

LIFE
AND
PHANTASY

WILLIAM
ALLEGRIAN



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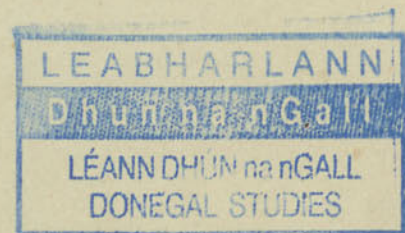
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LIFE AND PHANTASY



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WITH NINE AIRS FOR VOICE AND PIANOFORTE, 5s.

LAURENCE BLOOMFIELD, OR RICH AND POOR
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LIFE AND PHANTASY

BY
WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

WITH FRONTISPICES BY SIR JOHN E. MILLAIR, R.A.
& DESIGN BY ARTHUR H. HUGHES
AND A SONG FOR VOICE AND PIANOFORTE

LONDON
KRIEGER AND TURNER, 196 STRAND
1882

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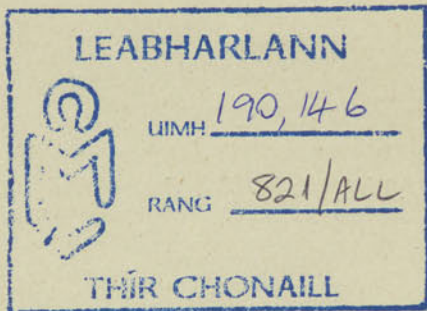
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PREFATORY NOTE.

WITH this book and one more (now in the press), my poems, as far as they go, will be completed and finally arranged in six volumes, no volume containing anything which is to be found in any of the others. Previous editions will survive, if at all, as curiosities merely. There are various modes of producing what a man is able to produce, and in my case I have, as it were, gone on knitting, in the midst of other occupation, a little web of poetry for myself and those near me out of designs suggested by the influences of the passing hours, have looked back at these from time to time, reconsidered, retouched, omitted, filled up, added new things to old. This is in the main a tolerably accurate hint of the process whereby for the most part these six volumes have taken substance and shape, and they ought at least to show something of the quality of homogeneity, so far as this may belong to a man's progress through successive stages of life and their various moods.

May, 1889.

TO THE GREAT RIVER

READER, if herein you find
Any trifle to your mind,
Take it, not ungratefully,
Nor disparaging the rest,
(Since what one good judge refuses
Presently another chooses)
And the writer's thanks in turn
Every writer hopes to earn
Gentle reader,—prithce be
One among the very best

NATURAL MIRACLE.



NATURAL MIRACLE.

—♦—
A SONG.

WHAT is sharp as tiger's claws,
Gentler than a linnet's wing,
Sweeping as a mountain flood,
Fragile as a primrose-bud,
Gay as crescent moon in Spring,
Sweet as song when singers pause?
Mournfuller than Autumn skies
Where the shroud of Summer lies,
Mystic as the stars above,
Light as wind and deep as death,
Pure as breath
A maiden draws
Lull'd with music? This is Love.



TO THEODORA.

FROM HER HOPELESS BUT WORSHIPPING LOVER.

THO' every dear perfection
Be counsel for despair,
Far better my rejection
Than thou less good or fair.

My peace of heart is troubled,
I must not call thee mine ;
But all my world's ennobled,
And life made more divine.

This earth, where'er I wander,
Is richer as thy home,
The day more bright, and grander
The midnight starry dome.

Man's dim heroic glory
Its lustre doth renew ;
All heights in song or story
Of love and faith, are true.

And tho' kind Heav'n completer
Did thee than others make,
I count all women sweeter
For thy beloved sake.

If sad, as too unworthy,
Yet, happy in my mood,
I bless the Maker for thee,
Who art so fair and good.

LOVE'S INSIGHT.

I.

WHO could say that Love is blind ?
Piercing-sighted, he will find
A thousand subtle charms that lie
Hid from every common eye.

II.

You that love not, blind are ye,
Learn to love, and learn to see.
'Tis the insight of the lover
Beauty's essence can discover.

THE LOOK OF LOVE.

I.

SWEET look!—I thought it love,
 Alas! how much mistaken!
 A dream a dream will prove
 When time is come to waken.
 She was friendly, fair, and kind;
 I was weak of wit, I find.
 Hope, adieu!—for now I see
 Her look of love, but not for me.

II.

I see within her eyes
 A tender, blissful token;
 Hope drops down and dies:
 Let no sad word be spoken.
 Soon and silent must I go;
 She, that knew not, shall not know.
 Joy, good-bye!—for now I see
 Her look of love, but not for me.

III.

The fault was mine alone,
 Who from her gracious sweetness
 Made fancies all my own
 Of heavenly love's completeness:
 This from me, poor fool, as far
 As from the earthworm shines the star.
 Dream, farewell!—for now I see
 Her look of love, but not for me.

REVERIE.

MY Love and I together,
 Deep in sunny sheen;
 Raiment of white innocence
 Clothed us on the green.

We reclined together,
 Musing grave and sweet;
 Golden air embraced us,
 Blue waves nigh our feet.

Love be my guardian,
 Dreams my heritage!
 My Love and I together
 In the golden age.

THE CUPIDS.

IN a grove I saw one day
 A flight of Cupids all at play,
 Flitting bird-like through the air,
 Soft alighting here and there,
 Making every bough rejoice
 With a most celestial voice,
 Or among the blossoms found
 Rolling on the swarded ground.
 Some there were with wings of blue,
 Other some, of rosy hue,
 Here, one plumed with purest white,
 There, as plunged in golden light ;
 Crimson some, and some I saw
 Colour'd like a gay macaw.
 Many were the Queen of Beauty's,
 Many bound to other duties.

Band of fowlