prate of Christian peace : 240
 As if those dreadful arbitrating messengers
 Which play the part of God 'twixt right and wrong
 Should be let loose against the innocent sleep

(Of templed cities and the smiling fields,
 For some poor argument of policy
 Which touches our own profit or our pride,
 Where it indeed were Christian charity
 To turn the cheek even to the smiter's hand ;
 And when our great Redeemer, when our God,
 When he who gave, accepted, and retained 250
 Himself in propitiation of our sins,
 Is scorned in his immediate ministry,
 With hazard of the inestimable loss
 Of all the truth and discipline which is
 Salvation to the extremest generation
 Of men innumerable—they talk of peace !
 Such peace as Canaan found, let Scotland now :
 For, by that Christ who came to bring a sword,
 Not peace, upon the earth, and gave command
 To his disciples at the passover 260
 That each should sell his robe and buy a sword,—
 Once strip that minister of naked wrath,
 And it shall never sleep in peace again
 Till Scotland bend or break.

KING

My Lord Archbishop,
 Do what thou wilt and what thou canst in this.
 Thy earthly even as thy heavenly King
 Gives thee large power in his unquiet realm.
 But we want money, and my mind misgives me
 That for so great an enterprise, as yet,
 We are unfurnished.

STRAFFORD

Yet it may not long 270
 Rest on our wills.

COTTINGTON

The expenses
 Of gathering shipmoney, and of distraining
 For every petty rate (for we encounter
 A desperate opposition inch by inch
 In every warehouse and on every farm),
 Have swallowed up the gross sum of the imposts ;
 So that, though felt as a most grievous scourge
 Upon the land, they stand us in small stead
 As touches the receipt.

STRAFFORD

'Tis a conclusion
 Most arithmetical: and thence you infer 280
 Perhaps the assembling of a parliament.
 Now, if a man should call his dearest enemies
 To sit in licensed judgment on his life,
 His Majesty might wisely take that course.

[*Aside to COTTINGTON.*]

It is enough to expect from these lean imposts
 That they perform the office of a scourge,
 Without more profit. (*Aloud.*) Fines and confiscations,
 And a forced loan from the refractory City,
 Will fill our coffers: and the golden love
 Of loyal gentlemen and noble friends 290
 For the worshipped father of our common country,
 With contributions from the catholics,
 Will make Rebellion pale in our excess.
 Be these the expedients until time and wisdom
 Shall frame a settled state of government.

LAUD

And weak expedients they! Have we not drained
 All, till the which seemed
 A mine exhaustless——

STRAFFORD

And the love which *is*,
 If loyal hearts could turn their blood to gold——

LAUD

Both now grow barren: and I speak it not 300
 As loving parliaments, which, as they have been
 In the right hand of bold bad mighty kings
 The scourges of the bleeding Church, I hate.
 Methinks they scarcely can deserve our fear.

STRAFFORD

O my dear liege, take back the wealth thou gavest:
 With that, take all I held but as in trust
 For thee, of mine inheritance: leave me but
 This unprovided body for thy service,
 And a mind dedicated to no care
 Except thy safety:—but assemble not 310
 A parliament. Hundreds will bring, like me,
 Their fortunes, as they would their blood, before——

KING

No! thou who judgest them art but one. Alas!
 We should be too much out of love with Heaven,
 Did this vile world shew many such as thee,
 Thou perfect, just and honourable man!
 Never shall it be said that Charles of England
 Stripped those he loved for fear of those he scorns;
 Nor will he so much misbecome his throne
 As to impoverish those who most adorn 320
 And best defend it. That you urge, dear Strafford,
 Inclines me rather——

QUEEN

To a parliament?
 Is this thy firmness? and thou wilt preside
 Over a knot of censurers,
 To the unswearing of thy best resolves,
 And choose the worst, when the worst comes too soon?
 Plight not the worst before the worst must come.
 Oh, wilt thou smile whilst our ribald foes,
 Dressed in thine own usurped authority,
 Sharpen their tongues on Henrietta's fame?
 It is enough! Thou lovest me no more! 330
[Weeps.]

KING

Oh, Henrietta!

[They talk apart.]

COTTINGTON (to LAUD)

Money we have none:
 And all the expedients of my Lord of Strafford
 Will scarcely meet the arrears.

LAUD

Without delay
 An army must be sent into the north;
 Followed by a Commission of the Church,
 With amplest power to quench in fire and blood,
 And tears and terror, and the pity of hell,
 The intenser wrath of Heresy. God will give
 Victory; and victory over Scotland give 340
 The lion England tamed into our hands.
 That will lend power, and power bring gold.

COTTINGTON

Meanwhile

We must begin first where your Grace leaves off.
Gold must give power, or——

LAUD

I am not averse

From the assembling of a parliament.
Strong actions and smooth words might teach them soon
The lesson to obey. And are they not
A bubble fashioned by the monarch's mouth,
The birth of one light breath? If they serve no purpose,
A word dissolves them.

STRAFFORD

The engine of parliaments 350
Might be deferred until I can bring over
The Irish regiments: they will serve to assure
The issue of the war against the Scots.
And, this game won—which if lost, all is lost—
Gather these chosen leaders of the rebels,
And call them, if you will, a parliament.

KING

Oh, be our feet still tardy to shed blood,
Guilty though it may be! I would still spare
The stubborn country of my birth, and ward
From countenances which I loved in youth 360
The wrathful Church's lacerating hand.

(To LAUD)

Have you o'erlooked the other articles?

[*Re-enter ARCHY.*]

LAUD

Hazlerig, Hampden, Pym, young Harry Vane,
Cromwell, and other rebels of less note,
Intend to sail with the next favouring wind
For the Plantations.

ARCHY

Where they think to found
A commonwealth like Gonzalo's in the play,
Gynæcocratic and pantisocratic.

KING

What's that, sirrah?

ARCHY

New devil's politics.

Hell is the pattern of all commonwealths : 370

Lucifer was the first republican.

Will you hear Merlin's prophecy, how three poets

"In one brainless skull, when the whitethorn is full,
 Shall sail round the world, and come back again :
 Shall sail round the world in a brainless skull,
 And come back again when the moon is at full :"—

When, in spite of the Church, they will hear homilies
 of whatever length or form they please.

COTTINGTON (?)

So please your Majesty to sign this order

For their detention. 380

ARCHY

If your Majesty were tormented night and day by
 fever, gout, rheumatism, and stone, and asthma, etc.,
 and you found these diseases had secretly entered into
 a conspiracy to abandon you, should you think it
 necessary to lay an embargo on the port by which they
 meant to dispeople your unquiet kingdom of man?

KING

If fear were made for kings, the Fool mocks wisely ;
 But in this case . . . (*writing*). Here, my lord, take
 the warrant,

And see it duly executed forthwith.— 390

That imp of malice and mockery shall be punished.

[*Exeunt all but KING, QUEEN, and ARCHY.*]

ARCHY

Ay, I am the physician of whom Plato prophesied,
 who was to be accused by the confectioner before a
 jury of children, who found him guilty without
 waiting for the summing-up, and hanged him without
 benefit of clergy. Thus Baby Charles, and the
 Twelfth-night Queen of Hearts, and the over-grown
 schoolboy Cottington, and that little urchin Laud—
 who would reduce a verdict of "guilty, death," by

famine, if it were impregnable by composition—all
 impannelled against poor Archy for presenting them 400
 bitter physic the last day of the holidays.

QUEEN

Is the rain over, sirrah?

KING

When it rains
 And the sun shines, 'twill rain again to-morrow:
 And therefore never smile till you've done crying.

ARCHY

But 'tis all over now: like the April anger of
 woman, the gentle sky has wept itself serene.

QUEEN

What news abroad? how looks the world this
 morning?

ARCHY

Gloriously as a grave covered with virgin flowers. 410
 There's a rainbow in the sky. Let your Majesty look
 at it, for

“A rainbow in the morning
 Is the shepherd's warning;”

and the flocks of which you are the pastor are scattered
 among the mountain-tops, where every drop of water
 is a flake of snow, and the breath of May pierces
 like a January blast.

KING

The sheep have mistaken the wolf for their shep-
 herd, my poor boy; and the shepherd, the wolves 420
 for the watchdogs.

QUEEN

But the rainbow was a good sign, Archy: it says
 that the waters of the deluge are gone, and can return
 no more.

ARCHY

Ay, the salt-water one: but that of tears and blood
 must yet come down, and that of fire follow, if there
 be any truth in lies.—The rainbow hung over the city
 with all its shops, and churches, from north to
 south, like a bridge of congregated lightning pieced

by the masonry of Heaven—like a balance in which
the angel that distributes the coming hour was weigh- 430
ing that heavy one whose poise is now felt in the
lightest hearts, before it bows the proudest heads under
the meanest feet.

QUEEN

Who taught you this trash, sirrah?

ARCHY

A torn leaf out of an old book trampled in the dirt.
—But for the rainbow. It moved as the sun moved,
and until the top of the Tower of
a cloud through its left-hand tip, and Lambeth Palace
look as dark as a rock before the other. Methought 440
I saw a crown figured upon one tip, and a mitre on the
other. So, as I had heard treasures were found where
the rainbow quenches its points upon the earth, I set
off, and at the Tower——. But I shall not tell your
Majesty what I found close to the closet-window on
which the rainbow had glimmered.

KING

Speak: I will make my Fool my conscience.

ARCHY

Then conscience is a fool.—I saw there a cat caught
in a rat-trap. I heard the rats squeak behind the
wainscots: it seemed to me that the very mice were 450
consulting on the manner of her death.

QUEEN

Archy is shrewd and bitter.

ARCHY

Like the season,

So blow the winds.—

But at the other end of the rainbow, where the grey
rain was tempered along the grass and leaves by a
tender interfusion of violet and gold in the meadows
beyond Lambeth, what think you that I found instead
of a mitre?

KING

Vane's wits perhaps.

ARCHY

Something as vain. I saw

a gross vapour hovering in a stinking ditch over the carcass of a dead ass, some rotten rags, and broken dishes—the wrecks of what once administered to the stuffing-out and the ornament of a worm of worms. His Grace of Canterbury expects to enter the New Jerusalem some Palm Sunday in triumph on the ghost of this ass. 460

QUEEN

Enough, enough! Go desire Lady Jane
She place my lute, together with the music
Mari received last week from Italy,

In my boudoir, and——

[Exit ARCHY.]

KING

I'll go in.

QUEEN

My beloved lord, 470

Have you not noted that the Fool of late
Has lost his careless mirth, and that his words
Sound like the echoes of our saddest fears?
What can it mean? I should be loth to think
Some factious slave had tutored him.

KING

Oh no!

He is but Occasion's pupil. Partly 'tis
That our minds piece the vacant intervals
Of his wild words with their own fashioning,—
As in the imagery of summer clouds,
Or coals of the winter fire, idlers find 480
The perfect shadows of their leering thoughts:
And partly, that the terrors of the time
Are sown by wandering Rumour in all spirits,
And in the lightest and the least may best
Be seen the current of the coming wind.

QUEEN

Your brain is overwrought² with these deep thoughts.
Come, I will sing to you; let us go try
These airs from Italy,—and, as we pass

The gallery, *e'll decide where that Correggio
 Shall hang—the Virgin Mother 490
 With her child, born the King of Heaven and earth,—
 Whose reign is men's salvation. And you shall see
 A cradled miniature of yourself asleep,
 Stamped on the heart by never-erring love;
 Likier than any Vandyke ever made,
 A pattern to the unborn age of thee,
 Over whose sweet beauty I have wept for joy
 A thousand times,—and now should weep for sorrow,
 Did I not think that after we were dead
 Our fortunes would spring high in him, and that 500
 The cares we waste upon our heavy crown
 Would make it light and glorious as a wreath
 Of Heaven's beams for his dear innocent brow.

KING

Dear Henrietta!

SCENE III.—*The Star Chamber.* LAUD, JUXON, STRAFFORD,
and others, as Judges. PRYNNE *as a Prisoner, and then*
 BASTWICK.

LAUD

Bring forth the prisoner Bastwick: let the clerk
 Recite his sentence.

CLERK

“That he pay five thousand
 Pounds to the king, lose both his ears, be branded
 With red-hot iron on the cheek and forehead,
 And be imprisoned within Lancaster Castle
 During the pleasure of the Court.”

LAUD

Prisoner,
 If you have aught to say wherefore this sentence
 Should not be put into effect, now speak.

JUXON

If you have aught to plead in mitigation,
 Speak.

BASTWICK

Thus, my lords. If, like the prelates, I 10
 Were an invader of the royal power,
 A public scorner of the word of God,
 Profane, idolatrous, popish, superstitious,
 Impious in heart and in tyrannic act,
 Void of wit, honesty, and temperance ;
 If Satan were my lord, as theirs,—our God
 Pattern of all I should avoid to do ;
 Were I an enemy of my God and King
 And of good men, as ye are ;—I should merit
 Your fearful state and guilt prosperity, 20
 Which, when ye wake from the last sleep, shall turn
 To cowls and robes of everlasting fire.
 But, as I am, I bid ye grudge me not
 The only earthly favour ye can yield,
 Or I think worth acceptance at your hands,—
 Scorn, mutilation, and imprisonment.
 even as my Master did,
 Until Heaven's kingdom shall descend on earth,
 Or earth be like a shadow in the light
 Of Heaven absorbed. Some few tumultuous years 30
 Will pass, and leave no wreck of what opposes
 His will whose will is power.

LAUD

Officer, take the prisoner from the bar,
 And be his tongue slit for his insolence.

BASTWICK

While this hand holds a pen——

LAUD

Be his hands——

JUXON

Stop !
 Forbear, my lord ! The tongue, which now can speak
 No terror, would interpret, being dumb,
 Heaven's thunder to our harm ;
 And hands, which now write only their own shame,
 With bleeding stumps might sign our blood away. 40

LAUD

Much more such "mercy" among men would be,
 Did all the ministers of Heaven's revenge

Flinch thus from earthly retribution. I
 Could suffer what I would inflict.

[*Exit BASTWICK guarded.*
 Bring up

The Lord Bishop of Lincoln.—

(*To STRAFFORD*)

Know you not
 That, in distraining for ten thousand pounds
 Upon his books and furniture at Lincoln,
 Were found these scandalous and seditious letters
 Sent from one Osbaldistone, who is fled?
 I speak it not as touching this poor person; 50
 But of the office which should make it holy,
 Were it as vile as it was ever spotless.
 Mark too, my lord, that this expression strikes
 His Majesty, if I misinterpret not.

Enter BISHOP WILLIAMS guarded.

STRAFFORD

'Twere politic and just that Williams taste
 The bitter fruit of his connection with
 The schismatics. But you, my Lord Archbishop,
 Who owed your first promotion to his favour,
 Who grew beneath his smile——

LAUD

Would therefore beg
 The office of his judge from this High Court,— 60
 That it shall seem, even as it is, that I,
 In my assumption of this sacred robe,
 Have put aside all worldly preference,
 All sense of all distinction of all persons,
 All thoughts but of the service of the Church.—
 Bishop of Lincoln!

WILLIAMS

Peace, proud hierarch!
 I know my sentence, and I own it just.
 Thou wilt repay me less than I deserve,
 In stretching to the utmost

* * * *

SCENE IV.—HAMPDEN, PYM, CROMWELL, *his Daughter,*
and young SIR HARRY VANE.

HAMPDEN

England, farewell! thou who hast been my cradle,
Shalt never be my dungeon or my grave!
I held what I inherited in thee
As pawn for that inheritance of freedom
Which thou hast sold for thy despoiler's smile:—
How can I call thee England, or my country?—
Does the wind hold?

VANE

The vanes sit steady
Upon the Abbey towers. The silver lightnings
Of the evening star, spite of the city's smoke,
Tell that the north wind reigns in the upper air. 10
Mark too that fleet of fleecy-winged clouds
Sailing athwart St. Margaret's.

HAMPDEN

Hail, fleet herald
Of tempest! that rude pilot who shall guide
Hearts free as his, to realms as pure as thee,
Beyond the shot of tyranny,
Beyond the webs of that swollen spider
Beyond the curses, calumnies, and
Of atheist priests! And thou,
Fair star, whose beam lies on the wide Atlantic,
Athwart its zones of tempest and of calm, 20
Bright as the path to a beloved home,
Oh, light us to the isles of the Evening land!
Like floating Edens, cradled in the glimmer
Of sunset, through the distant mist of years
Touched by departing Hope, they gleam! lone regions,
Where Power's poor dupes and victims yet have
never
Propitiated the savage fear of kings
With purest blood of noblest hearts; whose dew
Is yet unstained with tears of those who wake
To weep each day the wrongs on which it dawns; 30
Whose sacred silent air owns yet no echo
Of formal blasphemies; nor impious rites

Wrest man's free worship, from the God who loves,
 To the poor worm who envies us his love !
 Receive, thou young of Paradise,
 These exiles from the old and sinful world !

* * * *

This glorious clime ; this firmament, whose lights
 Dart mitigated influence through their veil
 Of pale-blue atmosphere ; whose tears keep green
 The pavement of this moist all-feeding earth ; 40
 This vaporous horizon, whose dim round
 Is bastioned by the circumfluous sea,
 Repelling invasion from the sacred towers ;
 Presses upon me like a dungeon's grate,
 A low dark roof, a damp and narrow wall :
 The boundless universe
 Becomes a cell too narrow for the soul
 That owns a master ; while the loathliest ward
 Of this wide prison, England, is a nest
 Of cradling peace built on the mountain-tops,— 50
 To which the eagle spirits of the free,
 Which range through Heaven and earth, and scorn the
 storm
 Of time, and gaze upon the light of truth,
 Return to brood on thoughts that cannot die
 And cannot be repelled.
 Like eaglets floating in the Heaven of time,
 They soar above their quarry, and shall stoop
 Through palaces and temples thunder-proof.

SCENE V.

ARCHY

I'll go live under the ivy that overgrows the terrace,
 and count the tears shed on its old as the
 plays the song of

“ A widow bird sate mourning
 Upon a wintry bough.”

[*Sings*]

Heigho ! the lark and the owl !
 One flies the morning, and one lulls the night :—
 Only the nightingale, poor fond soul,
 Sings like the Fool through darkness and light.

“ A widow bird sate mourning for her lov
 Upon a wintry bough ;
 The frozen wind crept on above,
 The freezing stream below.

10

“ There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
 No flower upon the ground,
 And little motion in the air
 Except the mill-wheel's sound.”

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE,

(1822)

SWIFT as a spirit hastening to his task
Of glory and of good, the Sun sprang forth
Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask

Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth ;
The smokeless altars of the mountain snows
Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth

Of light, the Ocean's orison arose,
To which the birds tempered their matin lay.
All flowers in field or forest which uncloze

Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day,
Swinging their censers in the element,
With orient incense lit by the new ray,

Burned slow and inconsumably, and sent
Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air ;
And, in succession due, did continent,

Isle, ocean, and all things that in them wear
The form and character of mortal mould,
Rise as the Sun their father rose, to bear

Their portion of the toil which he of old
Took as his own and then imposed on them :
But I, whom thoughts which must remain untold

Had kept as wakeful as the stars that gem
The cone of night,—now they were laid asleep,
Stretched my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem

Which an old chesnut flung athwart the steep
Of a green Apennine : before me fled
The night ; behind me rose the day ; the deep

Was at my feet, and Heaven above my head ;—
When a strange trance over my fancy grew,
Which was not slumber, for the shade it spread

Was so transparent, that the scene came through
As clear as, when a veil of light is drawn
O'er evening hills, they glimmer; and I knew

That I had felt the freshness of that dawn,
Bathed in the same cold dew my brow and hair,
And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn

Under the self-same bough, and heard as there
The birds, the fountains and the ocean hold
Sweet talk in music through the enamoured air;
And then a vision on my brain was rolled.

40

As in that trance of wondrous thought I lay,
This was the tenour of my waking dream:—
Methought I sate beside a public way

Thick-strewn with summer dust; and a great stream
Of people there was hurrying to and fro,
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,—

All hastening onward, yet none seemed to know
Whither he went, or whence he came, or why
He made one of the multitude, and so

Was borne amid the crowd, as through the sky
One of the million leaves of Summer's bier;
Old age and youth, manhood and infancy

50

Mixed in one mighty torrent did appear,
Some flying from the thing they feared, and some
Seeking the object of another's fear;

And others, as with steps towards the tomb,
Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath,
And others mournfully within the gloom

Of their own shadow walked, and called it death;
And some fled from it as it were a ghost,
Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath:

60

But more, with motions which each other crost,
Pursued or shunned the shadows the clouds threw,
Or birds within the noonday æther lost,

Upon that path where flowers never grew,—
And weary with vain toil and faint for thirst,
Heard not the fountains whose melodious dew

Out of their mossy cells forever burst ;
 Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told
 Of grassy paths and wood-lawns interspersed 70

With over-arching elms and caverns cold,
 And violet banks where sweet dreams brood ; but they
 Pursued their serious folly as of old. 75

And as I gazed, methought that in the way
 The throng grew wilder, as the woods of June
 When the south wind shakes the extinguished day ;

And a cold glare, intenser than the noon,
 But icy-cold, obscured with blinding light
 The sun, as he the stars. Like the young moon—

When on the sunlit limits of the night 80
 Her white shell trembles amid crimson air,
 And whilst the sleeping tempest gathers might,

Doth, as the herald of its coming, bear
 The ghost of its dead mother, whose dim form
 Bends in dark æther from her infant's chair,—

So came a chariot on the silent storm
 Of its own rushing splendour, and a Shape
 So sate within, as one whom years deform,

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape,
 Crouching within the shadow of a tomb ; 90
 And o'er what seemed the head a cloud-like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint ætherial gloom
 Tempering the light. Upon the chariot-beam
 A Janus-visaged Shadow did assume

The guidance of that wonder-wingèd team ;
 The shapes which drew it in thick lightnings
 Were lost :—I heard alone on the air's soft stream

The music of their ever-moving wings.
 All the four faces of that charioteer
 Had their eyes banded ; little profit brings 100

Speed in the van and blindness in the rear,
 Nor then avail the beams that quench the sun
 Or that with banded eyes could pierce the sphere

Of all that is, has been or will be done ;
 So ill was the car guided—but it past
 With solemn speed majestically on.

The crowd gave way, and I arose aghast,
 Or seemed to rise, so mighty was the trance,
 And saw, like clouds upon the thunder-blast,

The million with fierce song and maniac dance 110
 Raging around :—such seemed the jubilee
 As when to greet some conqueror's advance

Imperial Rome poured forth her living sea
 From senate-house, and forum, and theatre,
 When upon the free

Had bound a yoke, which soon they stooped to bear.
 Nor wanted here the just similitude
 Of a triumphal pageant, for where'er

The chariot rolled, a captive multitude
 Was driven ;—all those who had grown old in power 120
 Or misery,—all who had their age subdued

By action or by suffering, and whose hour
 Was drained to its last sand in weal or woe,
 So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower ;—

All those whose fame or infamy must grow
 Till the great Winter lay the form and name
 Of this green earth with them forever low ;—

All but the sacred few who could not tame
 Their spirits to the conqueror—but as soon
 As they had touched the world with living flame, 130

Fled back like eagles to their native noon ;
 Or those who put aside the diadem
 Of earthly thrones or gems till the last

Were there, of Athens and Jerusalem,
 Were neither 'mid the mighty captives seen,
 Nor 'mid the ribald crowd that followed them,

Nor those who went before, fierce and obscene.
 The wild dance maddens in the van, and those
 Who lead it, fleet as shadows on the green,

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

129

Outspeed the chariot, and without repose
Mix with each other in tempestuous measure
To savage music ; wilder as it grows, 140

They, tortured by their agonizing pleasure,
Convulsed, and on the rapid whirlwinds spun *balas*
Of that fierce Spirit whose unholy leisure

Was soothed by mischief since the world begun,
Throw back their heads and loose their streaming hair ;
And in their dance round her who dims the sun,

Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air
As their feet twinkle ; they recede, and now 150
Bending within each other's atmosphere

Kindle invisibly—and as they glow,
Like moths by light attracted and repelled,
Oft to their bright destruction come and go ;

Till like two clouds into one vale impelled,
That shake the mountains when their lightnings mingle,
And die in rain—the fiery band which held

Their natures, snaps—while the shock still may tingle ;
One falls and then another in the path
Senseless—nor is the desolation single ; 160

Yet ere I can say 'Ware, the chariot hath
Past over them—nor other trace I find
But as of foam after the ocean's wrath

Is spent upon the desert shore ;—behind,
Old men and women foully disarrayed,
Shake their grey hairs in the insulting wind,

And follow in the dance, with limbs decayed,
Seeking to reach the light which leaves them still
Farther behind and deeper in the shade.

* But not the less with impotence of will 170
They wheel—though ghastly shadows interpose
Round them and round each other—and fulfil

Their work, and in the dust from whence they rose
Sink, and corruption veils them as they lie,
And past in these performs what in those.

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry,
 Half to myself I said—"And what is this?
 Whose shape is that within the car? And why"—

I would have added—"Is all here amiss?"—
 But a voice answered—"Life!"—I turned, and knew 180
 (O Heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness!)

That what I thought was an old root which grew
 To strange distortion out of the hill-side,
 Was indeed one of that deluded crew,

And that the grass, which methought hung so wide
 And white, was but his thin discoloured hair,
 And that the holes it vainly sought to hide,

Were or had been eyes:—"If thou canst forbear
 To join the dance,—which I had well forborne!"
 Said the grim Feature, of my thought aware, 190

"I will unfold that which to this deep scorn
 Led me and my companions, and relate
 The progress of the pageant since the morn;

"If thirst of knowledge shall not then abate,
 Follow it thou even to the night; but I
 Am weary."—Then like one who with the weight

Of his own words is staggered, wearily
 He paused; and ere he could resume, I cried:
 "First, who art thou?"—"Before thy memory,

"I feared, loved, hated, suffered, did and died; 200
 And if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit
 Had been with purer nutriment supplied,

"Corruption would not now thus much inherit
 Of what was once Rousseau,—nor this disguise
 Stain that which ought to have disdained to wear it;

"If I have been extinguished, yet there rise
 A thousand beacons from the spark I bore."—
 "And who are those chained to the car?"—"The wise,

"The great, the unforgotten,—they who wore
 Mitres and helms and crowns, or wreaths of light, 210
 Signs of thought's empire over thought: their lore

"Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might
Could not repress the mystery within,
And, for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night

"Caught them ere evening."—"Who is he with chin
Upon his breast, and hands crost on his chain?"—
"The Child of a fierce hour; he sought to win

"The world, and lost all that it did contain /
Of greatness, in its hope destroyed; and more
Of fame and peace than virtue's self can gain 220

"Without the opportunity which bore
Him on its eagle pinions to the peak
From which a thousand climbers have before

"Fallen, as Napoleon fell."—I felt my cheek
Alter to see the Shadow pass away
Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak,

That every pygmy kicked it as it lay;
And much I grieved to think how power and will
In opposition rule our mortal day,

And why God made irreconcilable 230
Good and the means of good; and for despair
I half disdained mine eyes' desire to fill

With the spent vision of the times that were
And scarce have ceased to be.—"Dost thou behold,"
Said my guide, "those spoilers spoiled,—Voltaire,
—*—(u s s o r a.*

"Frederick, and Paul, Catherine, and Leopold,
And hoary anarchists, demagogues, and sage
names which the world thinks always old?

"For in the battle Life and they did wage,
She remained conqueror. I was overcome 240
By my own heart alone, which neither age,

"Nor tears, nor infamy, nor now the tomb
Could temper to its object."—"Let them pass,"
I cried, "the world and its mysterious doom

"Is not so much more glorious than it was,
That I desire to worship those who draw
New figures on its false and fragile glass

"As the old faded."—"Figures ever new"
 Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may;
 We have but thrown, as those before us threw, 250

"Our shadows on it as it past away.
 But mark how chained to the triumphal chair
 The mighty phantoms of an elder day;

"All that is mortal of great Plato there
 Expiates the joy and woe his master knew not;
 The star that ruled his doom was far too fair,

"And life, where long that flower of Heaven grew not,
 Conquered that heart by love, which gold, or pain,
 Or age, or sloth, or slavery could subdue not.

"And near him walk the twain, 260
 The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion
 Followed as tame as vulture in a chain.

"The world was darkened beneath either pinion
 Of him whom from the flock of conquerors
 Fame singled out for her thunder-bearing minion;

"The other long outlived both woes and wars,
 Throned in the thoughts of men, and still had kept
 The jealous key of Truth's eternal doors,

Pointing a key to it
 "If Bacon's eagle spirit had not leapt
 Like lightning out of darkness. He compelled 270
 The Proteus shape of Nature, as it slept,

"To wake, and lead him to the caves that held
 The treasure of the secrets of its reign.
 See the great bards of elder time, who quelled

"The passions which they sung, as by their strain
 May well be known: their living melody
 Tempers its own contagion to the vein

"Of those who are infected with it: I
 Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain!
 And so my words have seeds of misery— 280

Even as the deeds of others, not as theirs."
 And then he pointed to a company,

'Midst whom I [quickly] recognized the heirs
Of Cæsar's crime, from him to Constantine;
The anarch [chiefs], whose force and murderous snares

Had founded many a sceptre-bearing line,
And spread the plague of gold and blood abroad;
And Gregory and John, and men divine,

Who rose like shadows between man and God;
Till that eclipse, still hanging over Heaven,
Was worshipped, by the world o'er which they strode,

For the true sun it quenched. "Their power was given
But to destroy," replied the leader:—"I
Am one of those who have created, even

If it be but a world of agony."—
"Whence camest thou? and whither goest thou?
How did thy course begin?" I said, "and why?

"Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow
Of people, and my heart sick of one sad thought.
Speak!" "Whence I am, I partly seem to know,

"And how and by what paths I have been brought
To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess;—
Why this should be, my mind can compass not;

"Whither the conqueror hurries me, still less;—
But follow thou, and from spectator turn
Actor or victim in this wretchedness,

"And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn
From thee. Now listen:—in the April prime,
When all the forest tips began to burn

"With kindling green, touched by the azure clime
Of the young season, I was laid asleep
Under a mountain, which from unknown time

"Had yawned into a cavern, high and deep;
And from it came a gentle rivulet,
Whose water, like clear air, in its calm sweep

"Bent the soft grass, and kept forever wet
The stems of the sweet flowers, and filled the grove
With sounds, which whoso hears must needs forget

"All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love,
Which they had known before that hour of rest;
A sleeping mother then would dream not of" 320

"Her only child who died upon the breast
At eventide; a king would mourn no more
The crown of which his brows were dispossessed

"When the sun lingered o'er his ocean floor ^{Stew}
To gild his rival's new prosperity.
Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore

"Ills, which, if ill, can find no cure from thee;
The thought of which no other sleep will quell,
Nor other music blot from memory,—" 330

"So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell;
And whether life had been before that sleep
The Heaven which I imagine, or a hell

"Like this harsh world in which I wake to weep,
I know not. I arose, and for a space
The scene of woods and waters seemed to keep,

"Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace
Of light diviner than the common sun
Sheds on the common earth, and all the place

"Was filled with magic sounds woven into one 340
Oblivious melody, confusing sense,
Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun;

"And, as I looked, the bright omnipresence
Of morning through the orient cavern flowed,
And the sun's image radiantly intense

"Burned on the waters of the well that glowed
Like gold, and threaded all the forest's maze
With winding paths of emerald fire; there stood

"Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze " 350
Of his own glory, on the vibrating
Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,

"A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling
Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn;
And the invisible rain did ever sing

"A silver music on the mossy lawn ;
And still before me on the dusky grass,
Iris her many-coloured scarf had drawn :

"In her right hand she bore a crystal glass,
Mantling with bright Nepenthe; the fierce splendour
Fell from her as she moved under the mass

360

"Of the deep cavern, and with palms so tender
Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow,
Glided along the river, and did bend her

"Head under the dark boughs, till like a willow,
Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream
That whispered with delight to be its pillow.

"As one enamoured is upborne in dream
O'er lily-paven lakes 'mid silver mist,
To wondrous music, so this Shape might seem

"Partly to tread the waves with feet which kissed
The dancing foam ; partly to glide along
The air which roughened the moist amethyst,

370

"Or the faint morning beams that fell among
The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees ;
And her feet ever, to the ceaseless song

"Of leaves, and winds, and waves, and birds, and bees,
And falling drops, moved in a measure new
Yet sweet, as on the summer-evening breeze,

"Up from the lake a shape of golden dew
Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon,
Dances i' the wind, where never eagle flew ;

380

"And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune
To which they moved, seemed as they moved, to blot
The thoughts of him who gazed on them ; and soon

"All that was, seemed as if it had been not ;
And all the gazer's mind was strewn beneath
Her feet like embers ; and she, thought by thought,

"Trampled its sparks into the dust of death ;
As Day upon the threshold of the East
Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath

390

"Of darkness re-illumine even the least
Of Heaven's living eyes—like day she came,
Making the night a dream; and ere she ceased

"To move, as one between desire and shame
Suspended, I said—'If, as it doth seem,
Thou comest from the realm without a name,

"'Into this valley of perpetual dream,
Shew whence I came, and where I am, and why:
Pass not away upon the passing stream.'

"'Arise and quench thy thirst,' was her reply.
And as a shut lily, stricken by the wand
Of dewy morning's vital alchemy,

40

"I rose; and, bending at her sweet command,
Touched with faint lips the cup she raised;
And suddenly my brain became as sand

"Where the first wave had more than half erased
The track of deer on desert Labrador;
Whilst the wolf, from which they fled amazed,

"Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore,
Until the second bursts;—so on my sight
Burst a new vision, never seen before;

"And the fair Shape waned in the coming light,
As veil by veil the silent splendour drops
From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite

"Of sunrise, ere it tinge the mountain-tops;
And as the presence of that fairest planet,
Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes

"That his day's path may end, as he began it,
In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent
Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it,

"Or the soft note in which his dear lament
The Brescian shepherd breathes, or the caress
That turned his weary slumber to content;

"So knew I in that light's severe excess
The presence of that Shape which on the stream
Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,

"More dimly than a day-appearing dream,
The ghost of a forgotten form of sleep,
A light of Heaven, whose half-extinguished beam

Through the sick day in which we wake to weep, 430
Glimmers, forever sought, forever lost;
So did that Shape its obscure tenour keep

"Beside my path, as silent as a ghost.
But the new Vision, and the cold bright car,
With solemn speed and stunning music, crost

"The forest; and as if from some dread war
Triumphantly returning, the loud million
Fiercely extolled the fortune of her star. /

"A moving arch of victory the vermilion
And green and azure plumes of Iris had 440
Built high over her wind-wingèd pavilion,

"And, underneath, ætherial glory clad
The wilderness, and far before her flew
The tempest of the splendour, which forbade

"Shadow to fall from leaf and stone; ^{all} the crew
Seemed in that light, like atomies to dance
Within a sunbeam;—some upon the new

"Embroidery of flowers, that did enhance
The grassy vesture of the desert, played,
Forgetful of the chariot's swift advance; 450

"Others stood gazing, till within the shade
Of the great mountain its light left them dim;
Others outspeeded it; and others made

"Circles around it, like the clouds that swim
Round the high moon in a bright sea of air;
And more did follow, with exulting hymn,

"The chariot and the captives fettered there:—
But all like bubbles on an eddying flood
Fell into the same track at last, and were

"Borne onward.—I among the multitude 460
Was swept: me, sweetest flowers delayed not long;
Me, not the shadow nor the solitude;

"Me, not that falling stream's Lethean song ;
 Me, not the phantom of that early Form,
 Which moved upon its motion :—but among

✓ The thickest billows of that living storm
 I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime
 Of that cold light, whose aurs too soon deform.

"Before the chariot had begun to climb
 The opposing steep of that mysterious dell, 470
 Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

"Of him whom from the lowest depths of hell,
 Through every paradise and through all glory,
 Love led serene, and who returned to tell,

"In words of hate and awe, the wondrous story
 How all things are transfigured except Love ;
 For deaf as is a sea, which wrath makes hoary,

"The world can hear not the sweet notes that move
 The sphere whose light is melody to lovers :—
 A wonder worthy of his rhyme. The grove 480

"Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers,
 The earth was grey with phantoms, and the air
 Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers

"A flock of vampire-bats before the glare
 Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening,
 Strange night upon some Indian isle ;—thus were

"Phantoms diffused around ; and some did fling
 Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,
 Behind them ; some like eaglets on the wing

"Were lost in the white day ; others like elves 490
 Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes
 Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves ;

"And others sate chattering like restless apes
 On vulgar hands,
 Some made a cradle of the ermined capes

"Of kingly mantles ; some across the tiar
 Of pontiffs sate like vultures ; others played
 Under the crown which girt with empire

"A baby's on an idiot's brow, and made
 Their nests in it. The old anatomies
 Sate hatching their bare broods under the shade 500

"Of demon wings, and laughed from their dead eyes
 To re-assume the delegated power
 Arrayed in which those worms did monarchize

"Who made this earth their charnel. Others more
 Humble, like falcons, sate upon the fist
 Of common men, and round their heads did soar ;

"Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist
 On evening marshes, thronged about the brow
 Of lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist ; — 510

"And others, like discoloured flakes of snow,
 On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair
 Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

"Which they extinguished ; and, like tears, they were
 A veil to those from whose faint lids they rained
 In drops of sorrow. I became aware

"Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stained
 The track in which we moved. After brief space,
 From every form the beauty slowly waned ;

"From every firmest limb and fairest face 520
 The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left
 The action and the shape without the grace

"Of life. The marble brow of youth was cleft
 With care ; and in those eyes where once hope shone,
 Desire, like a lioness bereft

"Of her last cub, glared ere it died ; each one
 Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly
 These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

"In autumn evening from a poplar-tree.
 Each like himself and like each other were 530
 At first ; but some, distorted, seemed to be

"Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air ;
 And of this stuff the car's creative ray
 Wrought all the busy phantoms that were there,

"As the sun shapes the clouds; thus on the way
Mask after mask fell from the countenance
And form of all; and long before the day

"Was old, the joy which waked like Heaven's glance
The sleepers in the oblivious valley, died;
And some grew weary of the ghastly dance,

540

"And fell, as I have fallen, by the way-side;—
Those soonest from whose forms most shadows past,
And least of strength and beauty did abide."

"Then, what is Life?" I cried.—The cripple cast
His eye upon the car, which now had rolled
Onward, as if that look must be the last,

And answered, "Happy those for whom the gold
Of"

CANCELLED OPENING OF THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

Out of the eastern shadow of the Earth
Amid the clouds upon its margin grey,
Scattered by Night to swathe in its bright birth

In gold and fleecy snow the infant Day,
The glorious Sun arose; beneath his light
The earth and all

POEMS OF 1814-15

STANZA, WRITTEN AT BRACKNELL

(MARCH 1814)

THY dewy looks sink in my breast ;
Thy gentle words stir poison there ;
Thou hast disturbed the only rest
That was the portion of despair !
Subdued to Duty's hard controul,
I could have borne my wayward lot :
The chains that bind this ruined soul
Had cankered then—but crushed it not.

STANZAS.—APRIL, 1814

I.

AWAY! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
Rapid clouds have drunk the last pale beam of even :
Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of
Heaven.
Pause not! The time is past! Every voice cries, Away!
Tempt not with one last tear thy friend's ungente mood :
Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy
stay :
Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

II.

Away, away! to thy sad and silent home ;
Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth ;
Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.

The leaves of wasted autumn-woods shall float around
thine head :

The blooms of dewy Spring shall gleam beneath thy
feet :

But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds
the dead,

Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and
peace may meet.

III.

The cloud-shadows of midnight possess their own repose,
For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the
deep :

Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows ;
Whatever moves, or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed
sleep.

Thou in the grave shalt rest :—yet till the phantoms flee
Which that house and heath and garden made dear to
thee erewhile,

Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings are
not free

From the music of two voices and the light of one
sweet smile.

TO HARRIET

(MAY 1814)

I.

THY look of love has power to calm
The stormiest passion of my soul ;
Thy gentle words are drops of balm
In Life's too bitter bowl ;
No grief is mine, but that alone
These choicest blessings I have known.

II.

Harriet ! if all who long to live
In the warm sunshine of thine eye,
That price beyond all pain must give,—
Beneath thy scorn to die ;
Then hear thy chosen own too late
His heart most worthy of thy hate.

III.

Be thou, then, one among mankind
Whose heart is harder not for state,—
Thou only virtuous, gentle, kind,
Amid a world of hate;
And by a slight endurance seal
A fellow-being's lasting weal.

IV.

For pale with anguish is his cheek,
His breath comes fast, his eyes are dim,
Thy name is struggling ere he speak,
Weak is each trembling limb;
In mercy let him not endure
The misery of a fatal cure.

V.

Oh, trust for once no erring guide!
Bid the remorseless feeling flee;
'Tis malice, 'tis revenge, 'tis pride,
'Tis anything but thee;
Oh, deign a nobler pride to prove,
And pity if thou canst not love.

TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT
GODWIN

(JUNE 1814)

I.

MINE eyes were dim with tears unshed;
Yes, I was firm—thus wert not thou;—
My baffled looks did yearn yet dread
To meet thy looks—I could not know
How anxiously they sought to shine
With soothing pity upon mine.

II.

To sit and curb the soul's mute rage
Which preys upon itself alone;
To curse the life which is the cage
Of fettered grief that dares not groan,
Hiding from many a careless eye
The scornéd load of agony:—

III.

Whilst thou alone, then not regarded,
 The thou alone should be:—
 To spend years thus, and be rewarded,
 As thou, sweet love, requited me
 When none were near—oh! I did wake
 From torture for that moment's sake.

IV.

Upon my heart thy accents sweet
 Of peace and pity fell like dew
 On flowers half dead;—thy lips did meet
 Mine tremblingly; thy dark eyes threw
 Their soft persuasion on my brain,
 Channing away its dream of pain.

V.

We are not happy, sweet! our state
 Is strange and full of doubt and fear;
 More need of words that ills abate;—
 Reserve or censure come not near
 Our sacred friendship, lest there be
 No solace left for thee and me.

VI.

Gentle and good and mild thou art,
 Nor can I live if thou appear
 Aught but thyself, or turn thine heart
 Away from me, or stoop to wear
 The mask of scorn, although it be
 To hide the love thou feel'st for me.

TO ———

YET look on me—take not thine eyes away,^{*}
 Which feed upon the love within mine own,
 Which is indeed but the reflected ray
 Of thine own beauty from my spirit thrown.
 Yet speak to me: thy voice is as the tone
 Of my heart's echo, and I think I hear
 That thou yet lovest me; yet thou alone

Like one before a mirror, without care
Of aught but thine own features, imaged there,

* * *

And yet I wear out life in watching thee,—
A toil so sweet at times; and thou indeed
Art kind when I am sick, and pitiest me.

ΔΑΚΡΥΣΙ ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ 'ΑΠΟΤΜΟΝ

I.

O H, there are spirits of the air,
And gem of the evening breeze,
And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
As star-beams among twilight trees :—
Such lovely ministers to meet
Oft hast thou turned from men thy lonely feet.

II.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs,
And moonlight seas, that are the voice
Of these inexplicable things,
Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice
When they did answer thee; but they
Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

III.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes
Beams that were never meant for thine,
Another's wealth :—tame sacrifice
To a fond faith! Still dost thou pine?
Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,
Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands?

IV.

Ah! wherefore didst thou build thine hope
On the false earth's inconstancy?
Did thine own mind afford no scope
Of love, or moving thoughts to thee,
That natural scenes or human smiles
Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles?

v.

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled
 Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted ;
 The glory of the moon is dead ;
 Night's ghosts and dreams have now departed ;
 Thine own soul still is true to thee,
 But changed to a foul fiend through misery.

vi.

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever
 Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,
 Dream not to chase ;—the mad endeavour
 Would scourge thee to severer pangs.
 Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,
 Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

MUTABILITY

I.

WE are as clouds that veil the midnight moon ;
 How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
 Streaking the darkness radiantly !—yet soon
 Night closes round, and they are lost forever :

II.

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings
 Give various response to each varying blast ;
 To whose frail frame no second motion brings
 One mood or modulation like the last.

III.

We rest :—a dream has power to poison sleep ;
 We rise :—one wandering thought pollutes the day ;
 We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep ;
 Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away :

IV.

It is the same !—For, be it joy or sorrow,
 The path of its departure still is free :
 Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow ;
 Nought may endure but Mutability.

ON DEATH

There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.—*Ecclesiastes*.

I.

THE pale, the cold, and the moony smile
Which the meteor beam of a starless night
Sheds on a lonely and sea-girt isle,
Ere the dawning of morn's undoubted light,
Is the flame of Life so fickle and wan
That flits round our steps till their strength is gone.

II.

O man ! hold thee on in courage of soul
Through the stormy shades of thy worldly way,
And the billows of cloud that around thee roll
Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day,
Where Hell and Heaven shall leave thee free
To the universe of Destiny.

III.

This world is the nurse of all we know,
This world is the mother of all we feel,
And the coming of death is a fearful blow
To a brain unencompassed with nerves of steel ;
When all that we know, or feel, or see,
Shall pass like an unreal mystery.

IV.

The secret things of the grave are there,
Where all but this frame must surely be ;
Though the fine-wrought eye and the wondrous ear
No longer will live to hear or to see
All that is great and all that is strange
In the boundless realm of unending change.

V.

Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death ?
Who lifteth the veil of what is to come ?
Who painteth the shadows that are beneath
The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb :
Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be
With the fears and the love for that which we see ?

A SUMMER-EVENING CHURCH-YARD

LECHDALE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

(SEPT. 1815)

I.

THE wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
 Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray ;
 And pallid Evening twines its beaming hair
 In duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day :
 Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men,
 Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

II.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,
 Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea ;
 Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,
 Responding to the charm with its own mystery.
 The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass
 Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

III.

Thou too, aerial Pile ! whose pinnacles
 Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
 Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells,
 Clothing in hues of Heaven thy dim and distant spire,
 Around whose lessening and invisible height
 Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

IV.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres :
 And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound
 Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,
 Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around
 And mingling with the still night and mute sky
 Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

V.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild
 And terrorless as this serenest night :
 Here could I hope, like some enquiring child
 Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight
 Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
 That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.

TO WORDSWORTH

POET of Nature, thou hast wept to know
 That things depart which never may return :
 Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
 Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
 These common woes I feel. One loss is mine
 Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore ;
 Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
 On some frail bark in Winter's midnight roar :
 Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
 Above the blind and battling multitude :
 In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
 Songs consecrate to truth and liberty ;—
 Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
 Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN ON
 THE FALL OF BONAPARTE

I HATED thee, fallen tyrant ! I did groan
 To think that a most unambitious slave,
 Like thou, shouldst dance and revel on the grave
 Of Liberty. Thou mightst have built thy throne
 Where it had stood even now : thou didst prefer
 A frail and bloody pomp which Time has swept
 In fragments towards oblivion. Massacre,—
 For this I prayed,—would on thy sleep have crept,
 Treason and Slavery, Rapine, Fear, and Lust,
 And stifled thee, their minister. I know
 Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,
 That Virtue owns a more eternal foe
 Than Force or Fraud : old Custom, legal Crime,
 And bloody Faith the foulest birth of Time.

LINES

(Nov. 1815 or 1816)

I.

THE cold earth slept below,
 Above the cold sky shone ;
 And all around,
 With a chilling sound,

From caves of ice and fields of snow,
The breath of night like death did flow
Beneath the sinking moon.

II.

The wintry hedge was black,
The green grass was not seen,
The birds did rest
On the bare thorn's breast,
Whose roots, beside the pathway track,
Had bound their folds o'er many a crack
Which the frost had made between.

III.

Thine eyes glowed in the glare
Of the moon's dying light ;
As a fen-fire's beam
On a sluggish stream
Gleams dimly—so the moon shone there,
And it yellowed the strings of thy raven hair
That shook in the wind of night.

IV.

The moon made thy lips pale, beloved ;
The wind made thy bosom chill ;
The night did shed
On thy dear head
Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
Might visit thee at will.

POEMS OF 1816

THE SUNSET

THERE late was One within whose subtle being,
As light and wind within some delicate cloud
That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,
Genius and Death contended. None may know
The sweetness of the joy which made his breath
Fail, like the trances of the summer air,
When, with the lady of his love, who then
First knew the unreserve of mingled being,
He walked along the pathway of a field,
Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er, 10
But to the west was open to the sky.
There now the sun had sunk; but lines of gold
Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points
Of the far level grass and nodding flowers,
And the old dandelion's hoary beard,
And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay
On the brown massy woods; and in the east
The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose
Between the black trunks of the crowded trees,
While the faint stars were gathering overhead.— 20
"Is it not strange, Isabel," said the youth,
"I never saw the sun? We will walk here
To-morrow; thou shalt look on it with me."

That night the youth and lady mingled lay
In love and sleep; but when the morning came
The lady found her lover dead and cold.
Let none believe that God in mercy gave
That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,
But year by year lived on:—in truth I think
Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles, 30
And that she did not die, but lived to tend
Her aged father, were a kind of madness,
If madness 'tis to be unlike the world.
For but to see her were to read the tale

Woven by some subtlest bard to make hard hearts
 Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief ;—
 Her eyes were black and lustreless and wan,
 Her eyelashes were worn away with tears,
 Her lips and cheeks were like things dead—so pale ;
 Her hands were thin, and through their wandering veins 40
 And weak articulations might be seen
 Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self
 Which one vexed ghost inhabits, night and day,
 Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee !

“ Inheritor of more than earth can give,
 Passionless calm and silence unproved,—
 Whether the dead find—oh, not sleep !—but rest,
 And are the uncomplaining things they seem,
 Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love ;
 Oh, that like thine, mine epitaph were—Peace !” 50
 This was the only moan she ever made.

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

I.

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power
 Floats, though unseen, amongst us,—visiting
 This various world with as inconstant wing
 As summer winds that creep from flower to flower ;
 Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,
 It visits with inconstant glance
 Each human heart and countenance ;
 Like hues and harmonies of evening,
 Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
 Like memory of music fled,
 Like aught that for its grace may be
 Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

II.

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate
 With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
 Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone ?
 Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
 This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate ?
 Ask why the sunlight not forever
 Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river ;
 Why aught should fail and fade that once is shewn ;

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY 153

Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom,—why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope.

III.

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
To sage or poet these responses given :
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavour :
Frail spells, whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,
Or music by the night-wind sent
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

IV.

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
Thou messenger of sympathies
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes ;
Thou, that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame !
Depart not as thy shadow came :
Depart not—lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

V.

While yet a boy, I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed :
I was not heard—I saw them not :—
When, musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,—
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me ;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy !

VI.

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
 To thee and thine: have I not kept the vow?
 With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
 I call the phantoms of a thousand Hours
 Each from his voiceless grave: they have in visioned bowers
 Of studious zeal or love's delight
 Outwatched with me the envious night:
 They know that never joy illumed my brow
 Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
 This world from its dark slavery,
 That thou, O awful LOVELINESS,
 Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

VII.

The day becomes more solemn and serene
 When noon is past: there is a harmony
 In Autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
 Which through the Summer is not heard or seen,—
 As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
 Thus let thy power, which like the truth
 Of Nature on my passive youth
 Descended, to my onward life supply
 Its calm,—to one who worships thee,
 And every form containing thee,
 Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind
 To fear himself, and love all humankind.

MONT BLANC

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

(JULY 1816)

I.

THE everlasting Universe of Things
 Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
 Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
 Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
 The source of human thought its tribute brings
 Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,
 Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
 In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
 Where waterfalls around it leap forever,
 Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
 Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II.

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—
 Thou many-coloured, many-voiced vale,
 Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
 Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams : awful scene,
 Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
 From the ice-gulphs that gird his secret throne,
 Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
 Of lightning thro' the tempest ; thou dost lie,
 Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging, 20
 Children of elder time, in whose devotion
 The chainless winds still come and ever come
 To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
 To hear—an old and solemn harmony ;
 Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep
 Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil
 Robes some unsculptured image ; the strange sleep
 Which, when the voices of the desert fail,
 Wraps all in its own deep eternity ;—
 Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion,— 30
 A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame ;
 Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
 Thou art the path of that unresting sound—
 Dizzy Ravine ! and when I gaze on thee,
 I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
 To muse on my own separate phantasy,
 My own, my human mind, which passively
 Now renders and receives fast influencings,
 Holding an unremitting interchange
 With the clear Universe of Things around ; 40
 One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
 Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
 Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
 In the still cave of the witch Poesy ;
 Seeking among the shadows that pass by—
 Ghosts of all things that are—some shade of thee,
 Some phantom, some faint image : till the breast
 From which they fled recalls them, thou art there !

III.

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
 Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber, 50
 And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
 Of those who wake and live.—I look on high ;
 Has some unknown Omnipotence unfurled

The veil of life and death? or do I lie
 In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep
 Spread far around and inaccessible
 Its circles? For the very spirit fails,
 Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
 That vanishes among the viewless gales!
 Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky, 60
 Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene.
 Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
 Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between
 Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
 Blue as the overhanging Heaven, that spread
 And wind among the accumulated steeps;
 A desert peopled by the storms alone,
 Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
 And the wolf tracks her there. How hideously
 Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high, 70
 Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene
 Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young
 Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea
 Of fire envelop once this silent snow?
 None can reply: all seems eternal now.
 The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
 Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
 So solemn, so serene, that man may be
 But for such faith with Nature reconciled;
 Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal 80
 Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
 By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
 Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV.

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
 Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
 Within the dædal earth; lightning, and rain,
 Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
 The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
 Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
 Holds every future leaf and flower;—the bound 90
 With which from that detested trance they leap;
 The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
 And that of him and all that his may be;
 All things that move and breathe, with toil and sound
 Are born and die; revolve, subside and swell.
 Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
 Remote, serene, and inaccessible:

And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
 On which I gaze, even these primeval mountains,
 Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep 100
 Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
 Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice
 Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
 Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
 A city of death, distinct with many a tower
 And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
 Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
 Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
 Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing
 Its destined path, or in the mangled soil 110
 Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down
 From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
 The limits of the dead and living world,
 Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
 Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil;
 Their food and their retreat forever gone,
 So much of life and joy is lost. The race
 Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
 Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
 And their place is not known. Below, vast caves 120
 Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
 Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling
 Meet in the Vale; and one majestic River,
 The breath and blood of distant lands, forever
 Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,
 Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

v.

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:—the Power is there,
 The still and solemn power of many sights,
 And many sounds, and much of life and death.
 In the calm darkness of the moonless nights, 130
 In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
 Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,
 Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
 Or the star-beams dart through them:—winds contend
 Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
 Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home
 The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
 Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
 Over the snow. The secret Strength of Things
 Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome 140
 Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!

And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
 If to the human mind's imaginings
 Silence and solitude were vacancy?

CANCELLED PASSAGE OF MONT BLANC

THERE is a voice, not understood by all,
 Sent from these desert caves It is the roar
 Of the rent ice-cliff which the sunbeams call,
 Plunging into the vale—it is the blast
 Descending on the pines: the torrents pour

* * * *

FRAGMENT : HOME

DEAR home, thou scene of earliest hopes and joys,
 The least of which wronged Memory ever makes
 Bitterer than all thine unremembered tears.

FRAGMENT : HELEN AND HENRY

* * * *

A shovel of his ashes took
 From the hearth's obscurest nook,
 Muttering mysteries as she went.
 Helen and Henry knew that Granny
 Was as much afraid of ghosts as any,
 And so they followed hard—
 But Helen clung to her brother's arm,
 And her own spasm made her shake.

POEMS OF 1817

MARIANNE'S DREAM

I.

A PALE Dream came to a Lady fair,
And said, "A boon, a boon, I pray"
I know the secrets of the air,
And things are lost in the glare of day,
Which I can make the sleeping see,
If they will put their trust in me.

II.

And thou shalt know of things unknown,
If thou wilt let me rest between
The veiny lids, whose fringe is thrown
Over thine eyes so dark and sheen : "
And half in hope, and half in fright,
The Lady closed her eyes so bright.

III.

At first all deadly shapes were driven
Tumultuously across her sleep,
And o'er the vast cope of bending Heaven
All ghastly-visaged clouds did sweep ;
And the Lady ever looked to spy
If the golden sun shone forth on high.

IV.

And as towards the east she turned,
She saw aloft in the morning air,
Which now with hues of sunrise burned,
A great black Anchor rising there ;
And wherever the Lady turned her eyes,
It hung before her in the skies.

V.

The sky was blue as the summer sea,
The depths were cloudless overhead,
The air was calm as it could be,
There was no sight or sound of dread,
But that black Anchor floating still
Over the piny eastern hill.

VI.

The Lady grew sick with a weight of fear,
To see that Anchor ever hanging,
And veiled her eyes; she then did hear
The sound as of a dim low clanging,
And looked abroad if she might know
Was it aught else, or but the flow
Of the blood in her own veins, to and fro.

VII.

There was a mist in the sunless air,
Which shook as it were with an earthquake shock,
But the very weeds that blossomed there
Were moveless, and each mighty rock
Stood on its basis steadfastly;
The Anchor was seen no more on high.

VIII.

But piled around, with summits hid
In lines of cloud at intervals,
Stood many a mountain pyramid
Among whose everlasting walls
Two mighty cities shone, and ever
Through the red mist their domes did quiver.

IX.

On two dread mountains, from whose crest,
Might seem, the eagle, for her brood,
Would ne'er have hung her dizzy nest,
Those tower-encircled cities stood.
A vision strange such towers to see,
Sculptured and wrought so gorgeously,
Where human art could never be.

X.

And columns framed of marble white,
 And giant fanes, dome over dome
 Piled, and triumphant gates, all bright
 With workmanship, which could not come
 From touch of mortal instrument,
 Shot o'er the vales, or lustre lent
 From its own shapes magnificent.

XI.

But still the Lady heard that clang
 Filling the wide air far away ;
 And still the mist whose light did hang
 Among the mountains shook alway,
 So that the Lady's heart beat fast,
 As half in joy, and half aghast,
 On those high domes her look she cast.

XII.

Sudden, from out that city sprung
 A light that made the earth grow red ;
 Two flames that each with quivering tongue
 Licked its high domes, and overhead
 Among those mighty towers and fanes
 Dropped fire, as a volcano rains
 Its sulphurous ruin on the plains.

XIII.

And hark ! a rush as if the deep
 Had burst its bonds ; she looked behind
 And saw over the western steep
 A raging flood descend, and wind
 Through that wide vale ; she felt no fear,
 But said within herself, " 'Tis clear
 These towers are Nature's own, and she
 To save them has sent forth the sea."

XIV.

And now those raging billows came
 Where that fair Lady sate, and she
 Was borne towards the showering flame
 By the wild waves heaped tumultuously,
 And on a little plank, the flow
 Of the whirlpool bore her to and fro.

xv.

The flames were fiercely vomited
From every tower and every dome,
And dreary light did widely shed
O'er that vast flood's suspended foam,
Beneath the smoke which hung its night
On the stained cope of Heaven's light.

xvi.

The plank whereon that Lady sate
Was driven thro' the chasms, about and about,
Between the peaks so desolate
Of the drowning mountains, in and out,
As the thistle-beard on a whirlwind sails—
While the flood was filling those hollow vales.

xvii.

At last her plank an eddy crost,
And bore her to the city's wall,
Which now the flood had reached almost ;
It might the stoutest heart appal
To hear the fire roar and hiss
Through the domes of those mighty palaces.

xviii.

The eddy whirled her round and round
Before a gorgeous gate, which stood
Piercing the clouds of smoke which bound
Its aery arch with light like blood ;
She looked on that gate of marble clear,
With wonder that extinguished fear.

xix.

For it was filled with sculptures rarest,
Of forms most beautiful and strange,
Like nothing human, but the fairest
Of wingèd shapes, whose legions range
Throughout the sleep of those that are,
Like this same Lady, good and fair.

xx.

And as she looked, still lovelier grew
Those marble forms ;—the sculptor, sure,
Was a strong spirit, and the hue
Of his own mind did there endure

After the touch, whose power had braided
Such grace, was in some sad change faded.

XXI.

She looked,—the flames were dim, the flood
Grew tranquil as a woodland river
Winding through hills in solitude ;
Those marble shapes then seemed to quiver,
And their fair limbs to float in motion,
Like weeds unfolding in the ocean.

XXII.

And their lips moved ; one seemed to speak,—
When suddenly the mountain crackt,
And through the chasm the flood did break
With an earth-uplifting cataract :
The statues gave a joyous scream,
And on its wings the pale thin Dream
Lifted the Lady from the stream.

XXIII.

The dizzy flight of that phantom pale
Waked the fair Lady from her sleep,
And she arose, while from the veil
Of her dark eyes the Dream did creep ;
And she walked about as one who knew
That sleep has sights as clear and true
As any waking eyes can view.

TO CONSTANTIA, SINGING

I.

CEASE, cease !—for such wild lessons madmen learn.
Thus to be lost, and thus to sink and die,
Perchance were death indeed !—Constantia, turn !
In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie ;
Even though the sounds its voice that were
Between [thy] lips are laid to sleep,
Within thy breath, and on thy hair
Like odour it is [lingering] yet,
And from thy touch like fire doth leap.
Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet :—
Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but not forget !

II.

A breathless awe, like the swift change
 Of dreams unscen, but felt in youthful slumbers,
 Wild, sweet, yet incommunicably strange,
 Thou breakest now in fast-ascending numbers.
 The cope of Heaven seems rent and cloven
 By the inchantment of thy strain,
 And on my shoulders wings are woven,
 To follow its sublime career,
 Beyond the mighty moons that wane
 Upon the verge of Nature's utmost sphere,
 Till the world's shadowy walls are past and disappear.

III.

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers
 O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings;
 The blood and life within those snowy fingers
 Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.
 My brain is wild, my breath comes quick—
 The blood is listening in my frame,
 And thronging shadows, fast and thick,
 Fall on my overflowing eyes;
 My heart is quivering like a flame;
 As morning dew, that in the sunbeam dies,
 I am dissolved in these consuming ecstasies.

IV.

I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee,
 Whilst, like the world-surrounding air, thy song
 Flows on, and fills all things with melody.—
 Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong,
 On which, like one in trance upborne,
 Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,
 Rejoicing like a cloud of morn:
 Now 'tis the breath of summer night,
 Which when the starry waters sleep,
 Round western isles, with incense-blossoms bright,
 Lingering, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.

FRAGMENT : TO ONE SINGING

MY spirit like a charmed bark doth swim
 Upon the liquid waves of thy [sweet singing],
 Far, far away into the regions dim

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR 165

Of rapture—as *<a>* boat, with swift sails winging
Its way adown some many-winding river,
Speeds thro' dark forests o'er the waters swinging.

TO CONSTANTIA

I.

THE red rose that drinks the fountain-dew
In the fragrant air of noon,
Grows pale and blue with altered hue—
In the gaze of the nightly moon ;
For the planet of Frost, so cold and bright,
Makes it wan with borrowed light.

II.

Such is my heart :—roses are fair,
And that at best a withered blossom ;
But thy false care did idly wear
Its withered leaves in a faithless bosom ;
And fed with love, like air and dew,
Its growth

FRAGMENT : TO MUSIC

SILVER key of the fountain of tears,
Where the spirit drinks till the brain is wild ;
Softest grave of a thousand fears,
Where their mother, Care, like a drowsy child,
Is laid asleep in flowers.

ANOTHER FRAGMENT TO MUSIC

NO, Music, thou are not the 'food of Love,'
Unless Love feeds upon its own sweet self,
Till it becomes all Music murmurs of.

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR

I.

THY country's curse is on thee, darkest crest
Of that foul, knotted, many-headed worm,
Which rends our Mother's bosom !—Priestly Pest !
Masked Resurrection of a buried Form !

II.

Thy country's curse is on thee ! Justice sold,
 Truth trampled, Nature's landmarks overthrown,
 And heaps of fraud-accumulated gold,
 Plead, loud as thunder, at Destruction's throne.

III.

And whilst that slow sure Angel, which aye stands
 Watching the beck of Mutability,
 Delays to execute her high commands,
 And, though a nation weeps, spares thine and thee,

IV.

Oh let a father's curse be on thy soul,
 And let a daughter's hope be on thy tomb,
 And both on thy grey head a leaden cowl,
 To weigh thee down to thine approaching doom !

V.

I curse thee by a parent's outraged love,
 By hopes long cherished and too lately lost,
 By gentle feelings thou couldst never prove,
 By griefs which thy stern nature never crost :

VI.

By those infantine smiles of happy light,
 Which were a fire within a stranger's hearth,
 Quenched even when kindled, in untimely night
 Hiding the promise of a lovely birth :

VII.

By those unpractised accents of young speech,
 Which he who is a father thought to frame
 To gentlest lore, such as the wisest teach ;—
Thou strike the lyre of mind ! Oh grief and shame !

VIII.

By all the happy see in children's growth—
 That undeveloped flower of budding years—
 —Sweetness and sadness interwoven both,
 —Source of the sweetest hopes and saddest fears :

IX.

By all the days under an hireling's care
 Of dull constraint and bitter heaviness ;
 Oh, wretched ye, if ever any were,—
 Sadder than orphans, yet not fatherless !

X.

By the false cant, which on their innocent lips
 Must hang like poison on an opening bloom,
 By the dark creeds which cover with eclipse
 Their pathway from the cradle to the tomb :

XI.

By thy most impious Hell, and all its terror,
 By all the grief, the madness, and the guilt
 Of thine impostures, which must be their error,—
 That sand on which thy crumbling power is built :

XII.

By thy complicity with lust and hate,
 Thy thirst for tears, thy hunger after gold,
 The ready frauds which ever on thee wait,
 The servile arts in which thou hast grown old :

XIII.

By thy most killing sneer, and by thy smile,
 By all the snares and nets of thy black den,
 And—for thou canst outweep the crocodile—
 By thy false tears—those millstones braining men :

XIV.

By all the hate which checks a father's love,
 By all the scorn which kills a father's care,
 By those most impious hands that dared remove
 Nature's high bounds ; by thee—and by despair—

XV

Yes, the despair which bids a father groan,
 And cry, " My children are no longer mine ;
 The blood within those veins may be mine own,
 But, Tyrant, their polluted souls are thine : "—

XVI

I curse thee, though I hate thee not ;—O slave !
 If thou couldst quench the earth-consuming Hell
 Of which thou art a demon, on thy grave
 This curse should be a blessing. Fare thee well !

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

I.

THE billows on the beach are leaping around it,
 The bark is weak and frail ;
 The sea looks black, and the clouds that bound it
 Darkly strew the gale.
 Come with me, delightful child,
 Come with me ; though the wave is wild,
 And the winds are loose, we must not stay,
 Or the slaves of the law may rend thee away.

II.

They have taken thy brother and sister dear,
 They have made them unfit for thee ;
 They have withered the smile and dried the tear
 Which should have been sacred to me.
 To a blighting faith and a cause of crime
 They have bound them slaves in youthly prime,
 And they will curse my name and thee
 Because we fearless are and free.

III.

Come thou, beloved as thou art ;
 Another sleepeth still
 Near thy sweet mother's anxious heart,
 Which thou with joy shalt fill,
 With fairest smiles of wonder thrown
 On that which is indeed our own,
 And which in distant lands will be
 The dearest playmate unto thee.

IV.

Fear not the tyrants will rule forever,
 Or the priests of the evil faith ;
 They stand on the brink of that raging river,
 Whose waves they have tainted with death.

It is fed from the depth of a thousand dells,
 Around them it foams and rages and swells;
 And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
 Like wrecks on the surge of Eternity.

v

Rest, rest, shriek not, thou gentle child!
 The rocking of the boat thou fearest,
 And the cold spray and the clamour wild?—
 There, sit between us two, thou dearest—
 Me and thy mother: well we know
 The storm at which thou tremblest so,
 With all its dark and hungry giaves,
 Less cruel than the savage slaves
 Who hunt us o'er these sheltering waves.

vi.

This hour will in thy memory
 Be a dream of days forgotten long;
 We soon shall dwell by the azure sea
 Of serene and golden Italy,
 Or Greece, the Mother of the free.
 And I will teach thine infant tongue
 To call upon those heroes old
 In their own language, and will mould
 Thy growing spirit in the flame
 Of Grecian lore; that by such name
 A patriot's birthright thou mayst claim!

CANCELLED PASSAGES OF THE POEM
 TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

(1)

THE world is now our dwelling-place;
 Wher'er the earth one fading trace
 Of what was great and free does keep,
 That is our home!
 * Mild thoughts of man's ungentle race
 Shall our contented exile reap:
 For who that in some happy place
 His own free thoughts can freely chase
 By woods and waves, can clothe his face
 In cynic smiles? Child! we shall weep

(2)

this lament;
 The memory of thy grievous wrong
 Will fade
 But Genius is omnipotent
 To hallow

ON FANNY GODWIN

HER voice did quiver as we parted,
Yet knew I not that heart was broken
From which it came,—and I departed
Heeding not the words then spoken.
Misery—O Misery,
This world is all too wide for thee.

DEATH

I,

THEY die—the dead return not. Misery
Sits near an open grave and calls them over,
A Youth with hoary hair and haggard eye.
They are the names of kindred, friend, and lover,
Which he so feebly calls: they all are gone—
Fond wretch, all dead!—Those vacant names alone,
This most familiar scene, my pain,
These tombs,—alone remain.

XL.

Misery, my sweetest friend—oh, weep no more!
 Thou wilt not be consoled:—I wonder not!
 For I have seen thee from thy dwelling's door
 Watch the calm sunset with them, and this spot
 Was even as bright and calm, but transitory;
 And now thy hopes are gone, thy hair is hoary;
 This most familiar scene, my pain,
 These tombs,—alone remain.

LINES

(Nov. 5, 1817)

THAT time is dead forever, child,
Drowned, frozen, dead forever!
We look on the past
And stare aghast

A HATE-SONG

171

At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast,
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled
To death on life's dark river.

The stream we gazed on then, rolled by ;
Its waves are unreturning ;
But we yet stand
In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears which fade and flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

LINES TO A CRITIC

HONEY from silkworms who can gather,
Or silk from the yellow bee ?
The grass may grow in winter weather
As soon as hate in me.

Hate men who cant, and men who pray,
And men who rail like thee ;
An equal passion to repay
They are not coy like me.

Or seek some slave of power and gold,
To be thy dear heart's mate ;
Thy love will move that bigot cold,
Sooner than me thy hate.

A passion like the one I prove
Cannot divided be ;
I hate thy want of truth and love—
How should I then hate thee ?

A HATE-SONG

A HATER he came and sat by a ditch,
And he took out an old cracked lute ;
And he sang a song which was more of a screech
'Gainst a woman that was a brute.

OZYMANDIAS

I MET a traveller from an antique land
 Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away."

OZYMANDIAS

(FRAGMENT OF AN EARLIER DRAFT)

[THERE stands by Nile a single pedestal,
 On] which two trunkless legs of crumbling stone
 Quiver thro' sultry mist; beneath the sand
 Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown
 And wrinkled lips impatient of command
 Betray some sculptor's art, whose

FRAGMENT: "MIGHTY EAGLE"

MIGHTY eagle! thou that soarest
 O'er the misty mountain forest,
 And amid the light of morning
 Like a cloud of glory hiest,
 And when night descends defiest
 The embattled tempests' warning!

FRAGMENT: OTHO

I/

THOU wert not, Cassius, and thou couldst not be,
 Last of the Romans,—though thy memory claim
 From Brutus his own glory, and on thee
 Rests the full splendour of his sacred fame;

FRAGMENT: THE SOARING MIND 173

Nor he who dared make the foul tyrant quail
 Amid his cowering senate with thy name,—
 Though thou and he were great ; it will avail
 To thine own fame that Otho's should not fail.

II.

'Twill wrong thee not—thou wouldst, if thou couldst feel,
 Abjure such envious fame : great Otho died
 Like thee—he sanctified his country's steel,
 At once the tyrant and tyrannicide,
 In his own blood. A deed it was to bring
 Tears from all men—though full of gentle pride,
 Such pride as from impetuous love may spring,
 That will not be refused its offering.

* * * *

FRAGMENTS

PROBABLY INTENDED FOR OTHO

(1)

Those whom nor power, nor lying faith, nor toil,
 Nor Custom, queen of many slaves, makes blind,
 Have ever grieved that man should be the spoil
 Of his own weakness, and with earnest mind
 Fed hopes of its redemption ; these recur
 Chastened by deathful victory now, and find
 Foundations in this foulest age, and stir
 Me whom they cheer to be their minister.

(2)

DARK is the realm of grief ; but human things
 Those may not know who cannot weep for them.

FRAGMENT: THE SOARING MIND

ONCE more descend
 The shadows of my soul upon mankind ;
 For to those hearts with which they never blend,
 Thoughts are but shadows which the flashing mind
 From the swift clouds which track its flight of fire,
 Casts on the gloomy world it leaves behind.

FRAGMENT : A CLOUD-CHARIOT

OH that a chariot of cloud were mine!
 Of cloud which the wild tempest weaves in air,
 When the moon over the ocean's line
 Is spreading the locks of her bright grey hair.
 Oh that a chariot of cloud were mine!
 I would sail on the waves of the billowy wind
 To the mountain peak and the rocky lake,
 And the

FRAGMENT : TO ONE FREED FROM PRISON

FOR me, my friend, if not that tears did tremble
 In my faint eyes, and that my heart beat fast
 With feelings which make rapture pain resemble,
 Yet, from thy voice that Falsehood starts aghast
 I thank thee. Let the tyrant keep
 His chains and tears; yea, let him weep
 With rage to see thee freshly risen,
 Like strength from slumber, from the prison,
 In which he vainly hoped the soul to bind
 Which on the chains must prey that fetter humankind.

FRAGMENT : SATAN AT LARGE

A GOLDEN-WINGED Angel stood
 Before the Eternal Judgment-seat:
 His looks were wild, and Devils' blood
 Stained his dainty hands and feet.
 the Father and the Son
 Knew that strife was now begun.
 They knew that Satan had broken his chain,
 And with millions of demons in his train,
 Was ranging over the world agam.
 Before the Angel had told his tale,
 A sweet and a creeping sound
 Like the rushing of wings was heard around;
 And suddenly the lamps grew pale—
 The lamps, before the Archangels seven,
 —That burn continually in Heaven.

FRAGMENT : UNSATISFIED DESIRE

TO thirst and find no fill—to [wail] and wander
 With short unsteady steps—to pause and ponder—
 To feel the blood run thro' the veins, and tingle
 Where busy thought and blind sensation mingle;
 To nurse the image of unfelt caresses
 Till [dizzy] imagination just possesses
 The half-created shadow:—then all the night
 Sick

FRAGMENT : LOVE IMMORTAL.

WEALTH and dominion fade into the mass
 Of the great sea of human right and wrong,
 When once from our possession they must pass;
 But love, though misdirected, is among
 The things which are immortal, and surpass
 All that frail stuff which will be, or which was.

FRAGMENT : ELUSIVE THOUGHTS

MY thoughts arise and fade in solitude;
 The verse that would invest them melts away
 Like moonlight in the Heaven of spreading day;
 How beautiful they were! how firm they stood,
 Flecking the starry sky like woven pearl!

FRAGMENTS

FROM THE BODLEIAN MS.

(1)

SERENE, in his unconquerable might
 Endued, the Almighty King,—his steadfast throne
 Encompassed unapproachably with power
 And darkness and deep solitude and awe,—
 Stood like a black cloud on some aery cliff
 Embosoming its lightning: in his sight
 Unnumbered glorious spirits trembling stood
 Like slaves before their Lord: prostrate around
 Heaven's multitudes hymned everlasting praise.

(2)

Sort pillows for the fiends,
Of power to renovate their blighted pinions
For

(3)

ADDRESS TO THE HUMAN MIND

Thou living light, that in thy rainbow hues
Clothest this naked world ; and over Sea
And Earth and air, and all the shapes that be
In peopled darkness of this wondrous world,
The Spirit of thy glory dost diffuse ;
truth thou Vital Flame,
Mysterious Thought, that in this mortal frame
Of things, with unextinguished lustre burnest,
Now pale and faint, now high to Heaven upcurled ;
That e'er as thou dost languish, still returnest, 10
And ever

Before the before the Pyramids

So soon as from the Earth formless and rude
One living step had chased drear Solitude,
Thou wert, Thought ; thy brightness charmed the lids
Of the vast snake Eternity, who kept
The tree of good and evil.—

(4)

ARISE, sweet Mary, rise—
For the time is passing now

(5)

Heigh-ho, wisdom and folly :
Heigh-ho, Edward and Molly ;
He'll wear the willow and she'll wear the holly.
There's dear Mr. Mag going wild for our Dolly ;
Let us follow him out to his in the colly
And bother him out of his melancholy.

POEMS OF 1818

TO THE NILE

MONTH after month the gathered rains descend
Drenching yon secret Æthiopian dells,
And from the desert's ice-girt pinnacles
Where Frost and Heat in strange embraces blend
On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend.
Girt there with blasts and meteors, Tempest dwells
By Nile's aerial urn, with rapid spells
Urging those waters to their mighty end.
O'er Egypt's land of Memory floods are level,
And they are thine, O Nile: and well thou knowest 10
That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil
And fruits and poisons spring where'er thou flowest.
Beware, O Man—for knowledge must to thee
Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be.

PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES

LISTEN, listen, Mary mine,
To the whisper of the Apennine.
It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,
Or like the sea on a northern shore,
Heard in its raging ebb and flow
By the captives pent in the cave below.
The Apennine in the light of day
As a mighty mountain dim and grey,
Which between the earth and sky doth lay;
But when night comes, a chaos dread 10
On the dim starlight then is spread,
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm,
Shrouding

THE PAST

I.

WILT thou forget the happy hours
 Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,
 Heaping over their corpses cold
 Blossoms and leaves instead of mould?
 Blossoms which were the joys that fell,
 And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

II.

Forget the dead, the past? Oh yet
 There are ghosts that may take revenge for it,—
 Memories that make the heart a tomb,
 Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
 And with ghastly whispers tell
 That joy, once lost, is pain.

ON A FADED VIOLET

I.

THE odour from the flower is gone,
 Which like thy kisses, breathed on me...
 The colour from the flower is flown,
 Which glowed of thee, and only thee!

II.

A shrivelled, lifeless, vacant form,
 It lies on my abandoned breast—
 And mocks the heart which yet is warm,
 With cold and silent rest.

III.

I weep—my tears revive it not!
 I sigh—it breathes no more on me;
 Its mute and uncomplaining lot
 Is such as mine should be.

SONNET

LIFT not the painted veil which those who live
 Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,
 And it but mimic all we would believe,
 —With colours idly spread:—behind, lurk Fear

THE WOODMAN AND NIGHTINGALE 179

And Hope, twin destinies ; who ever weave
Their shadows o'er the chasm sightless and drear.
I knew one who had lifted it : he sought,
For his lost heart was tender, things to love,
But found them not, alas ! nor was there aught
The world contains, the which he could approve. 10
Through the unheeding many he did move,
A splendour among shadows, a bright blot
Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove
For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.

THE WOODMAN AND THE NIGHTINGALE

A WOODMAN whose rough heart was out of tune
(I think such hearts yet never came to good)
Hated to hear, under the stars or moon

One nightingale in an interfluous wood
Sate the hungry dark with melody ;—
And as a vale is watered by a flood,

Or as the moonlight fills the open sky
Struggling with darkness—as a tuberosé
Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie

Like clouds above the flower from which they rose,— 10
The singing of that happy nightingale
In this sweet forest, from the golden close

Of evening, till the star of dawn may fail,
Was interfused upon the silentness ;
The folded roses and the violets pale

Heard her within their slumbers ; the abyss
Of Heaven with all its planets ; the dull ear
Of the night-cradled Earth ; the loneliness

Of the circumfluous waters,—every sphere
And every flower and beam and cloud and wave, 20
And every wind of the mute atmosphere,

And every beast stretched in its rugged cave,
And every bird lulled on its mossy bough,
And every silver moth fresh from the grave

Which is its cradle—ever from below
 Aspiring like one who loves too fair, too far,
 To be consumed within the purest glow

Of one serene and unapproachèd star,
 As if it were a lamp of earthly light,—
 Unconscious, as some human lovers are,

30

Itself how low, how high beyond all height
 The Heaven where it would perish!—and every form
 That worshipped in the temple of the night

Was awed into delight, and by the charm
 Girt as with an interminable zone,
 Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm

Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion
 Out of their dreams; harmony became love
 in every soul but one.

* * * *

And so this man returned with axe and saw
 At evening close from killing the tall tree,
 The soul of whom by Nature's gentle law

40

Was each a wood-nymph, and kept ever green
 The pavement and the roof of the wild copse,
 Chequering the sunlight of the blue serene

With jagged leaves,—and from the forest tops
 Singing the winds to sleep—or weeping oft
 Fast showers of aerial water-drops

Into their mother's bosom, sweet and soft,—
 Nature's pure tears which have no bitterness;—
 Around the cradles of the birds aloft

50

They spread themselves into the loveliness
 Of fan-like leaves, and over pallid flowers
 Hang like moist clouds:—or, where high branches kiss,

Make a green space among the silent bowers,
 Like a vast fane in a metropolis,
 Surrounded by the columns and the towers

All overwrought with branch-like traceries
 In which there is religion, and the mute
 Persuasion of unkindled melodies,

60

INVOCATION TO MISERY

181

Odours and gleams and murmurs, which the lute
Of the blind pilot-spirit of the blast
Stirs as it sails, now grave and now acute,

Wakening the leaves and waves, ere it has past
To such brief unison as on the brain
One tone, which never can recur, has cast,

One accent never to return again.

* * * *

The world is full of Woodmen who expel
Love's gentle Dryads from the haunts of life,
And vex the nightingales in every dell.

70

INVOCATION TO MISERY

I.

COME, be happy!—sit by me,
Shadow-vested Misery:
Coy, unwilling, silent bride,
Mourning in thy robe of pride,
Desolation—deified!

II.

Come, be happy!—sit near me:
Sad as I may seem to thee,
I am happier far than thou,
Lady, whose imperial brow
Is endiademed with woe.

III.

Misery¹ we have known each other,
Like a sister and a brother
Living in the same lone home,
Many years: we must live some
Hours or ages yet to come.

IV.

'Tis an evil lot, and yet
Let us make the best of it;
If love can live when pleasure dies,
We two will love, till in our eyes
This heart's Hell seem Paradise.

V.

Come, be happy!—lie thee down
On the fresh grass newly mown,
Where the grasshopper doth sing
Merrily—one joyous thing
In a world of sorrowing!

VI.

There our tent shall be the willow,
And thine arm shall be my pillow;
Sounds and odours sorrowful
Because they once were sweet, shall lull
Us to slumber, deep and dull.

VII.

Ha! thy frozen pulses flutter
With a love thou darest not utter.
Thou art murmuring—thou art weeping:
Was thine icy bosom leaping
While my burning heart was sleeping?

VIII.

Kiss me;—oh! thy lips are cold:
Round my neck thine arms enfold.
They are soft, but chill and dead;
And thy tears upon my head
Burn like points of frozen lead.

IX.

Hasten to the bridal bed—
Underneath the grave 'tis spread:
In darkness may our love be hid,
Oblivion be our coverlid—
We may rest, and none forbid.

X.

Clasp me till our hearts be grown
Like two lovers into one;
Till this dreadful transport may
Like a vapour fade away,
In the sleep that lasts alway.

XI.

We may dream, in that long sleep,
That we are not those who weep;

Even as Pleasure dreams of thee,
Life-deserting Misery,
Thou mayst dream of her with me.

VII.

Let us laugh, and make our mirth,
At all shadows on the Earth,
As dogs bay the moonlight clouds,
Which, like spectres wrapt in shrouds,
Pass o'er night in multitudes.

XIII.

All the wide world, beside us
Shew like multitudinous
Puppets passing from a scene;
What but mockery can they mean,
Where I am—where Thou hast been?

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

I.

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright;
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might;
The breath of the moist earth is light
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean-floods,
The City's voice itself is soft, like Solitude's.

II.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone;
The lightning of the nortide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

III.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
 Nor peace within nor calm around,
 Nor that content surpassing wealth
 The sage in meditation found,
 And walked with inward glory crowned;
 Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
 Others I see whom these surround;
 Smiling they live and call life pleasure;—
 To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

IV.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
 Even as the winds and waters are;
 I could lie down like a tired child,
 And weep away the life of care
 Which I have borne and yet must bear,
 Till death like sleep might steal on me,
 And I might feel in the warm air
 My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
 Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

V.

Some might lament that I were cold,
 As I, when this sweet day is gone,
 Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
 Insults with this untimely moan;
 They might lament—for I am one
 Whom men love not,—and yet regret;
 Unlike this day, which, when the sun
 Shall on its stainless glory set,
 Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

SCENE FROM "TASSO"

MADDALO, *a Courtier*,
 MALFIGLIO, *a Post*,

PIGNA, *a Minister*,
 ALBANO, *an Usher*.

MADDALO

NO access to the Duke! You have not said
 That the Count Maddalo would speak with him?

PIGNA

Did you inform his Grace that Signor Pigna
 Waits with state-papers for his signature?

MALPIGLIO

The Lady Leonora cannot know
That I have written a sonnet to her fame,
In which I Venus and Adonis
You should not take my gold and serve me not.

ALBANO

In truth I told her, and she smiled and said,
"If I am Venus, thou, coy Poesy, 10
Art the Adonis whom I love, and he
The Erymanthian boar that wounded him."
Oh, trust to me, Signor Malpighio,
Those nods and smiles were favours worth the zechin.

MALPIGLIO

The words are twisted in some double sense
That I reach not: the smiles fell not on me.

PIGNA

How are the Duke and Duchess occupied?

ALBANO

Buried in some strange talk. The Duke was leaning,
His finger on his brow, his lips unclosed.
The Princess sate within the window-seat, 20
And so her face was hid; but on her knee
Her hands were clasped, veined and pale as snow,
And quivering. Young Tasso, too, was there.

MADDALO

Thou seest on whom from thine own worshipped Heaven
Thou drawest down smiles: they did not rain on thee.

MALPIGLIO

Would they were parching lightnings, for his sake
On whom they fell!

SONG FOR "TASSO"

I.

I LOVED—alas! our life is love;
But when we cease to breathe and move
I do suppose love ceases too.
I thought, but not as now I do,

Keen thoughts and bright of linkèd lore,—
Of all that men had thought before,
And all that Nature shews, and more.

II.

And still I love, and still I think,
But strangely, for my heart can drink
The dregs of such despair, and live,
And love ;
And if I think, my thoughts come fast,
I mix the present with the past,
And each seems uglier than the last.

III.

Sometimes I see before me flee
A silver spirit's form, like thee,
O Leonora, and I sit
 still watching it,
Till by the grated casement's ledge
It fades, with such a sigh, as sedge
Breathes o'er the breezy streamlet's edge.

FRAGMENT : TO MARY ———

O H, Mary dear, that you were here
With your brown eyes bright and clear,
And your sweet voice, like a bird
Singing love to its lone mate
In the ivy-bower disconsolate ;
Voice the sweetest ever heard !
And your brow more
Than the sky
Of this azure Italy.
Mary dear, come to me soon,—
I am not well whilst thou art far ;
As sunset to the spherèd moon,
As twilight to the western star,
Thou, belovèd, art to me.

10

Oh, Mary dear, that you were here ;
The Castle echo whispers " Here ! "

FRAGMENT: ADDRESSED TO BYRON

O MIGHTY mind, in whose deep stream this age
Shakes like a reed in the unheeding storm,
Why dost thou curb not thine own sacred rage?

FRAGMENT: TO SILENCE

SILENCE! Oh well are Death and Sleep and Thou
Three brethren named, the guardians gloomy-winged
Of one abyss, where life, and truth, and joy
Are swallowed up. Yet spare me, Spirit—pity me!—
Until the sounds I hear become my soul,
And it has left these faint and weary limbs,
To track along the lapses of the air
This wandering melody, until it rests
Among lone mountains in some

FRAGMENT: THE STREAM'S MARGIN

THE fierce beasts of the woods and wildernesses
Track not the steps of him who drinks of it;
For the light breezes, which for ever fleet
Around its margin, heap the sand thereon.

FRAGMENT: A LOST LEADER

MY head is wild with weeping for a grief
Which is the shadow of a gentle mind.
I walk into the air, (but no relief
To seek,—or haply, if I sought, to find;
It came unsought); to wonder that a chief
Among men's spirits should be cold and blind.

FRAGMENT: THE VINE

FLOURISHING vine, whose kindling clusters glow
Beneath the autumnal sun, none taste of thee;
For thou dost shroud a ruin, and below
The rotting bones of dead antiquity

FRAGMENT: "GREAT SPIRIT"¹

GREAT Spirit whom the sea of boundless mind
Nurtures within its unimagined caves;
In which thou sittest solemnly reclined,
Giving a voice to its mysterious waves:
Which breathes within the winds that wake mankind
Like golden-winged Love, whose footstep paves

¹ Hitherto placed among Poems of 1821. The last two lines, and two corrections in lines 1 and 3, are from the Bodleian MS —Ed

POEMS OF 1819

LINES WRITTEN DURING THE CASTLEREAGH ADMINISTRATION

I.

CORPSES are cold in the tomb ;
Stones on the pavement are dumb ;
Abortions are dead in the womb,—
And their mothers look pale, like the death-white shore
Of Albion, free no more.

Peterloo

II.

Her sons are as stones in the way ;
They are masses of senseless clay ;
They are trodden, and move not away ;—
The abortion with which she travaileth,
Is Liberty, smitten to death.

III.

Then trample and dance, thou Oppressor !
For thy victim is no redresser ;
Thou art sole lord and possessor
Of her corpses, and clods, and abortions—they pave
Thy path to the grave.

IV.

Hearest thou the festival din
Of Death, and Destruction, and Sin,
And Wealth crying *Havock* ! within ?
'Tis the Bacchanal triumph which makes Truth dumb—
Thine Epithalamium.

V.

Ay, marry thy ghastly wife !
Let Fear, and Disquiet, and Strife
Spread thy couch in the chamber of Life :
Marry Ruin, thou Tyrant ! and Hell be thy guide
To the bed of the bride !

SONG

TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND

I.

MEN of England, wherefore plough
 For the lords who lay ye low?
 Wherefore weave with toil and care,
 The rich robes your tyrants wear?

II.

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,
 From the cradle to the grave,
 Those ungrateful drones who would
 Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

III.

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge
 Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,
 That these stingless drones may spoil
 The forced produce of your toil?

IV.

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
 Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
 Or what is it ye buy so dear
 With your pain and with your fear?

V.

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
 The wealth ye find, another keeps;
 The robes ye weave, another wears;
 The arms ye forge, another bears.

VI.

Sow seed,—but let no tyrant reap;
 Find wealth,—let no impostor heap;
 Weave robes,—let not the idle wear;
 Forge arms,—in your defence to bear.

VII.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells;
 In halls ye deck another dwells.
 Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see
 The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

VIII.

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair
England be your sepulchre.

TO SIDMOUTH AND CASTLEREAGH

AS from an ancestral oak
Two empty ravens sound their clarion,
Yell by yell, and croak by croak,
When they scent the noonday smoke
Of fresh human carrion :—

As two gibbering night-birds flit
From their bowers of deadly yew,
Through the night to frighten it,
When the moon is in a fit,
And the stars are none, or few :—

As a shark and dog-fish wait
Under an Atlantic isle,
For the negro-ship whose freight
Is the theme of their debate,
Wrinkling their red gills the while—

Are ye, two vultures sick for battle,
Two scorpions under one wet stone,
Two bloodless wolves whose dry throats rattle,
Two crows perched on the murrained cattle,
Two vipers tangled into one.

ENGLAND IN 1819

AN old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,—
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn—mud from a muddy spring ;
Rulers, who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow ;
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—
An army, which liberticide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield ;
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay ;

Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed ;
 A Senate,—Time's worst statute unrepealed,—
 Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may
 Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

FRAGMENT : TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND

PEOPLE of England, ye who toil and groan,
 Who reap the harvests which are not your own,
 Who weave the clothes which your oppressors wear,
 And for your own take the inclement air ;
 Who build warm houses
 And are like gods who give them all they have,
 And nurse them from the cradle to the grave ;

* * * *

What men gain fairly—that they should possess,
 And children may inherit idleness
 From him who earns it. This is understood ;
 Private injustice may be general good.
 But he who gains by base and armed wrong,

Or guilty fraud, or base compliances,
 May be despoiled ; even as a stolen dress
 Is stript from a convicted thief, and he
 Left in the nakedness of infamy.

A NEW NATIONAL ANTHEM

I.

GOD prosper, speed, and save,
 God raise from England's grave
 Her murdered Queen !
 Pave with swift victory
 The steps of Liberty,
 Whom Britons own to be
 Immortal Queen.

II.

See, she comes throned on high,
On swift Eternity!

God save the Queen!
Millions on millions wait
Firm, rapid, and elate,
On her majestic state!
God save the Queen!

III.

She is thine own pure soul
Moulding the mighty whole,—
God save the Queen!
She is thine own deep love
Rained down from Heaven above,—
Wherever she rest or move,
God save our Queen!

IV.

'Wilder her enemies
In their own dark disguise,—
God save our Queen!
All earthly things that dare
Her sacred name to bear,
Strip them, as kings are, bare;
God save the Queen!

V.

Be her eternal throne
Built in our hearts alone,—
God save the Queen!
Let the oppressor hold
Canopied seats of gold;
She sits enthroned of old
O'er our hearts Queen.

•

VI.

Lips touched by seraphim
Breathe out the choral hymn
"God save the Queen!"
Sweet as if Angels sang,
Loud as that trumpet's clang
Wakening the world's dead gang,—
God save the Queen!

AN ODE

WRITTEN OCTOBER, 1819, BEFORE THE SPANIARDS HAD
RECOVERED THEIR LIBERTY

I.

ARISE, arise, arise!
There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread;
Be your wounds like eyes
To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.
What other grief were it just to pay?
Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they;
Who said they were slain on the battle-day?

II.

Awaken, awaken, awaken!
The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes;
Be the cold chains shaken
To the dust where your kindred repose, repose:
Their bones in the grave will start and move,
When they hear the voices of those they love,
Most loud in the holy combat above.

III.

Wave, wave high the banner!
When Freedom is riding to conquest by:
Though the slaves that fan her
Be Famine and Toil, giving sigh for sigh.
And ye who attend her imperial car,
Lift not your hands in the banded war,
But in her defence whose children ye are.

IV.

Glory, glory, glory,
To those who have greatly suffered and done!
Never name in story
Was greater than that which ye shall have won.
Conquerors have conquered their foes alone,
Whose revenge, pride, and power they have overthrown:
Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.

V.

Bind, bind every brow
With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine:
Hide the blood-stains now
With hues which sweet Nature has made divine—

ODE TO HEAVEN

195

Green strength, azure hope, and eternity :
But let not the pansy among them be ;
Ye were injured, and that means memory.

VI.

[Gather, oh gather,
Foeman and friend in love and peace !
Waves sleep together
When the blasts that called them to battle cease
For fingleless Power, grown tame and mild,
Is at play with Freedom's fearless child,—
The dove and the serpent reconciled !]

ODE TO HEAVEN

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

FIRST SPIRIT

PALACE-ROOF of cloudless nights !
Paradise of golden lights !
Deep, immeasurable, vast,—
Which art now, and which wert then ;
Of the present and the past,
Of the eternal where and when,
Presence-chamber, temple, home ;
Ever-canopying dome
Of acts and ages yet to come !

Glorious shapes have life in thee,—
Earth, and all earth's company ;
Living globes which ever throng
Thy deep chasms and wildernesses ;
And green worlds that glide along ;
And swift stars with flashing tresses ;
And icy moons most cold and bright,
And mighty suns beyond the Night,
Atoms of intensest light.

10

Even thy name is as a god,
Heaven ! for thou art the abode
Of that Power which is the glass
Wherein man his nature sees.
Generations as they pass
Worship thee with bended knees.
Their unremaining gods and they
Like a river roll away :
Thou remainest such—alway

20

SECOND SPIRIT

Thou art but the mind's first chamber,
 Round which its young fancies clamber,
 Like weak insects in a cave
 Lighted up by stalactites;
 But the portal of the grave,
 Where a world of new delights
 Will make thy best glories seem
 But a dim and noonday gleam
 From the shadow of a dream!

30

THIRD SPIRIT

Peace! the abyss is wreathed with scorn
 At your presumption, atom-born!
 What is Heaven? and what are ye
 Who its brief expanse inherit?
 What are suns and spheres which flee
 With the instinct of that Spirit
 Of which ye are but a part?
 Drops which Nature's mighty heart
 Drives through thinnest veins. Depart!

40

What is Heaven? a globe of dew,
 Filling in the morning new
 Some eyed flower whose young leaves waken
 On an unimagined world:
 Constellated suns unshaken,
 Orbits measureless, are furled
 In that frail and fading sphere,
 With ten millions gathered there,
 To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

50

AN EXHORTATION¹

I.

CAMELIONS feed on light and air:
 Poets' food is love and fame: a
 If in this wide world of care
 Poets could but find the same
 With as little toil as they,
 Would they ever change their hue
 As the light camelions do,
 Suiting it to every ray
 Twenty times a day?

¹ Perhaps written in 1820.—Ed.

II.

Poets are on this cold earth,
 As camelions might be,
 Hidden from their early birth
 In a cave beneath the sea ; ,
 Where light is, camelions change :
 Where love is not, poets do :
 Fame is love disguised : if few
 Find either, never think it strange
 That poets range.

III.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power
 A poet's free and heavenly mind :
 If bright camelions should devour
 Any food but beams and wind,
 They would grow as earthly soon
 As their brother lizards are.
 Children of a sunnier star,
 Spirits from beyond the moon,
 Oh, refuse the boon !

ODE TO THE WEST WIND¹

I.

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes : O thou,
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

¹ This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foregaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathizes with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it.

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
 With living hues and odours plain and hill.

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
 Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II.

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion, ^a
 Loose clouds like Earth's decaying leaves are shed, ^b
 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean, ^c

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread ^a
 On the blue surface of thine airy surge, ^a
 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head ^b

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge ^a
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height ^a
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge ^a

Of the dying Year, to which this closing night ^b
 Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre, ^a
 Vaulted with all thy congregated might ^b

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere ^a
 Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear! ^a

III.

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
 The blue Mediterranean, where ~~he~~ ^{he} lay, ~~perishing~~
 Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a ~~purice~~ ^{purice}-isle in Baia's bay, ~~under~~ ^{under} ^d
 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
 The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
 The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: lameless, and swift, and proud.

V.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened Earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

ON THE MEDUSA OF LEONARDO DA VINCI

IN THE FLORENTINE GALLERY

I.

It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky,
 Upon the cloudy mountain-peak supine ;
 Below, far lands are seen tremblingly ;
 Its horror and its beauty are divine.
 Upon its lips and eyelids seems to lie
 Loveliness like a shadow, from which shine,
 Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath,
 The agonies of anguish and of death.

II.

Yet it is less the horror than the grace
 Which turns the gazer's spirit into stone,
 Whereon the lineaments of that dead face
 Are graven, till the characters be grown
 Into itself, and thought no more can trace ;
 'Tis the melodious hues of beauty thrown
 Athwart the darkness and the glare of pain,
 Which humanize and harmonize the strain.

III.

And from its head as from one body grow,
 As grass out of a watery rock,
 Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow
 And their long tangles in each other lock,
 And with unending involutions shew
 Their mailèd radiance, as it were to mock
 The torture and the death within, and saw
 The solid air with many a ragged jaw.

IV.

And from a stone beside, a poisonous eft
 Peeps idly into those Gorgonian eyes ;
 Whilst in the air a ghastly bat, bereft
 Of sense, has fitted with a mad surprise
 Out of the cave this hideous light had cleft,
 And he comes hastening like a moth that hies
 After a taper ; and the midnight sky
 Flares, a light more dread than obscurity.

V.

'Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror ;
 For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare
 Kindled by that inextricable error,
 Which makes a thrilling vapour of the air
 Become a and ever-shifting mirror
 Of all the beauty and the terror there—
 A woman's countenance, with serpent locks,
 Gazing in death on Heaven from those wet rocks.

THE INDIAN SERENADE

I.

I ARISE from dreams of thee
 In the first sweet sleep of night,
 When the winds are breathing low,
 And the stars are burning bright :
 I arise from dreams of thee,
 And a spirit in my feet
 Hath led me—who knows how ?
 To thy chamber window, sweet !

II.

The wandering airs they faint
 On the dark, the silent stream ;
 The Champak odours fail
 Like sweet thoughts in a dream ;
 The nightingale's complaint,
 It dies upon her heart,
 As I must die on thine,
 Oh, belovèd as thou art !

III.

Oh lift me from the grass !
 I die ! I faint ! I fail !
 Let thy love in kisses rain
 On my lips and eyelids pale.
 My cheek is cold and white, alas !
 My heart beats loud and fast,—
 Oh ' press it close to thine again,
 Where it will break at last.

TO SOPHIA

I.

THOU art fair, and few are fairer
 Of the nymphs of earth or ocean.
 They are robes that fit the wearer—
 Those soft limbs of thine, whose motion
 Ever falls and shifts and glances,
 As the life within them dances.

II.

Thy deep eyes, a double planet,
 Gaze the wisest into madness
 With soft clear fire. The winds that fan it
 Are those thoughts of tender gladness
 Which, like zephyrs on the billow,
 Make thy gentle soul their pillow.

III.

If whatever face thou paintest
 In those eyes, grows pale with pleasure,
 If the fainting soul is faintest
 When it hears thy harp's wild measure,
 Wonder not that when thou speakest,
 Of the weak my heart is weakest.

IV.

As dew beneath the wind of morning,
 As the sea which whirlwinds waken,
 As the birds at thunder's warning,
 As aught mute yet deeply shaken,
 As one who feels an unseen spirit,
 Is my heart when thine is near it.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

I.

THE fountains mingle with the river,
 And the rivers with the ocean;
 The winds of Heaven mix forever
 With a sweet emotion;

Nothing in the world is single;
 All things by a law divine
 In one another's being mingle;—
 Why not I with thine?

II.

See the mountains kiss high Heaven,
 And the waves clasp one another;
 No sister flower would be forgiven
 If it disclaimed its brother;
 And the sunlight clasps the earth,
 And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
 What are all these kissings worth,
 If thou kiss not me?

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

(With what truth may I say—
 Roma! Roma! Roma!
 Non è più come era prima!)

I.

MY lost William, thou in whom
 Some bright spirit lived, and did
 That decaying robe consume
 Which its lustre faintly hid,—
 Here its ashes find a tomb,
 But beneath this pyramid
 Thou art not—if a thing divine
 Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine
 Is thy mother's grief and mine.

II.

Where art thou, my gentle child?
 Let me think thy spirit feeds,
 With its life intense and mild,
 The love of living leaves and weeds,
 Among these tombs and ruins wild;—
 Let me think that through low seeds
 Of sweet flowers and sunny grass,
 Into their hues and scents may pass
 A portion

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

THY little footsteps on the sands
 Of a remote and lonely shore ;
 The twinkling of thine infant hands
 Where now the worm will feed no more :
 Thy mingled look of love and glee
 When we returned to gaze on thee :

TO MARY SHELLEY

MY dearest Mary, wherefore hast thou gone,
 And left me in this dreary world alone !
 Thy form is here indeed—a lovely one—
 But thou art fled, gone down the dreary road,
 That leads to Sorrow's most obscure abode ;
 Thou sittest on the hearth of pale despair,
 where
 For thine own sake I cannot follow thee.

TO MARY SHELLEY

THE world is dreary,
 And I am weary
 Of wandering on without thee, Mary ;
 A joy was erewhile
 In thy voice and thy smile,
 And 'tis gone, when I should be gone too, M. ry.

FRAGMENT : "FOLLOW"

* * * *
FOLLOW to the deep wood's weeds,
 Follow to the wild-briar dingle,
 Where we sink to intermingle,
 And the violet tells her tale
 To the odour-scented gale,
 For they two have enough to do
 Of such work as I and you. ?

THE BIRTH OF PLEASURE

AT the creation of the Earth
 Pleasure, that divinest birth,
 From the soil of Heaven did rise,
 Wrapt in sweet wild melodies—
 Like an exhalation wreathing
 To the sound of air low-breathing
 Through Æolian pines, which make
 A shade and shelter to the lake
 Whence it rises soft and slow ;
 Her life-breathing did flow
 In the harmony divine
 Of an ever-lengthening line
 Which enwrapt her perfect form
 With a beauty clear and warm.

FRAGMENT : TO-DAY

AND who feels discord now or sorrow ?
 Love is the universe to-day :
 These are the slaves of dim to-morrow,
 Darkening Life's labyrinthine way.

FRAGMENT : "A GENTLE STORY

A GENTLE story of two lovers young,
 Who met in innocence and died in sorrow,
 And of one selfish heart, whose rancour clung
 Like curses on them ; are ye slow to borrow
 The lore of truth from such a tale ?
 Or in this world's deserted vale,
 Do ye not see a star of gladness
 Pierce the shadows of its sadness,
 When ye are told that love is a light sent
 From Heaven, which none shall quench, to cheer the
 innocent ?

FRAGMENT : LOVE'S ATMOSPHERE

THERE is a warm and gentle atmosphere
 About the form of one we love, and thus
 As in a tender mist our spirits are
 Wrapt in the of that which is to us
 The health of life's own life.

FRAGMENT : THE POET'S LOVER

I AM as a spirit who has dwelt
 Within his heart of hearts; and I have felt
 His feelings, and have thought his thoughts, and known
 The inmost converse of his soul,—the tone
 Unheard but in the silence of his blood,
 When all the pulses in their multitude
 Image the trembling calm of summer seas.
 I have unlocked the golden melodies
 Of his deep soul, as with a master-key,
 And loosened them and bathed myself therein—
 Even as an eagle in a thunder-mist,
 Clothing his wings with lightning,

FRAGMENT : A MYSTERY

IS it that in some brighter sphere
 We part from friends we meet with here?
 Or do we see the Future pass
 Over the Present's dusky glass?
 Or what is that that makes us seem
 To patch up fragments of a dream,
 Part of which comes true, and part
 Beats and trembles in the heart?

FRAGMENT : FOREBODINGS

IS not to-day enough? Why do I peer
 Into the darkness of the day to come?
 Is not to-morrow even as yesterday?
 And will the day that follows change thy doom?
 Few flowers grow upon thy wintry way;
 And who waits for thee in that cheerless home
 Whence thou hast fled, whither thou must return
 Charged with the load that makes thee faint and mourn?

FRAGMENT : TRANSIENT THOUGHTS

YE gentle visitations of calm thought—
 Moods like the memories of happier earth,
 Which come arrayed in thoughts of little worth,
 Like stars in clouds by the weak winds unwrought,
 But that the clouds depart and stars remain,
 While they remain, and ye, alas, depart!

FRAGMENT : A SERPENT ASLEEP 207

FRAGMENT : POETRY AND MUSIC

HOW sweet it is to sit and read the tales
Of mighty poets, and to hear the while
Sweet music, which when the attention fails
Fills the dim pause

FRAGMENT : THE TOMB OF MEMORY

AND where is truth? On tombs? for such to thee
Has been my heart—and thy dead memory
Has lain from childhood, many a changeful year,
Unchangingly preserved and buried there.

FRAGMENT : SONG OF FURIES

I.

WHEN a lover clasps his fairest,
Then be our dread sport the rarest.
Their caresses were like the chaff
In the tempest, and be our laugh
His despair—her epitaph!

II.

When a mother clasps her child,
Watch till dusty Death has piled
His cold ashes on the clay;
She has loved it many a day—
She remains,—it fades away.

FRAGMENT : A SERPENT ASLEEP

WAKE the serpent not—lest he
Should not know the way to go;—
Let him crawl, which yet lies sleeping,
Through the deep grass of the meadow!
Not a bee shall hear him creeping,
Not a may-fly shall awaken
From its cradling blue-bell shaken,
Not the starlight as he's sliding
Through the grass with silent gliding.

FRAGMENT : RAIN AND WIND

THE fitful alternations of the rain,
 When the chill wind, languid as with pain
 Of its own heavy moisture, here and there
 Drives through the grey and beamless atmosphere.

FRAGMENT : A TALE UNTOLD

ONE sung of thee who left the tale untold,
 Like the false dawns which perish in the bursting :
 Like empty cups of wrought and dædal gold,
 Which mock the lips with air, when they are thirsting.

FRAGMENT : TO ITALY

AS the sunrise to the night,
 As the north wind to the clouds,
 As the earthquake's fiery flight,
 Ruining mountain solitudes,
 Everlasting Italy,
 Be those hopes and fears on thee.

FRAGMENT : WINE OF EGLANTINE

I AM drunk with the honey-wine
 Of the moon-unfolded eglantine,
 Which fairies catch in hyacinth bowls :—
 The bats, the dormice, and the moles
 Sleep in the walls or under the sward
 Of the desolate Castle yard ;
 And when 'tis spilt on the summer earth
 Or its fumes arise among the dew,
 Their *jocund dreams* are full of mirth,
 They gibber their joy in sleep ; for few
 Of the fairies bear those bowls so few !

FRAGMENT : A ROMAN'S CHAMBER

IN the cave which wild weeds cover
 Wait for thine ætherial lover ;
 For the pallid moon is waning,
 O'er the spiral cypress hanging,
 And the moon no cloud is staining.

It was once a Roman's chamber,
 Where he kept his darkest revels,
 And the wild weeds twine and clamber;
 It was then a chasm for devils.

FRAGMENT : ROME AND NATURE

R OME has fallen,—ye see it lying
 Heaped in undistinguished ruin:
 Nature is alone undying.

FRAGMENT : O PILLOW COLD

O PILLOW cold and wet with tears,
 Thou breathest sleep no more!

FRAGMENTS

FROM THE BODLEIAN MS.

(1)

W HEN a Nation screams aloud
 Like an eagle from the cloud,
 * * * *
 Watch the look askance and old—
 See neglect and falsehood fold

(2)

THE [living frame which sustains my soul]
 Is [sinking beneath the fierce controul]:
 Down through the lampless deep of song
 I am drawn and driven along.

POEMS OF 1820

A VISION OF THE SEA

TIS the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
 Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale :
 From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
 And when Lightning is loosed, like a deluge from Heaven,
 She sees the black trunks of the water-spouts spin,
 And bend, as if Heaven was ruining in,
 Which they seemed to sustain with their terrible mass
 As if ocean had sunk from beneath them : they pass
 To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
 And the waves and the thunders made silent around 10
 Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now tossed
 Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
 In the skirts of the thunder-cloud : now down the sweep
 Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
 It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale
 Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
 Dim mirrors of ruin, hang gleaming about ;
 While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
 Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron
 With splendour and terror the black ship environ, 20
 Or, like sulphur-flakes hurled from a mine of pale fire,
 In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
 The pyramid-billows with white points of brine
 In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
 As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea.

The great ship seems splitting ! it cracks as a tree
 While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
 Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has past.
 The intense thunder-balls which are raining from Heaven
 Have shattered its mast, and it stands black and riven. 30
 The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk
 On the living sea rolls, an inanimate bulk,
 Like a corpse on the clay which is hungering to fold
 Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
 One deck is burst up by the waters below,
 And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow

O'er the lakes of the desert! Who sits on the other?
 Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
 Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those
 Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose, 40
 In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold;
 (What now makes them tame, is what then made them
 bold;)

Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
 The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank,—
 Are these all?

Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain
 On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
 Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
 And there seemed to be fire in the beams of the moon;
 Till a lead-coloured fog gathered up from the deep,
 Whose breath was quick pestilence; then, the cold sleep 50
 Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,
 O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
 With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast
 Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast
 Down the deep, which closed on them above and around,
 And the sharks and the dog-fish their grave-clothes un-
 bound,

And were gluttled like Jews with this manna rained down
 From God on their wilderness. One after one
 The mariners died; on the eve of this day,
 When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array, 60
 But seven remained. Six the thunder has smitten,
 And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written
 His scorn of the embalmer; the seventh, from the deck
 An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back,
 And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck.

No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair
 Than Heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
 It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea,
 She clasps a bright child on her upgathered knee;
 It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder 70
 Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder
 It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near,—
 It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
 Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high,
 The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye;
 Whilst its mother's is lustreless. "Smile not, my child,
 But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
 Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,—
 So dreadful since thou must divide it with me!

Dream, sleep! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed, 80
 Will it rock thee not, infant? 'Tis beating with dread!
 Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we,
 That when the ship sinks we no longer may be?
 What! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more?
 To be after life what we have been before?

Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those
 eyes,

Those lips, and that hair, all that smiling disguise
 Thou yet wearest, sweet spirit,—which I, day by day,
 Have so long called my child, but which now fades
 away

Like a rainbow, and I the fall'n shower?"

Lo! the ship
 Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip;
 The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine
 Crawling inch by inch on them; hair, ears, limbs, and
 eyne,

Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse cry
 Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously,
 And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
 Rebounding, like thunder from crag to cave,
 Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,
 Hurried on by the might of the hurricane:

The hurricane came from the west, and past on 100
 By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
 Transversely dividing the stream of the storm;

As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
 Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste,
 Black as a cormorant the screaming blast,
 Between ocean and Heaven, like an ocean, past,
 Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
 Which, based on the sea and to Heaven upcurled,
 Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
 The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain, 110
 As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag:

And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
 Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has past,
 Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast;
 They are scattered like foam on the torrent; and where
 The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air
 Of clear morning the beams of the sunrise flow in,
 Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
 Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate
 They encounter, but interpenetrate. 120

And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
 And the caverns of cloud are torn up by the day,

And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings
 Lulled by the motion and murmurings,
 And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea ;
 And overhead glorious, but dreadful to see,
 The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
 Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
 The deep calm of blue Heaven dilating above,
 And, like passions made still by the presence of Love, 130
 Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide
 Tremulous with soft influence ; extending its tide
 From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
 Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with Heaven's azure
 smile,
 The wide world of waters is vibrating.

Where

Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay
 One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
 With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
 Stain the clear air with sunbows ; the jar, and the rattle
 Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress 140
 Of the snake's adamantinousness ;
 And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
 Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins
 Swoln with rage, strength, and effort ; the whirl and the
 splash

As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash
 The thin winds and soft waves into thunder ; the screams
 And hissings, crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean-streams,
 Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
 A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
 The fin-winged tomb of the victor. The other 150
 Is winning his way from the fate of his brother,
 To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat
 Advances ; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
 Urge on the keen keel, the brine foams. At the stern
 Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn
 In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on
 To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,—
 'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone, —
 Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.
 With her left hand she grasps it impetuously, 160
 With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
 Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere,
 Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
 Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
 Like a meteor of light o'er the waters! Her child
 Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring ; so smiled

The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
 The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
 Whilst

THE CLOUD

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams ;
 I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noonday dreams.
 From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
 The sweet buds every one,
 When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.
 I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under, 10
 And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
 And their great pines groan aghast ;
 And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
 Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
 Lightning my pilot sits ;
 In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,—
 It struggles and howls at fits ; 20
 Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
 This pilot is guiding me,
 Lured by the love of the genii that move
 In the depths of the purple sea ;
 Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
 Over the lakes and the plains,
 Wherever he dream under mountain or stream
 The Spirit he loves remains ;
 And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains. 30

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
 And his burning plumes outspread,
 Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
 When the morning star shines dead :
 As on the jag of a mountain crag,
 Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
 An eagle alit one moment may sit
 In the light of its golden wings.
 And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
 Its ardours of rest and of love, 40

And the crimson pall of eve may fall
 From the depth of Heaven above,
 With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
 As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
 Whom mortals call the moon,
 Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
 By the midnight breezes strewn ;
 And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
 Which only the angels hear, 50
 May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
 The stars peep behind her and peer ;
 And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
 Like a swarm of golden bees,
 When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
 Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
 Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
 Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
 And the moon's with a girdle of pearl ; 60
 The volcanos are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
 When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
 From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
 Over a torrent sea,
 Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
 The mountains its columns be.
 The triumphal arch through which I march
 With hurricane, fire, and snow,
 When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
 Is the million-coloured bow ; 70
 The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
 While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
 And the nursling of the sky ;
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;
 I change, but I cannot die.
 For after the rain, when with never a stain
 The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
 And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams,
 Build up the blue dome of air, 80
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
 And out of the caverns of rain,
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
 I arise and unbuild it again.

TO A SKYLARK

I.

HAIL to thee, blithe Spirit!—
 Bird thou never wert!—
 That from Heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

II.

Higher still and higher
 From the earth thou springest
 Like a cloud of fire;
 The blue deep thou wingest,
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

III.

In the golden lightning
 Of the sunken sun,
 O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
 Thou dost float and run;
 Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

IV.

The pale purple even
 Melts around thy flight;
 Like a star of Heaven,
 In the broad daylight
 Thou art unseen,—but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

V.

Keen as are the arrows
 Of that silver sphere,
 Whose intense lamp narrows
 In the white dawn clear,
 Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there:

VI.

All the earth and air
 With thy voice is loud,
 As, when Night is bare,
 From one lonely cloud
 The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

VII.

What thou art we know not ;
 What is most like thee ?
 From rainbow-clouds there flow not
 Drops so bright to see
 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

VIII.

Like a Poet hidden
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not :

IX.

Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace-tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour
 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower :

X.

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its aerial hue
 Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view :

XI.

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged
 thieves.

XII.

Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass ;
 Rain-awakened flowers,
 All that ever was
 Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

XIII.

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
 , What sweet thoughts are thine ;
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine :

XIV.

Chorus hymeneal,
 Or triumphal chaunt,
 Matched with thine, would be all
 But an empty vaunt,
 A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

XV.

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain ?
 What fields or waves or mountains ?
 What shapes of sky or plain ?
 What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ?

XVI.

With thy clear keen joyance
 Languor cannot be :
 Shadow of annoyance
 Never came near thee :
 Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety :

XVII.

Waking or asleep
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream,
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?

XVIII.

We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not :
 Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught ;
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought ;

XIX.

Yet if we could scorn
 Hate and pride and fear;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

XX.

Better than all measures
 Of delightful sound—
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

XXI.

Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow
 The world should listen then—as I am listening now.

ARETHUSA

I.

ARETHUSA arose
 From her couch of snows
 In the Acroceraunian mountains,—
 From cloud and from crag,
 With many a jag,
 Shepherding her bright fountains.
 She leapt down the rocks,
 With her rainbow locks
 Streaming among the streams;—
 Her steps paved with green
 The downward ravine
 Which slopes to the western gleams:
 And gliding and springing,
 She went, ever singing,
 In murmurs as soft as sleep;
 The Earth seemed to love her,
 And Heaven smiled above her,
 As she lingered towards the deep.

II.

Then Alpheus bold,
 On his glacier cold,
 With his trident the mountains strook;
 And opened a chasm
 In the rocks;—with the spasm
 All Erymanthus shook.
 And the black south wind
 It unsealed behind
 The urns of the silent snow,
 And earthquake and thunder
 Did rend in sunder
 The bars of the springs below:
 And the beard and the hair
 Of the River-god were
 Seen through the torrent's sweep,
 As he followed the light
 Of the fleet nymph's flight
 To the brink of the Dorian deep.

III.

“ Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!
 And bid the deep hide me,
 For he grasps me now by the hair!”
 The loud Ocean heard,
 To its blue depth stirred,
 And divided at her prayer;
 And under the water
 The Earth's white daughter
 Fled like a sunny beam;
 Behind her descended
 Her billows, unblended
 With the brackish Dorian stream:—
 Like a gloomy stain
 On the emerald main
 Alpheus rushed behind,—
 As an eagle pursuing
 A dove to its ruin
 Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

IV.

Under the bowers
 Where the Ocean Powers
 Sit on their pearl'd thrones;

SONG OF PROSERPINE

221

Through the coral woods
 Of the weltering floods,
 Over heaps of unvalued stones :
 Through the dim beams
 Which amid the streams
 Weave a net-work of coloured light ;
 And under the caves
 Where the shadowy waves
 Are as green as the forest's night :—
 Outspeeding the shark,
 And the sword-fish dark,—
 Under the Ocean's foam,
 And up through the rifts
 Of the mountain cliffs
 They past to their Dorian home.

v.

And now from their fountains
 In Enna's mountains,
 Down one vale where the morning basks,
 Like friends once parted
 Grown single-hearted,
 They ply their watery tasks.
 At sunrise they leap
 From their cradles steep
 In the cave of the shelving hill ;
 At noontide they flow
 Through the woods below
 And the meadows of Asphodel ;
 And at night they sleep
 In the rocking deep
 Beneath the Ortygian shore ;—
 Like spirits that lie
 In the azure sky
 When they love but live no more.

SONG OF PROSERPINE

WHILE GATHERING FLOWERS ON THE
 PLAIN OF ENNA

i.

SACRED Goddess, Mother Earth,
 Thou from whose immortal bosom,
 Gods, and men, and beasts have birth,

Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom,—
 Breathe thine influence most divine
 On thine own child, Proserpine.

II.

If with mists of evening dew
 Thou dost nourish these young flowers
 Till they grow, in scent and hue,
 Fairest children of the Hours,
 Breathe thine influence most divine
 On thine own child, Proserpine.

HYMN OF APOLLO

I.

THE sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,
 Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries
 From the broad moonlight of the sky,
 Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,—
 Waken me when their Mother, the grey Dawn,
 Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

II.

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,
 I walk over the mountains and the waves,
 Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam ;
 My footsteps pave the clouds with fire ; the caves
 Are filled with my bright presence, and the air
 Leaves the green earth to my embraces bare.

III.

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
 Decent, that loves the night and fears the day ;
 All men who do or even imagine ill
 Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
 Good minds and open actions take new might,
 Until diminished by the reign of night.

IV.

I feed the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers
 With their atherial colours ; the Moon's globe
 And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
 Are cinctured with my power as with a robe ;
 Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine,
 Are portions of one power, which is mine.

V.

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven,
 Then with unwilling steps I wander down
 Into the clouds of the Atlantic even ;
 For grief that I depart they weep and frown :
 What look is more delightful than the smile
 With which I soothe them from the western isle ?

VI.

I am the eye with which the Universe
 Beholds itself and knows it is divine ;
 All harmony of instrument or verse,
 All prophecy, all medicine is mine,
 All light of art or nature ;—to my song,
 Victory and praise in its own right belong.

HYMN OF PAN

I.

FROM the forests and highlands
 We come, we come ;
 From the river-girt islands,
 Where loud waves are dumb
 Listening my sweet pipings.
 The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
 The bees on the bells of thyme,
 The birds on the myrtle-bushes,
 The cicale above in the lime,
 And the lizards below in the grass,
 Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,
 Listening my sweet pipings.

II.

Liquid Penëus was flowing,
 And all dark Tempe lay
 In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing
 The light of the dying day,
 Speeded by my sweet pipings.
 The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
 And the Nymphs of the woods and the waves,
 To the edge of the moist river-lawns,
 And the brink of the dewy caves,

And all that did then attend and follow
 Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,
 With envy of my sweet pipings.

III.

I sang of the dancing stars,
 I sang of the dædal Earth,
 And of Heaven—and the giant wars,
 And Love, and Death, and Birth,—
 And then I changed my pipings,—
 Singing how down the vale of Menalus
 I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed :
 Gods and men, we are all deluded thus !
 It breaks in our bosom and then we bleed :
 All wept, as I think both ye now would,
 If envy or age had not frozen your blood,
 At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

THE QUESTION

I.

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,
 Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring,
 And gentle odours led my steps astray,
 Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
 Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
 Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
 Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
 But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

II.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets ;
 Daisies, those pearly Arcturi of the earth,
 The constellated flower that never sets ;
 Faint oxlips ; tender bluebells, at whose birth
 The sod scarce heaved ; and that tall flower that wets—
 Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth—
 Its mother's face with Heaven's collected tears,
 When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

III.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
 Green cow-bind and the moonlight-coloured May,
 And cherry blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
 Was the bright dew yet drained not by the Day ;

And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
 With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray;
 And flowers azure, black and streaked with gold,
 Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

IV.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
 There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked with white,
 And starchy river-buds among the sedge,
 And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
 Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
 With moonlight beams of their own watery light;
 And bulrushes and reeds, of such deep green
 As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

V.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
 I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
 That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
 Were mingled or opposed,—the like array
 Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
 Within my hand;—and then, elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
 That I might there present it!—Oh! to whom?

THE TWO SPIRITS

AN ALLEGORY

FIRST SPIRIT

O THOU, who plumed with strong desire
 Wouldst float above the earth, beware!
 A Shadow tracks thy flight of fire—
 Night is coming!
 Bright are the regions of the air,
 And among the winds and beams
 It were delight to wander there—
 Night is coming!

SECOND SPIRIT

The deathless stars are bright above;
 If I would cross the shade of night,
 Within my heart is the lamp of love,
 And that is day!

And the moon will smile with gentle light
 On my golden plumes where'er they move ;
 The meteors will linger round my flight
 And make night day.

FIRST SPIRIT

But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken
 Hail and lightning and stormy rain ;
 See, the bounds of the air are shaken—
 Night is coming !
 The red swift clouds of the hurricane
 Yon declining sun have overtaken,
 The clash of the hail sweeps over the plain—
 Night is coming !

20

SECOND SPIRIT

I see the light, and I hear the sound ;
 I'll sail on the flood of the tempest dark
 With the calm within and the light around
 Which makes night day :
 And thou, when the gloom is deep and stark,
 Look from thy dull earth, slumber-bound ;
 My moon-like flight thou then may'st mark
 On high, far away.

30

Some say, there is a precipice
 Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin
 O'er piles of snow and chasms of ice
 'Mid Alpine mountains ;
 And that the languid storm pursuing
 That wingèd shape forever flies
 Round those hoar branches, aye renewing
 Its aëry fountains.

40

Some say, when nights are dry and clear,
 And the death-dews sleep on the morass,
 Sweet whispers are heard by the traveller,
 Which make night day :
 And a silver shape like his early love doth pass
 Upborne by her wild and glittering hair,
 And when he awakes on the fragrant grass,
 He finds night day.

TO ———

I.

I FEAR thy kisses, gentle maiden,
Thou needest not fear mine;
My spirit is too deeply laden
Ever to burthen thine.

II.

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion,
Thou needest not fear mine;
Innocent is the heart's devotion
With which I worship thine.

AUTUMN

A DIRGE

I.

THE warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are
dying,
And the Year
On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
Is lying;
Come, Months, come away,
From November to May,
In your saddest array;
Follow the bier
Of the dead cold Year,
And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

II.

The chill rain is falling, the nupt worm is crawling,
The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling
For the Year;
The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone
To his dwelling;
Come, Months, come away;
Put on white, black, and grey;
Let your light sisters play:—
Ye, follow the bier
Of the dead cold Year,
And make her grave green with tear on tear.

STUDY FOR "AUTUMN, A DIRGE" (?)

FROM THE BODLEIAN MS.

THE death-knell is ringing,
 The raven is singing,
 The earth-worm is creeping,
 The mourners are weeping,—
 Ding-dong, bell.

LIBERTY

I.

THE fiery mountains answer each other ;
 Their thunderings are echoed from zone to zone ;
 The tempestuous oceans awake one another,
 And the ice-rocks are shaken round Winter's throne
 When the clarion of the Typhoon is blown.

II.

From a single cloud the lightning flashes,
 Whilst a thousand isles are illumined around ;
 Earthquake is trampling one city to ashes,
 An hundred are shuddering and tottering ; the sound
 Is bellowing underground.

III.

But keener thy gaze than the lightning's glare,
 And swifter thy step than the earthquake's tramp ;
 Thou deafenest the rage of the ocean ; thy stare
 Makes blind the volcanos ; the sun's bright lamp
 To thine is a fen-fire damp.

IV.

From billow and mountain and exhalation
 The sunlight is darted through vapour and blast ;
 From spirit to spirit, from nation to nation,
 From city to hamlet thy dawning is cast,—
 And tyrants and slaves are like shadows of night
 In the van of the morning light.

AN ALLEGORY

I.

A PORTAL as of shadowy adamant
 Stands yawning on the highway of the life
 Which we all tread,—a tavern huge and gaunt ;
 Around it rages an unceasing strife
 Of shadows, like the restless clouds that haunt

The gap of some cleft mountain, lifted high
 Into the whirlwinds of the upper sky.

II.

And many pass it by with careless tread,
 Not knowing that a shadowy
 Tracks every traveller even to where the dead
 Wait peacefully for their companion new ;
 But others, by more curious humour led,
 Pause to examine ;—these are very few,
 And they learn little there, except to know
 That shadows follow them where'er they go.

THE TOWER OF FAMINE

AMID the desolation of a city,
 Which was the cradle, and is now the grave,
 Of an extinguished people,—so that Pity

Weeps o'er the shipwrecks of oblivion's wave,
 There stands the Tower of Famine. It is built
 Upon some prison-homes, whose dwellers rave

For bread, and gold, and blood : pain, linked to guilt,
 Agitates the light flame of their hours,
 Until its vital oil is spent or spill :

There stands the pile, a tower amid the towers
 And sacred domes ; each marble-ribbed roof,
 The brazen-gated temples, and the bowers

Of solitary wealth,—the tempest-proof
 Pavilions of the dark Italian air,
 Are by its presence dimmed—they stand aloof,

And are withdrawn—so that the world is bare ;
 As if a spectre, wrapt in shapeless terror,
 Amid a company of ladies fair

Should glide and glow, till it became a mirror
Of all their beauty,—and their hair and hue,
The life of their sweet eyes, with all its error,
Should be absorbed, till they to marble grew.

20

SONNET

YE hasten to the grave! What seek ye there,
Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes
Of the idle brain, which the world's livery wear?
O thou quick Heart, which pantest to possess
All that pale Expectation feigneth fair!
Thou vainly curious Mind which wouldest guess
Whence thou didst come, and whither thou must go,
And all that never yet was known wouldest know—
Oh, whither hasten ye, that thus ye press
With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path,
Seeking alike from happiness and woe
A refuge in the cavern of grey Death?
O Heart, and Mind, and Thoughts! what thing do you
Hope to inherit in the grave below?

DEATH

I.

DEATH is here and Death is there,
Death is busy everywhere;
All around, within, beneath,
Above is Death—and we are Death.

II.

Death has set his mark and seal
On all we are and all we feel,
On all we know and all we fear,

* * * *

III.

First our pleasures die—and then
Our hopes, and then our fears—and when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust—and we die too

IV.

All things that we love and cherish,
 Like ourselves must fade and perish ;
 Such is our rude mortal lot—
 Love itself would, did they not.

SUMMER AND WINTER

IT was a bright and cheerful afternoon,
 Towards the end of the sunny month of June,
 When the north wind congregates in crowds
 The floating mountains of the silver clouds
 From the horizon—and the stainless sky
 Opens beyond them like Eternity.
 All things rejoiced beneath the sun ; the weeds,
 The river, and the corn-fields, and the reeds ;
 The willow-leaves that glanced in the light breeze,
 And the firm foliage of the larger trees. 10

It was a Winter such as when birds die
 In the deep forests ; and the fishes lie
 Stiffened in the translucent ice, which makes
 Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes
 A wrinkled clod as hard as brick ; and when,
 Among their children, comfortable men
 Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold—
 Alas then for the homeless beggar old !

TIME LONG PAST

I.

LIKE the ghost of a dear friend dead
 Is Time long past.
 A tone which is now forever fled,
 A hope which is now forever past,
 A love so sweet it could not last,
 Was Time long past.

II.

There were sweet dreams in the night
 Of Time long past :
 And, was it sadness or delight,

Each day a shadow onward cast
Which made us wish it yet might last—
That Time long past.

III.

There is regret, almost remorse,
For Time long past.
'Tis like a child's belovèd corse
A father watches, till at last
Beauty is like remembrance, cast
From Time long past.

GOOD-NIGHT

I.

GOOD-NIGHT? ah, no! the hour is ill
Which severs those it should unite;
Let us remain together still,—
Then it will be *good* night.

II.

How can I call the lone night good,
Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight!
Be it not said, thought, understood,—
That it will be—*good* night.

III.

✓ To hearts which near each other move
From evening close to morning light,
The night is good; because, my love,
They never *say* good-night.

BUONA NOTTE

I.

“BUONA notte, buona notte!”—Come mai
La notte sarà buona senza te?
Non dirmi buona notte,—chè tu sai,
La notte sà star buona da per sè.

II.

Solinga, scura, cupa, senza speme,
 La notte quando Lilla m'abbandona ;
 Pei cuori che si batton insieme
 Ogni notte, senza dirla, sarà buona.

III.

Come male buona notte si suona
 Con sospiri e parole interrotte !—
 Il modo di aver la notte buona
 E mai non di dir la buona notte.

TO THE MOON

I.

ART thou pale for weariness
 Of climbing Heaven and gazing on the earth,
 Wandering companionless
 Among the stars that have a different birth,—
 And ever changing, like a joyless eye
 That finds no object worth its constancy ?

II.

Thou chosen sister of the spirit,
 That gazes on thee till in thee it pities

THE WANING MOON

AND like a dying lady, lean and pale,
 Who totters forth, wrapt in a gauzy veil,
 Out of her chamber, led by the insane
 And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,
 The moon arose up in the murky east,
 A white and shapeless mass.

THE WORLD'S WANDERERS

I.

TELL me, thou star, whose wings of light
 Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
 In what cavern of the night
 Will thy pinions close now ?

II.

Tell me, moon, thou pale and grey
 Pilgrim of Heaven's homeless way,
 In what depth of night or day
 Seekest thou repose now?

III.

Weary wind, who wanderest
 Like the world's rejected guest,
 Hast thou still some secret nest
 On the tree or billow?

LINES TO A REVIEWER

A LAS! good friend, what profit can you see
 In hating such a hateless thing as me?
 There is no sport in hate where all the rage
 Is on one side: in vain would you assuage
 Your frowns upon an unresisting smile,
 In which not even contempt lurks to beguile
 Your heart, by some faint sympathy of hate.
 Oh conquer what you cannot satiate!
 For to your passion I am far more coy
 Than ever yet was coldest maid or boy
 In winter noon. Of your antipathy
 If I am the Narcissus, you are free
 To pine into a sound with hating me.

FRAGMENT OF A SATIRE ON SATIRE

I F gibbets, axes, confiscations, chains,
 And racks of subtle torture,—if the pains
 Of shame, of fiery Hell's tempestuous wave,
 Seen through the caverns of the shadowy grave
 Hurling the damned into the murky air
 While the meek blest sit smiling; if Despair
 And Hate, the rapid bloodhounds with which Terror
 Hunts through the world the homeless steps of Error,
 Are the true secrets of the commonweal
 To make men wise and just;

10

And not the sophisms of revenge and fear,
 Bloodier than is revenge

Then send the priests to every hearth and home
 To preach the burning wrath which is to come,
 In words like flakes of sulphur, such as thaw
 The frozen tears

* * * *

If Satire's scourge could wake the slumbering hounds
 Of Conscience, or erase the deeper wounds,
 The leprous scars of callous Infamy ;
 If it could make the present not to be, 20
 Or charm the dark past never to have been,
 Or turn regret to hope ; who that has seen
 What Southey is and was, would not exclaim,
 " Lash on ! be the keen verse dipped in flame ;
 Follow his flight with wingèd words, and urge
 The strokes of the inexorable scourge
 Until the heart be naked, till his soul
 See the contagion's spots foul ;
 And from the mirror of Truth's sun-like shield,
 From which his Parthian arrow 30
 Flash on his sight the spectres of the past,
 Until his mind's eye paint thereon

Let scorn like yawn below,
 And rain on him like flakes of fiery snow."
 This cannot be, it ought not, evil still—
 Suffering makes suffering, ill must follow ill.
 Rough words beget sad thoughts, and, beside,
 Men take a sullen and a stupid pride
 In being all they hate in others' shame,
 By a perverse antipathy of fame. 20
 'Tis not worth while to prove, as I could, how
 From the sweet fountains of our nature flow
 These bitter waters ; I will only say,
 If any friend would take Southey some day,
 And tell him, in a country walk alone,
 Softening harsh words with friendship's gentle tone,
 How incorrect his public conduct is,
 And what men think of it,—'twere not amiss.
 Far better than to make innocent ink

ORPHEUS

A

NOT far from hence. From yonder pointed hill,
 Crowned with a ring of oaks, you may behold
 A dark and barren field, through which there flows,

Sluggish and black, a deep but narrow stream,
 Which the wind ripples not, and the fair moon
 Gazes in vain, and finds no mirror there.
 Follow the herbless banks of that strange brook
 Until you pause beside a darksome pond,
 The fountain of this rivulet, whose gush
 Cannot be seen, hid by a rayless night
 That lives beneath the overhanging rock
 That shades the pool: an endless spring of gloom,
 Upon whose edge hovers the tender light,
 Trembling to mingle with its paramour,—
 But, as Syrinx fled Pan, so Night flies Day,
 Or, with most sullen and regardless hate,
 Refuses stern her Heaven-born embrace.
 On one side of this jagged and shapeless hill
 There is a cave, from which there eddies up
 A pale mist, like aerial gossamer,
 Whose breath destroys all life: awhile it veils
 The rock—then, scattered by the wind, it flies
 Along the stream, or lingers on the clefts,
 Killing the sleepy worms, if aught hide there.
 Upon the beetling edge of that dark rock
 There stands a group of cypresses; not such
 As, with a graceful spire and stirring life,
 Pierce the pure Heaven of your native vale,
 Whose branches the air plays among, but not
 Disturbs, fearing to spoil their solemn grace;
 But blasted and all wearily they stand,
 One to another clinging; their weak boughs
 Sigh as the wind buffets them, and they shake
 Beneath its blasts—a weather-beaten crew!

CHORUS

What wondrous sound is that, mournful and faint,
 But more melodious than the murmuring wind
 Which through the columns of a temple glides?

A

It is the wandering voice of Orpheus' lyre,
 Borne by the winds, who sigh that their rude king
 Hurries them fast from these air-feeding notes;
 But in their speed they bear along with them
 The waning sound, scattering it like dew
 Upon the startled sense.

CHORUS

Does he still sing?
 Methought he rashly cast away his harp
 When he had lost Eurydice.

A

Ah no!

Awhile he paused.—As a poor hunted stag
 A moment shudders on the fearful brink
 Of a swift stream—the cruel hounds press on
 With deafening yell, the arrows glance and wound, —
 He plunges in: so Orpheus, seized and torn 50
 By the sharp fangs of an insatiate grief,
 Mænad-like waved his lyre in the bright air,
 And wildly shrieked, “Where she is, it is dark!”
 And then he struck from forth the strings a sound
 Of deep and fearful melody. Alas!
 In times long past, when fair Eurydice
 With her bright eyes sat listening by his side,
 He gently sang of high and heavenly themes.
 As in a brook, fretted with little waves,
 By the light airs of Spring, each ripplet makes 60
 A many-sided mirror for the sun,
 While it flows musically through green banks,
 Ceaseless and pauseless, ever clear and fresh,
 So flowed his song, reflecting the deep joy
 And tender love that fed those sweetest notes,
 The heavenly offspring of ambrosial food.
 But that is past. Returning from drear Hell,
 He chose a lonely seat of unhewn stone,
 Blackened with lichens, on a herbless plain.
 Then from the deep and overflowing spring 70
 Of his eternal ever-moving grief
 There rose to Heaven a sound of angry song.
 ’Tis as a mighty cataract that parts
 Two sister rocks with waters swift and strong,
 And casts itself with horrid roar and din
 Adown a steep; from a perennial source
 It ever flows and falls, and breaks the air
 With loud and fierce, but most harmonious roar,
 And as it falls casts up a vaporous spray
 Which the sun clothes in hues of Iris light. 80
 Thus the tempestuous torrent of his grief
 Is clothed in sweetest sounds and varying words
 Of poesy. Unlike all human works,
 It never slackens, and through every change

Wisdom and beauty and the power divine
 Of mighty poesy together dwell,
 Mingling in sweet accord. As I have seen
 A fierce south blast tear thro' the darkened sky,
 Driving along a rack of wingèd clouds,
 Which may not pause, but ever hurry on, 90
 As their wild shepherd wills them, while the stars,
 Twinkling and dim, peep from between the plumes :
 Anon the sky is cleared, and the high dome
 Of serene Heaven, starred with fiery flowers,
 Shuts in the shaken earth ; or the still moon
 Swiftly, yet gracefully, begins her walk,
 Rising all bright behind the eastern hills——
 I talk of moon, and wind, and stars, and not
 Of song ; but would I echo his high song,
 Nature must lend me words ne'er used before, 100
 Or I must borrow from her perfect works,
 To picture forth his perfect attributes.
 He does no longer sit upon his throne
 Of rock upon a desert herbless plain ;
 For the evergreen and knotted ilexes,
 And cypresses that seldom wave their boughs,
 And sea-green olives with their grateful fruit,
 And cims dragging along the twisted vines,
 Which drop their berries as they follow fast,
 And blackthorn bushes with their infant race 110
 Of blushing rose-blooms ; beeches, to lovers dear,
 And weeping willow-trees,—all swift or slow,
 As their huge boughs or lighter dress permit,
 Have circled in his throne, and Earth herself
 Has sent from her maternal breast a growth
 Of star-like flowers and herbs of odour sweet,
 To pave the temple that his poesy
 Has framed, while near his feet grim lions couch,
 And kids, fearless from love, creep near his lair.
 Even the blind worms seem to feel the sound. 120
 The birds are silent, hanging down their heads,
 Perched on the lowest branches of the trees ;
 Not even the nightingale intrudes a note
 In rivalry, but all entranced she listens.

FIORDISPINA

THE season was the childhood of sweet June,
 Whose sunny Hours from morning until noon
 Went creeping through the day with silent feet,
 Each with its load of pleasure, slow yet sweet ;

Like the long years of blest Eternity,
 Never to be developed. Joy to thee,
 Fiordispina, and thy Cosimo,
 For thou the wonders of the depth canst know
 Of this unfathomable flood of hours,
 Sparkling beneath the Heaven which embowers 10

* † * *

They were two cousins, almost like two twins,
 Except that from the catalogue of sins
 Nature had rased their love,—which could not be
 But by dissevering their nativity.
 And so they grew together like two flowers
 Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers
 Lull or awaken in their purple prime,
 Which the same hand will gather—the same clime
 Shake with decay. This fair day smiles to see 20
 All those who love,—and who e'er loved like thee,
 Fiordispina? Scarcely Cosimo,
 Within whose bosom and whose brain now glow
 The ardours of a vision which obscure
 The very idol of its portraiture;
 He faints, dissolved into a sea of love;
 But thou art as a planet sphered above,—
 But thou art Love itself, ruling the motion
 Of his subjected spirit: such emotion
 Must end in sin or sorrow, if sweet May
 Had not brought forth this morn—your wedding-day. 30

* * * *

“Lie there; sleep awhile in your own dew,
 Ye faint-eyed children of the Hours,”
 Fiordispina said, and threw the flowers
 Which she had from the breathing

A table near of polished porphyry.
 They seemed to wear a beauty from the eye
 That looked on them—a fragrance from the touch
 Whose warmth checked their life; a light such
 As sleepers wear, lulled by the voice they love,
 which did reprove 40
 The childish pity that she felt for them;
 And a remorse that from their stem
 She had divided such fair shapes made
 A feeling in the which was a shade
 Of gentle beauty on the flowers: there lay
 All gems that make the earth's dark bosom gay;

rods of myrtle-buds and lemon-blooms,
 And that leaf tinted lightly which assumes
 The livery of unremembered snow:
 Violets whose eyes have drunk

50

* * * *

Fiordispina and her nurse are now
 Upon the steps of the high portico;
 Under the withered arm of Media
 She flings her glowing arm

* * * *

step by step and stair by stair,
 That withered woman, grey and white and brown—
 More like a trunk by lichens overgrown
 Than anything which once could have been human.
 And ever as she goes, the palsied woman

* * * *

"How slow and painfully you seem to walk,
 Poor Media! you tire yourself with talk."

60

"And well it may,

Fiordispina, dearest—well-a-day!
 You are hastening to a marriage-bed;
 I to the grave!"—"And if my love were dead,
 Unless my heart deceives me, I would lie
 Beside him in my shroud as willingly
 As now in the gay night-dress Lilla wrought."
 "Fie, child! Let that unseasonable thought

70

Not be remembered till it snows in June;
 Such fancies are a music out of tune
 With the sweet dance your heart must keep to-night.
 What! would you take all beauty and delight
 Back to the Paradise from which you sprung,
 And leave to grosser mortals
 And say, sweet lamb, would you not learn the sweet
 And subtle mystery by which spirits meet?
 Who knows whether the loving game is played,
 When, once of mortal disarrayed,
 The naked soul goes wandering here and there
 Through the wide deserts of Elysian air?
 The violet dies not till it"

80

FRAGMENT: THE DESERTS OF SLEEP

I WENT into the deserts of dim sleep—
 That world which, like an unknown wilderness,
 Bounds this with its recesses wide and deep.

FRAGMENT : CONSEQUENCE

THE viewless and invisible Consequence
 Watches thy goings-out and comings-in,
 And hovers o'er thy guilty sleep,
 Unveiling every new-born deed, and thoughts
 More ghastly than those deeds.

FRAGMENT : A FACE

HIS face was like a snake's—wrinkled and loose
 And withered.

FRAGMENT : TORPOR

MY head is heavy, my limbs are weary,
 And it is not life that makes me move,
 And my way

FRAGMENT : HOPE, FEAR, AND DOUBT

SUCH hope, as is the sick despair of good,
 Such fear, as is the certainty of ill,
 Such doubt, as is pale Expectation's food
 Turned while she tastes to poison, when the will
 Is powerless, and the spirit

FRAGMENT : DISAPPOINTMENT

ALAS! this is not what I thought life was.
 I knew that there were crimes and evil men,
 Misery and hate ; nor did I hope to pass
 Untouched by suffering, through the rugged gleam
 In mine own heart I saw as in a glass
 The hearts of others And when
 I went among my kind, with triple brass
 Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed,
 To bear scorn, fear, and hate, a woful mass!

FRAGMENT : MILTON'S SPIRIT

I DREAMED that Milton's spirit rose, and took
 From life's green tree his Uranian lute ;
 And from his touch sweet thunder flowed, and shook
 All human things built in contempt of man,—
 And sanguine thrones and impious altars quaked,
 Prisons and citadels

FRAGMENTS

FROM THE BODLEIAN MS.

(1)

WHEN May is painting with her colours gay
 The landscape sketched by April her sweet twin,

(2)

Thy beauty hangs around thee like
 Splendour around the moon :
 Thy voice, as silver bells that strike
 Upon

(3)

I stood upon a Heaven-cleaving turret
 Which overlooked a wide Metropolis—
 And in the temple of my heart my Spirit
 Lay prostrate, and with parted lips did kiss
 The dust of Desolation's [altar]—
 And with a voice too faint to falter
 It shook that trembling fane with its weak prayer.
 'Twas noon,—the sleeping skies were blue,
 The city

(4)

And through the silent interstellar air

(5)

FRAGMENT OF A TRANSLATION (?)

DELUGE and dearth, ardours and frosts and earthquake,
 Fire from high mountains, winds and rain and lightning,
 New pestilences and epidemics,
 Death " seditious acts and transmigrations

POEMS OF 1821

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR

I.

“ORPHAN Hours, the Year is dead :
Come and sigh, come and weep !”
“Merry Hours, smile instead,
For the Year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.”

II.

“As an earthquake rocks a corse
In its coffin in the clay,
So white Winter, that rough nurse,
Rocks the death-cold Year to-day ;
Solemn Hours ! wail aloud
For your mother in her shroud.”

III.

“As the wild air stirs and sways
The tree-swung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days
Rocks the Year :—be calm and mild,
Trembling Hours ; she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

IV.

January grey is here,
Like a sexton by her grave ;
February bears the bier,
March with grief doth howl and rave,
And April weeps—but, O ye Hours,
Follow with May's fairest flowers.”

TIME

UNFATHOMABLE Sea, whose waves are years;
 Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
 Are brackish with the salt of human tears!
 Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow
 Claspest the limits of mortality!
 And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
 Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore;
 Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,
 Who shall put forth on thee,
 Unfathomable Sea?

TO NIGHT

I.

SWIFTLY walk o'er the western wave,
 'Spart of Night!
 Out of the misty eastern cave,
 Where, all the long and lone daylight,
 Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
 Which make thee terrible and dear,—
 Swift be thy flight!

II.

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
 Star-inwrought!
 Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day,
 Kiss her until she be wearied out;
 Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
 Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long sought!

III.

When I arose and saw the dawn,
 I sighed for thee;
 When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
 And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
 And the weary Day turned to his rest,
 Lingering like an unloved guest,
 I sighed for thee.

IV.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 "Wouldst thou me?"
 Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
 Murmured like a noontide bee,
 "Shall I nestle near thy side?
 Wouldst thou me?"—And I replied,
 "No, not thee!"

V.

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon:
 Sleep will come when thou art fled;
 Of neither would I ask the boon
 I ask of thee, beloved Night,—
 Swift, be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon!

TO EMILIA VIVIANI

MADONNA, wherefore hast thou sent to me
 Sweet-Jasmin and myrtle?
 Embleming love and health, which never yet
 In the same wreath might be.
 Alas, and they are wet!
 Is it with thy kisses or thy tears?
 For never rain or dew
 Such fragrance drew
 From plant or flower: the very doubt endears
 My sadness ever new,
 The sighs I breathe, the tears I shed for thee
 Send the stars light, but send not love to me,
 In whom love ever made
 Health like a heap of embers soon to fade.

10

FROM THE ARABIC

AN IMITATION

I.

MY faint spirit was sitting in the light
 Of thy looks, my love;
 It panted for thee like the hind at noon
 For the brooks, my love.

Thy barb whose hoofs outspeed the tempest's flight
 Bore thee far from me ;
 My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon,
 Did companion thee.

II.

Ah ! fleetest far than fleetest storm or steed,
 Or the death they bear,
 The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove
 With the wings of care ;
 In the battle, in the darkness, in the need,
 Shall mine cling to thee,
 Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,
 It may bring to thee.

SONG

I.

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,
 Spirit of Delight !
 Wherefore hast thou left me now
 Many a day and night ?
 Many a weary night and day
 'Tis since thou art fled away.

II.

How shall ever one like me
 Win thee back again ?
 With the joyous and the free
 Thou wilt scoff at pain.
 Spirit false ! thou hast forgot
 All but those who need thee not.

III.

As a lizard with the shade
 Of a trembling leaf,
 Thou with sorrow art dismayed ;
 Even the sighs of grief
 Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
 And reproach thou wilt not hear.

IV.

Let me set my mournful ditty
To a merry measure ;
Thou wilt never come for pity,
Thou wilt come for pleasure ;
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

V.

I love all that thou lovest,
Spirit of Delight !
The fresh Earth in new leaves drest,
And the starry night ;
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born.

VI.

I love snow, and all the forms
Of the radiant frost ;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,—
Everything almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

VII.

I love tranquil solitude,
And such society
As is quiet, wise, and good ;
Between thee and me
What difference ? But thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

VIII.

I love Love—though he has wings,
And like light can flee ;
But above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee.
Thou art love and life ! Oh come,
Make once more my heart thy home. ~

MUTABILITY

I.

THE flower that smiles to-day
 To-morrow dies ;
 All that we wish to stay,
 Tempts and then flies ;
 What is this world's delight ?
 Lightning that mocks the night,
 Brief even as bright.

II.

Virtue, how frail it is !
 Friendship how rare !
 Love, how it sells poor bliss
 For proud despair !
 But we, though soon they fall,
 Survive their joy and all
 Which ours we call.

III.

Whilst skies are blue and bright,
 Whilst flowers are gay,
 Whilst eyes that change ere night
 Make glad the day ;
 Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
 Dream thou—and from thy sleep
 Then wake to weep.

LINES

I.

FAR, far away, O ye
 Halcyons of Memory,
 Seek some far calmer nest
 Than this abandoned breast ;—
 No news of your false Spring
 To my heart's Winter bring ;
 Once having gone, in vain
 Ye come again.

II.

Vultures, who build your bowers
High in the Future's towers,
Withered hopes on hopes are spread ;
Dying joys, choked by the dead,
Will serve your beaks for prey
Many a day.

A LAMENT

O WORLD! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb
Trembling at that where I had stood before ;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight ;
Fresh Spring, and Summer, and Winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief,—but with delight
No more—oh, never more!

TO ———

MUSIC, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory ;
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.
Rose-leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed ;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

SONNET: POLITICAL GREATNESS

NOR happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,
Shepherd those herds whom Tyranny makes tame ;
Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,
History is but the shadow of their shame,
Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts,

As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,
 Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery
 Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit
 By force or custom? Man who man would be,
 Must rule the empire of himself; in it
 Must be supreme, establishing his throne
 On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
 Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

LINES

WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE
DEATH OF NAPOLEON

I.

WHAT! alive and so bold, O Earth?
 Art thou not over-bold?
 What! leapest thou forth as of old
 In the light of thy morning mirth,
 The last of the flock of the starry fold?
 Ha! leapest thou forth as of old?
 Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled,
 And canst thou move, Napoleon being dead?

II.

How! is not thy quick heart cold?
 What spark is alive on thy hearth?
 How! is not *his* death-knell knolled?
 And livest *thou* still, Mother Earth?
 Thou wert warming thy fingers old
 O'er the embers covered and cold
 Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled;
 What, Mother, do you laugh now he is dead?

III.

"Who has known me of old," replied Earth,
 "Or who has my story told?
 It is thou who art over-bold."
 And the lightning of scorn laughed forth
 As she sung, "To my bosom I fold
 All my sons when their knell is knolled,
 And so with living motion all are fed,
 And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead.

IV.

"Still alive and still bold," shouted Earth
 "I grow bolder, and still more bold.
 The dead fill me ten thousand-fold
 Fuller of speed, and splendour, and mirth,
 I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold,
 Like a frozen chaos uprolled,
 Till by the spirit of the mighty dead
 My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed.

V.

"Ay, alive and still bold," muttered Earth.
 "Napoleon's fierce spirit rolled,
 In terror and blood and gold,
 A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.
 Leave the millions who follow to mould
 The metal before it be cold;
 And weave into his shame, which like the dead
 Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled."

THE FUGITIVES

I.

THE waters are flashing,
 The white hail is dashing,
 The lightnings are glancing,
 The hoar spray is dancing—
 Away!

The whirlwind is rolling,
 The thunder is tolling,
 The forest is swinging,
 The minster bells ringing—
 Come away!

The Earth is like Ocean,
 Wreck-strewn and in motion:
 Bird, beast, man and worm
 Have crept out of the storm—
 Come away!

II.

"Our boat has one sail,
And the helmsman is pale ;—
A bold pilot I trow,
Who should follow us now,"—
Shouted he ;

And she cried : "Ply the oar !
Put off gaily from shore !" —
As she spoke, bolts of death
Mixed with hail, specked their path
O'er the sea.

And from isle, tower and rock,
The blue beacon-cloud broke,
And though dumb in the blast,
The red cannon flashed fast
From the lea.

III.

And "Fear'st thou," and "Fear'st thou ?"
And "See'st thou," and "Hear'st thou ?"
And "Drive we not free
O'er the terrible sea,
I and thou ?"

One boat-cloak did cover
The loved and the lover :
Their blood beats one measure,
They murmur proud pleasure
Soft and low ;—

While around the lashed Ocean,
Like mountains in motion,
Is withdrawn and uplifted,
Sunk, shattered and shifted,
To and fro.

IV.

In the court of the fortress
Beside the pale portress,
Like a bloodhound well beaten
The bridegroom stands, eaten
By shame ;

On the topmost watch-turret,
 As a' death-boding spiril,
 Stands the grey tyrant father,—
 To his voice the mad weather
 Seems tame;

And with curses as wild
 As e'er clung to child,
 He devotes to the blast
 The best, loveliest and last
 Of his name!

TO ———

I.

ONE word is too often profaned
 For me to profane it,
 One feeling too falsely disdained
 For thee to disdain it.
 One hope is too like despair
 For prudence to smother,
 And pity from thee more dear
 Than that from another.

II.

I can give not what men call love,
 But wilt thou accept not
 The worship the heart lifts above
 And the Heavens reject not;
 The desire of the moth for the star,
 Of the night for the morrow,
 The devotion to something afar
 From the sphere of our sorrow?

MUSIC

I.

I PANT for the music which is divine,
 My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;
 Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,
 Loosen the notes in a silver shower;
 Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain,
 I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

II.

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound,
 More, oh more,—I am thirsting yet!
 It loosens the serpent which care has bound
 Upon my heart to stifle it;
 The dissolving strain, through every vein,
 Passes into my heart and brain.

III.

As the scent of a violet withered up,
 Which grew by the brink of a silver lake,
 When the hot noon has drained its dewy cup,
 And nist there was none its thirst to slake—
 And the violet lay dead while the odour flew
 On the wings of the wind o'er the waters blue:—

IV.

As one who drinks from a charmed cup
 Of foaming, and sparkling and murmuring wine,
 Whom a mighty Enchantress, filling up,
 Invites to love with her kiss divine

* * * * *

TO ———

I.

WHEN passion's trance is overpast,
 If tenderness and truth could last
 Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep
 Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,
 I should not weep, I should not weep!

II.

It were enough to feel, to see
 Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,
 And dream the rest—and burn and be
 The secret food of fires unseen,
 Couldst thou but be as thou hast been.

III.

After the slumber of the year
 The woodland violets re-appear;

TO EDWARD WILLIAMS

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All things revive in field or grove,
And sky, and sea, but two, which move,
And form all others, life and love.

TO EDWARD WILLIAMS

I.

THE serpent is shut out from paradise.
The wounded deer must seek the herb no more
In which its heart-cure lies :
The widowed dove must cease to haunt a bower
Like that from which its mate with feignèd sighs
Fled in the April hour.
I too, must seldom seek again
Near happy friends a mitigated pain.

II.

Of hatred I am proud,—with scorn content ;
Indifference, which once hurt me, is now grown
Itself indifferent.
But, not to speak of love, pity alone
Can break a spirit already more than bent.
The miserable one
Turns the mind's poison into food ;
Its medicine is tears,—its evil good.

III.

Therefore, if now I see you seldomer,
Dear friends, dear *friend* ! know that I only fly
Your looks because they stir
Griefs that should sleep, and hopes that cannot die :
The very comfort that they minister
I scarce can bear ; yet I,
So deeply is the arrow gone,
Should quickly perish if it were withdrawn.

IV.

When I return to my cold home, you ask
Why I am not as I have lately been.
You spoil me for the task
Of acting a forced part in life's dull scene,—
Of wearing on my brow the idle mask
Of author, great or mean,
In the world's carnival. I sought
Peace thus, and but in you I found it not.

V.

Full half an hour, to-day, I tried my lot
 With various flowers, and every one still said,
 "She loves me—loves me not."
 And if this meant a vision long since fled—
 If it meant fortune, fame, or peace of thought—
 If it meant—but I dread
 To speak what you may know too well—
 Still there was truth in the sad oracle.

VI.

The crane o'er seas and forests seeks her home ;
 No bird so wild but has its quiet nest,
 When it no more would roam ;
 The sleepless billows on the ocean's breast
 Break like a bursting heart, and die in foam,
 And thus at length find rest :
 Doubtless there is a place of peace
 Where my weak heart and all its throbs will cease.

VII.

I asked her, yesterday, if she believed
 That I had resolution. One who *had*
 Would ne'er have thus relieved
 His heart with words,—but what his judgment bade
 Would do, and leave the scorner unrelieved.
 These verses were too sad
 To send to you, but that I know,
 Happy yourself, you feel another's woe.

REMEMBRANCE

I.

SWIFTER far than Summer's flight,
 Swifter far than youth's delight,
 Swifter far than happy night,
 Art thou come and gone ;
 As the wood when leaves are shed,
 As the night when sleep is fled,
 As the heart, when joy is dead,
 I am left lone, alone.

II.

The swallow Summer comes again,
 \ The owlet Night resumes her reign,
 But the wild swan Youth is fain
 To fly with thee, false as thou.
 My heart each day deserves the morrow,
 Sleep itself is turned to sorrow,
 Vainly would my Winter borrow
 Sunny leaves from any bough.

III.

Lilies for a bridal bed,
 \ Roses for a matron's head,
 Violets for a maiden dead,
 Pansies let *my* flowers be;
 On the living grave I bear
 Scatter them without a tear—
 Let no friend, however dear,
 Waste one hope, one fear for me.

A BRIDAL SONG

I.

THE golden gates of sleep unbar
 Where Strength and Beauty, met together,
 Kindle their image like a star
 In a sea of glassy weather.
 Night, with all thy stars look down,—
 Darkness, weep thy holiest dew,—
 Never smiled the inconstant moon
 On a pair so true.
 Let eyes not see their own delight;—
 Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight
 Oft renew.

II.

Fairies, sprites, and angels keep her!
 Holy stars, permit no wrong!
 And return to wake the sleeper,
 Dawn,—ere it be long!
 Oh joy! Oh fear! what will be done
 In the absence of the sun!
 Come along!

A SECOND VERSION OF THE SAME

NIGHT, with all thine eyes look down!
 Darkness shed its holiest dew!
 When ever smiled the inconstant moon
 On a pair so true?
 Hence, coy Hour! and quench thy light,
 Lest eyes see their own delight!
 Hence, swift Hour! and thy loved flight
 Oft renew.

BOYS

Oh joy! Oh fear! what may be done
 In the absence of the sun?
 Come along!

10

The golden gates of sleep unbar!
 When Strength and Beauty meet together,
 Kindles their image like a star
 In a sea of glassy weather.
 Hence, coy Hour! and quench thy light,
 Lest eyes see their own delight!
 Hence, swift Hour! and thy loved flight
 Oft renew.

GIRLS

Oh joy! Oh fear! what may be done
 In the absence of the sun?
 Come along!

20

Fairies! sprites! and angels keep her!
 Holiest powers, permit no wrong!
 And return, to wake the sleeper,
 Dawn, ere it be long.
 Hence, swift Hour! and quench thy light,
 Lest eyes see their own delight!
 Hence, coy Hour! and thy loved flight
 Oft renew.

30

BOYS AND GIRLS

Oh joy! Oh fear! what will be done
 In the absence of the sun?
 Come along!

A THIRD VERSION OF THE SAME,

BOYS SING

NIGHT! with all thine eyes look down!
 Darkness! weep thy holiest dew!
 Never smiled the inconstant moon

On a pair so true.

Haste, coy Hour! and quench all light,
 Lest eyes see their own delight!
 Haste, swift Hour! and thy loved flight
 Oft renew!

GIRLS SING

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her!

Holy stars! permit no wrong!

And return to wake the sleeper,

Dawn, ere it be long!

Oh joy! Oh fear! there is not one

Of us can guess what may be done

In the absence of the sun:—

Come along!

BOYS

Oh! linger long, thou envious eastern lamp

In the damp

Caves of the deep!

GIRLS

Nay, return, Vesper! urge thy lazy car!

Swift unbar

The gates of Sleep!

CHORUS

The golden gate of sleep unbar,

When Strength and Beauty, met together,

Kindle their image, like a star

In a sea of glassy weather.

May the purple mist of love

Round them rise, and with them move,

Nourishing each tender gem

Which, like flowers, will burst from them.

As the fruit is to the tree

May their children ever be!

EVENING: PONTE A MARE, PISA

I.

THE sun is set; the swallows are asleep;
 The bats are flitting fast in the grey air;
 The slow soft loads out of damp corners creep,
 And evening's breath, wandering here and there
 Over the quivering surface of the stream,
 Wakes not one ripple from its summer dream.

II.

There is no dew on the dry grass to-night,
 Nor damp within the shadow of the trees;
 The wind is intermitting, dry, and light;
 And in the inconstant motion of the breeze
 The dust and straws are driven up and down,
 And whirled about the pavement of the town.

III.

Within the surface of the fleeting river
 The wrinkled image of the city lay,
 Immoveably unquiet, and forever
 It trembles, but it never fades away;
 Go to the
 You, being changed, will find it then as now.

IV.

The chasm in which the sun has sunk is shut
 By darkest barriers of cinereous cloud,
 Like mountain over mountain huddled—but
 Growing and moving upwards in a crowd;
 And over it a space of watery blue,
 Which the keen evening star is shining through.

THE BOAT ON THE SERCHIO

OUR boat is asleep on Serchio's stream,
 Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream,
 The helm sways idly, hither and thither;
 Dominic, the boatman, has brought the mast,
 And the oars and the sails; but 'tis sleeping fast,
 Like a beast unconscious of its tether.

THE BOAT ON THE SÉRCHIO

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The stars burnt out in the pale blue air,
And the thin white moon lay withering there;
To tower, and cavern, and rift and tree,
The owl and the bat fled drowsily.

10

Day had kindled the dewy woods,
And the rocks above and the stream below,
And the vapours in their multitudes,
And the Apennine's shroud of summer snow,
And clothed with light of aery gold
The mists in their eastern caves uprolled.

Day had awakened all things that be,—
The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,
And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,
And the matin-bell and the mountain bee:
Fire-flies were quenched on the dewy corn,
Glow-worms went out on the river's brim,
Like lamps which a student forgets to trim:
The beetle forgot to wind his horn,

20

The crickets were still in the meadow and hill:
Like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun
Night's dreams and terrors, every one,
Fled from the brains which are their prey
From the lamp's death to the morning ray.

All rose to do the task He set to each,
Who shaped us to his ends and not our own;
The million rose to learn, and one to teach
What none yet ever knew or can be known;

30

and many rose

Whose woe was such that fear became desire;—
Melchior and Lionel were not among those;
They from the throng of men had stepped aside,
And made their home under the green hill-side.
It was that hill, whose intervening brow

Screens Lucca from the Pisan's envious eye,—
Which the circumfluous plain waving below,
Like a wide lake of green fertility,

40

with streams and fields and marshes bare,
Divides from the far Apennines—which lie
Islanded in the immeasurable air.

"What think you, as she lies in her green cove,
Our little sleeping boat is dreaming of?"
"If morning dreams are true, why I should guess
That she was dreaming of our idleness,
And of the miles of watery way
We should have led her by this time of day."—

50

[Of us and of our lazy motions,"
 Impatiently said Melchior,
 "If I can guess a boat's emotions;
 And how we ought, two hours before,
 To have been the devil knows where."
 And then, in such transalpine Tuscan
 As would have killed a Della-Cruscan,]¹

* * * *

"Never mind," said Lionel,
 "Give care to the winds,—they can bear it well 60
 About yon poplar-tops; and see!
 The white clouds are driving merrily,
 And the stars we miss this morn will light
 More willingly our return to-night.—
 How it whistles, Dominic's long black hair!
 List my dear fellow; the breeze blows fair:
 Hear how it sings into the air."

So Lionel according to his art
 Weaving his idle words, Melchior said:
 "She dreams that we are not yet out of bed;
 We'll put a soul into her, and a heart 70
 Which like a dove chased by a shall beat."

* * * *

"Ay, heave the ballast overboard,
 And stow the eatables in the aft locker."
 "Would not this keg be best a little lowered?"
 "No, now all's right."—"Those bottles of warm tea—
 (Give me some straw)—must be stowed tenderly;
 Such as we used, in Summer after six,
 To cram in great-coat pockets, and to mix 80
 Hard eggs and radishes and rolls at Eton,
 And, couched on stolen hay in those green harbours
 Farmers called gaps, and we schoolboys called arbours,
 Would feast till eight."

* * * *

With a bottle in one hand,
 As if his very soul were at a stand,
 Lionel stood—when Melchior brought him steady:—
 "Sit at the helm—fasten this sheet—all ready!"

The chain is loosed, the sails are spread,
 The living breath is fresh behind;
 As with dews and sunrise fed, 90
 Comes the laughing morning wind;—

¹ Apparently an alternative version of lines 48-51.—ED.

FRAGMENT: "I WOULD NOT BE A KING" 263

The sails are full, the boat makes head
Against the Serchio's torrent fierce,
Then flaps with intermitting course,
And hangs upon the wave, and stems
The tempest of the

Which fervid from its mountain source
Shallow, smooth and strong doth come.
Swift as fire, tempestuously

It sweeps into the affrighted sea ; 160
In morning's smile its eddies coil,
Its billows sparkle, toss and boil,
Torturing all its quiet light
Into columns fierce and bright.

* * * *

The Serchio, twisting forth

Between the marble barriers which it clove
At Ripafratta, leads through the dread chasm
The wave that died the death which lovers love,

Living in what it sought ; as if this spasm
Had not yet past, the toppling mountains cling ; 110
But the clear stream in full enthusiasm

Pours itself on the plain, then wandering
Down one clear path of effluence crystalline
Sends its superfluous waves, that they may fling

At Arno's feet tribute of corn and wine :
Then, through the pestilential deserts wild
Of tangled marsh and woods of stunted pine,
It rushes to the Ocean.

FRAGMENT: "I WOULD NOT BE A
KING"

I WOULD not be a king—enough
Of woe it is to love ;
The path to power is steep and rough,
And tempests reign above.
I would not climb the imperial throne ;
'Tis built on ice which fortune's sun
Thaws in the height of noon.
Then farewell, king ! Yet, were I one,
Care would not come so soon.
Would he and I were far away
Keeping flocks on Himalay !

THE AZIOLA •

I.

“**D**O you not hear the Aziola cry?
 Methinks she must be nigh,”
 Said Mary, as we sate
 In dusk, ere stars were lit, or candles brought;
 And I, who thought
 This Aziola was some tedious woman,
 Asked, “Who is Aziola?” How elate
 I felt to know that it was nothing human,
 No mockery of myself to fear or hate!
 And Mary saw my soul,
 And laughed, and said, “Disquiet yourself not;
 ’Tis nothing but a little downy owl.”

II.

Sad Aziola! many an eventide
 Thy music I had heard
 By wood and stream, meadow and mountain-side,
 And fields and marshes wide,—
 Such as nor voice, nor lute, nor wind, nor bird,
 The soul ever stirred;
 Unlike and far sweeter than them all.
 Sad Aziola! from that moment I
 Loved thee and thy sad cry.

SONNET TO BYRON

IF I esteemed you less, Envy would kill
 Pleasure, and leave to Wonder and Despair
 The ministration of the thoughts that fill
 The mind which, like a worm whose life may share
 A portion of the unapproachable,
 Marks your creations rise as fast and fair
 As perfect worlds at the Creator's will.
 But such is my regard that nor your power
 To soar above the heights where others <climb>,
 Nor fame, that shadow of the unborn hour
 Cast from the envious future on the time,
 Moves one regret for his unhonoured name
 Who dares these words:—the worm beneath the sod
 May lift itself in homage of the God.

FRAGMENT ON KEATS,
WHO DESIRED THAT ON HIS TOMB SHOULD
BE INSCRIBED—

“ HERE lieth One whose name was writ on water!”,
But ere the breath that could erase it blew,
Death, in remorse for that fell slaughter,
Death, the immortalizing Winter, flew
Athwart the stream; Time’s printless torrent grew
A scroll of crystal, blazoning the name
Of Adonais!—

FRAGMENT: A DREAM

ME THOUGHT I was a billow in the crowd
Of common men, that stream without a shore,
That ocean which at once is deaf and loud;
That I, a man, stood amid many more
By a wayside which the aspect bore
Of some imperial metropolis,
Where mighty shapes—pyramid, dome, and tower—
Gleamed like a pile of crags.

TO-MORROW

WHERE art thou, beloved To-morrow?
When young and old, and strong and weak,
Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow,
Thy sweet smiles we ever seek,—
In thy place—ah! well-a-day!
We find the thing we fled—To-day.

STANZA

IF I walk in Autumn’s even
While the dead leaves pass,
If I look on Spring’s soft Heaven,
Something is not there which was.
Winter’s wondrous frost and snow,
Summer’s clouds, where are they now?

FRAGMENT : A WANDERER

HE wanders, like a day-appearing dream
 Through the dun wildernesses of the mind,
 Through desert woods and tracts, which seem
 Like ocean, homeless, boundless, unconfined.

FRAGMENT : FROM REST TO REST

THE babe is at peace within the womb,
 The corpse is at rest within the tomb;
 We begin in what we end.

FRAGMENT : "I FAINT, I PERISH
WITH MY LOVE!"

I FAINT, I perish with my love! I grow
 Frail as a cloud whose pale
 Under the evening's ever-changing glow :
 I die like mist upon the gale,
 And like a wave under the calm I fail.

FRAGMENT : THE LADY OF THE
SOUTH

FAINT with love, the Lady of the South
 Lay in the paradise of Lebanon
 Under a Heaven of cedar-boughs ; the South
 Of love was on her lips ; the light was gone
 Out of her eyes.

FRAGMENT : ZEPHYR

COME, thou awakener of the spirit's ocean,
 Zephyr, whom to thy cloud or cave
 No thought can trace ! speed with thy gentle motion !

FRAGMENT: LAURELS

267.

FRAGMENT : RAIN-WIND

THE gentleness of rain was in the wind.

FRAGMENT : HIDDEN DANGERS

WHEN soft winds and sunny skies
With the green earth harmonize,
And the young and dewy dawn,
Bold as an unhunted fawn,
Up the windless Heaven is gone—
Laugh—for ambushed in the day,
Clouds and whirlwinds watch their prey.

FRAGMENT : "THE RUDE WIND
IS SINGING "

THE rude wind is singing
The dirge of the music dead ;
The cold worms are clinging
Where kisses were lately fed.

FRAGMENT : "O THOU IMMORTAL
DEITY "

O THOU immortal deity
Whose throne is in the depth of human thought,
I do adjure thy power and thee
By all that man may be, by all that he is not,
By all that he has been and yet must be !

FRAGMENT : LAURELS

" WHAT art thou, Presumptuous, who profanest
The wreath to mighty poets only due,
Even whilst like a forgotten moon thou wanest ?

Touch not those leaves which for the eternal few
 Who wander o'er the paradise of fame,
 In sacred dedication ever grew :
 One of the crowd thou art without a name."
 "Ah, friend, 'tis the false laurel that I wear ;
 Bright though it seem, it is not the same
 As that which bound Milton's immortal hair ; 10
 Its dew is poison, and the hopes that quicken
 Under its chilling shade, though seeming fair,
 Are flowers which die almost before they sicken."

FRAGMENT : "AND THAT I WALK
 THUS PROUDLY CROWNED" -

A ND that I walk thus proudly crowned withal
 Is that 'tis my distinction ; if I fall,
 I shall not weep out of the vital day,
 To-morrow dust, nor wear a dull decay.

POEMS OF 1822

THE ZUCCA

I.

SUMMER was dead and Autumn was expiring,
And infant Winter laughed upon the land
All cloudlessly and cold ;—when I, desiring
More in this world than any understand,
Wept o'er the beauty, which like sea retiring,
Had left the earth bare as the wave-worn sand
Of my lorn heart, and o'er the grass and flowers
Pale for the falsehood of the flattering Hours.

II.

Summer was dead, but I yet lived to weep
The instability of all but weeping ;
And on the Earth lulled in her winter sleep
I woke, and envied her as she was sleeping.
Too happy Earth ! over thy face shall creep
The wakening vernal airs, until thou, leaping
From unremembered dreams, shalt see
No death divide thy immortality.

III.

I loved—oh no, I mean not one of ye,
Or any earthly one, though ye are dear
As human heart to human heart may be ;—
I loved, I know not what—but this low sphere
And all that it contains, contains not thee,
Thou, whom seen nowhere, I feel everywhere ;
From Heaven and Earth, and all that in them are,
Veiled art thou, like a star :

IV.

By Heaven and Earth, from all whose shapes thou flower,
 Neither to be contained, delayed, nor hidden ;
 Making divine the loftiest and the lowest,
 When for a moment thou art not forbidden
 To live within the life which thou bestowest ;
 And leaving noblest things vacant and chidden,
 Cold as a corpse after the spirit's flight,
 Blank as the sun after the birth of night.

V.

In winds, and trees, and streams, and all things common,
 In music and the sweet unconscious tone
 Of animals, and voices which are human,
 Meant to express some feelings of their own ;
 In the soft motions and rare smile of woman,
 In flowers and leaves, and in the grass fresh-shewn,
 Or dying in the Autumn, I the most
 Adore thee present or lament thee lost.

VI.

And thus I went, lamenting, when I saw
 A plant upon the river's margin lie,
 Like one who loved beyond his nature's law,
 And in despair had cast him down to die ;
 Its leaves which had outlived the frost, the thaw
 Had blighted, like a heart which hatred's eye
 Can blast not, but which pity kills ; the dew
 Lay on its spotted leaves like tears too true.

VII.

The Heavens had wept upon it, but the Earth
 Had crushed it on her unmaternal breast.

* * * *

VIII.

I bore it to my chamber, and I planted
 It in a vase full of the lightest mould ;
 The winter beams which out of Heaven slanted
 Fell through the window-panes, disrobed of cold,
 Upon its leaves and flowers ; the star which panted
 In evening for the Day, whose car has rolled
 Over the horizon's wave, with looks of light
 Smiled on it from the threshold of the night.

IX.

The mitigated influences of air
And light revived the plant, and from it grew
Strong leaves and tendrils; and its flowers fair,
Full as a cup with the vine's burning dew,
O'erflowed with golden colours; an atmosphere
Of vital warmth infolded it anew,
And every impulse sent to every part
The unbeheld pulsations of its heart.

X.

Well might the plant grow beautiful and strong,
Even if the air and sun had smiled not on it;
For one wept o'er it all the Winter long
Tears pure as Heaven's rain, which fell upon it
Hour after hour; for sounds of softest song,
Mixed with the stringed melodies that won it
To leave the gentle lips on which it slept,
Had loosed the heart of him who sat and wept:—

XI.

Had loosed his heart, and shook the leaves and flowers
On which he wept, the while the savage storm
Waked by the darkest of December's hours
Was raving round the chamber hushed and warm;
The birds were shivering in their leafless bowers,
The fish were frozen in the pools, the form
Of every summer plant was dead and chill,
Whilst this tear-nurtured still.

* * * *

THE MAGNETIC LADY TO HER
PATIENT

I.

"SLEEP, sleep on! forget thy pain;
My hand is on thy brow,
My spirit on thy brain;
My pity on thy heart, poor friend;
And from my fingers flow
The powers of life, and like a sign,
Seal thee from thine hour of woe;
And brood on thee, but may not blend
With thine.

II.

"Sleep, sleep on ! I love thee not ;
 But when I think that he
 Who made and makes my lot
 As full of flowers as thine of weeds,
 Might have been lost like thee ;
 And that a hand which was not mine,
 Might then have charmed his agony
 As I another's—my heart bleeds
 For thine.

III.

"Sleep, sleep, and with the slumber of
 The dead and the unborn
 Forget thy life and love ;
 Forget that thou must wake forever ;
 Forget the world's dull scorn ;
 Forget lost health, and the divine
 Feelings which died in youth's brief morn :
 And forget me, for I can never
 Be thine.

IV.

"Like a cloud big with a May shower,
 My soul weeps healing rain,
 On thee, thou withered flower ;
 It breathes mute music on thy sleep ;
 Its odour calms thy brain ;
 Its light within thy gloomy breast
 Spreads like a second youth again.
 By mine thy being is to its deep
 Possess.

V.

"The spell is done. How feel you now ?"
 "Better—quite well," replied
 The sleeper.—"What would do
 You good when suffering and awake ?
 What cure your head and side ?"—
 " What would cure, that would kill me, Jane :
 And as I must on earth abide
 Awhile, yet tempt me not to break
 My chain."

LINES: "WHEN THE LAMP 'IS'
SHATTERED"

I.

WHEN the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead ;
When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet notes are remembered not ;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

II.

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute :—
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind in a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III.

When hearts have once mingled,
Love first leaves the well-built nest ;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possest.
O Love ! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why chose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier ?

IV.

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high :
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

TO JANE : THE INVITATION

BEST and brightest, come away !
 Fairer far than this fair Day,
 Which, like thee to those in sorrow,
 Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
 To the rough Year just awake
 In its cradle on the brake.
 The brightest Hour of unborn Spring,
 Through the winter wandering,
 Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn
 To hoar February born ;
 Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
 It kissed the forehead of the Earth,
 And smiled upon the silent sea,
 And bade the frozen streams be free,
 And waked to music all their fountains,
 And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
 And like a prophetess of May,
 Strewed flowers upon the barren way,
 Making the wintry world appear
 Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.

Away, away, from men and towns,
 To the wild wood and the downs :
 To the silent wilderness
 Where the soul need not repress
 Its music lest it should not find
 An echo in another's mind,
 While the touch of Nature's art
 Harmonizes heart to heart.
 I leave this notice on my door
 For each accustomed visitor :—
 " I am gone into the fields
 To take what this sweet Hour yields ;—
 Reflection, you may come to-morrow,
 Sit by the fireside with Sorrow.—
 You with the unpaid bill, Despair,—
 You tiresome verse-reciter, Care,—
 I will pay you in the grave,—
 Death will listen to your stave.
 Expectation too, be off !
 To-day is for itself enough ;
 Hope, in pity mock not Woe
 With smiles, nor follow where I go ;

TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION 275

Long having lived on thy sweet food,
At length I find one moment's good,
After long pain: with all your love,
This you never told me of."

Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
And the pools where winter rains
Image all their roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green, and ivy dun,
Round stems that never kiss the sun;
Where the lawns and pastures be
And the sandhills of the sea;
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers and violets
Which yet join not scent to hue,
Crown the pale Year weak and new;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dun and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one,
In the universal sun.

TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION

I.

NOW the last day of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead,—
Rise, Memory, and write its praise!
Up to thy wonted work! come, trace
The epitaph of glory fled:
For now the Earth has changed its face,
A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

II.

We wandered to the Pine Forest
That skirts the Ocean's foam
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.

v.

We paused ^a beside the pools that lie
 Under the forest bough;
 Each seemed as 'twere a little sky
 Gulphed in a world below;—
 A firmament of purple light,
 Which in the dark earth lay,
 More boundless than the depth of night,
 And purer than the day:
 In which the lovely forests grew,
 As in the upper air,
 More perfect both in shape and hue
 Than any spreading there.
 There lay the glade and neighbouring lawn,
 And through the dark green wood
 The white sun twinkling like the dawn
 Out of a speckled cloud.
 Sweet views, which in our world above
 Can never well be seen,
 Were imaged by the water's love
 Of that fair forest green.
~~And all was interlarded beneath~~
 With an elysian glow,
 An atmosphere without a breath,
 A softer day below.
 Like one beloved, the scene had lent
 To the dark water's breast
 Its every leaf and lineament
 With more than truth expressed.
 Until an envious wind crept by,
 Like an unwelcome thought,
 Which from the mind's too faithful eye
 Blots one dear image out.
 Though thou art ever fair and kind,
 The forests ever green,
 Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,
 Than calm in waters seen.

CANCELLED PASSAGE

WERE not the crocuses that grew
 Under that ilex-tree,
 As beautiful in scent and hue
 As ever fed the bee?

WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE

"A RIEL to Miranda — Take
 This slave of Music, for the sake
 Of him who is the slave of thee,
 And teach it all the harmony
 In which thou canst, and only thou, .
 Make the delighted spirit glow,
 Till joy denies itself again,
 And, too intense, is turned to pain ;
 For by permission and command
 Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,
 Poor Ariel sends this silent token
 Of love that never can be spoken ;
 Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,
 From life to life, must still pursue
 Your happiness ;—for thus alone
 Can Ariel ever find his own.
 From Prospero's enchanted cell,
 As the mighty verses tell,
 To the throne of Naples, he
 Lit you o'er the trackless sea,
 Flitting on, your prow before, .
 Like a living meteor.
 When you die, the silent Moon,
 In her interlunar swoon, ^{h s}
 Is not sadder in her cell
 Than deserted Ariel.
 When you live again on earth,
 Like an unseen star of birth
 Ariel guides you o'er the sea
 Of life from your nativity. ^l
 Many changes have been run,
 Since Ferdinand and you begun
 Your course of love, and Ariel still
 Has tracked your steps, and served your will ;
 Now, in humbler, happier lot,
 This is all remembered not ;
 "And now, alas ! the poor sprite is
 Imprisoned, for some fault of his,
 In a body like a grave ;—
 From you he only dares to crave,
 For his service and his sorrow,
 A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought,
 To echo all harmonious thought,
 Felled a tree, while on the steep
 The woods were in their winter sleep,
 Rocked in that repose divine
 On the wind-swept Apennine ;
 And dreaming, some of Autumn past,
 And some of Spring approaching fast, 50
 And some of April buds and showers,
 And some of songs in July bowers,
 And all of love ; and so this tree,—
 Oh that such our death may be !—
 Died in sleep, and felt no pain,
 To live in happier form again :
 From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,
 The artist wrought this loved Guitar,
 And taught it justly to reply,
 To all who question skilfully, 60
 In language gentle as thine own ;
 Whispering in enamoured tone
 Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
 And summer winds in sylvan cells ;
 For it had learnt all harmonies
 Of the plains and of the skies,
 Of the forests and the mountains,
 And the many-voiced fountains ;
 The clearest echoes of the hills,
 The softest notes of falling rills, 70
 The melodies of birds and bees,
 The murmuring of summer seas,
 And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
 And airs of evening ; and it knew
 That seldom-heard mysterious sound,
 Which, driven on its diurnal round,
 As it floats through boundless day,
 Our world enkindles on its way.
 All this it knows, but will not tell
 To those who cannot question well 80
 The Spirit that inhabits it ;
 It talks according to the wit
 Of its companions ; and no more
 Is heard than has been felt before
 By those who tempt it to betray
 These secrets of an elder day.
 But sweetly as its answers will
 Flatter hands of perfect skill,
 It keeps its highest, holiest tone
 For our beloved Jane alone. 90

TO JANE : "THE KEEN STARS WERE
TWINKLING"

I.

THE keen stars were twinkling,
And the fair moon was rising among them,
Dear Jane!
The guitar was tinkling,
But the notes were not sweet till you sung them
Again.
As the moon's soft splendour
O'er the faint cold starlight of Heaven
Is thrown,
So your voice most tender
To the strings without soul had then given
Its own.

II.

The stars will awaken,
Though the moon sleep a full hour later
To-night;
No leaf will be shaken
Whilst the dews of your melody scatter
Delight.
Though the sound overpowers,
Sing again, with your dear voice revealing
A tone
Of some world far from ours,
Where music and moonlight and feeling
Are one.

A DIRGE

ROUGH wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
Bare woods, whose branches strain,
Deep caves and dreary main,
Wail, for the world's wrong!

LINES WRITTEN IN THE BAY OF
LERICI

SHE left me at the silent time
 When the moon had ceased to climb
 The azure path of Heaven's steep,
 And, like an albatross asleep,
 Balanced on her wings of light,
 Hovered in the purple night,
 Ere she sought her ocean nest
 In the chambers of the west.
 She left me, and I stayed alone,
 Thinking over every tone, 10
 Which, though silent to the ear,
 The enchanted heart could hear,
 Like notes which die when born, but still
 Haunt the echoes of the hill;
 And feeling ever—oh, too much!—
 The soft vibration of her touch,
 As if her gentle hand even now
 Lightly trembled on my brow;
 And thus, although she absent were,
 Memory gave me all of her 20
 That even Fancy dares to claim:—
 Her presence had made weak and tame
 All passions, and I lived alone
 In the time which is our own;
 The past and future were forgot,
 As they had been, and would be, not.
 But soon, the guardian angel gone,
 The dæmon re-assumed his throne
 In my faint heart. I dare not speak
 My thoughts; but thus disturbed and weak 30
 I sat, and saw the vessels glide
 Over the ocean bright and wide,
 Like spirit-wingèd chariots sent
 O'er some serenest element
 For ministrations strange and far;
 As if to some Elysian star
 They sailed for drink to medicine
 Such sweet and bitter pain as mine.
 And the wind that winged their flight
 From the land came fresh and light; 40
 And the scent of wingèd flowers,
 And the coolness of the hours

Of dew, and sweet warmth left by day,
 Were scattered o'er the twinkling bay;
 And the fisher, with his lamp
 And spear, about the low rocks damp
 Crept, and struck the fish which came
 To worship the delusive flame.
 Too happy they, whose pleasure sought
 Extinguishes all sense and thought
 Of the regret that pleasure leaves,—
 Destroying life alone, not peace!

50°

LINES: "WE MEET NOT AS WE PARTED"

I.

WE meet not as we parted,
 We feel more than all may see;
 My bosom is heavy-hearted,
 And thine full of doubt for me.
 One moment has bound the free.

II.

That moment is gone forever,
 Like lightning that flashed and died,
 Like a snowflake upon the river,
 Like a sunbeam upon the tide,
 Which the dark shadows hide.

III.

That moment from time was singled
 As the first of a life of pain;
 The cup of its joy was mingled—
 Delusion too sweet though vain!
 Too sweet to be mine again.

IV.

Sweet lips, could my heart have hidden
 That its life was crushed by you,
 Ye would not have then forbidden
 The death which a heart so true
 Sought in your briny dew.

v.

* * * *
 , * * * *
 * * * *

Methinks too little cost
 For a moment so found, so lost !

THE ISLE

THERE was a little lawny islet
 By anemone and violet,
 Like mosaic, paven :
 And its roof was flowers and leaves
 Which the Summer's breath enweaves,
 Where nor sun nor showers nor breeze
 Pierce the pines and tallest trees,—
 Each a gem engraven :
 Girt by many an azure wave
 With which the clouds and mountains pave **to**
 A lake's blue chasm.

FRAGMENT : TO THE MOON

BRIGHT wanderer, fair coquette of Heaven,
 To whom alone it has been given
 To change and be adored forever,
 Envy not this dim world, for never
 But once within its shadow grew
 One fair as

EPITAPH

THESE are two friends whose lives were undivided ;
 * So let their memory be, now they have glided
 Under the grave ; let not their bones be parted,
 For their two hearts in life were single-hearted.

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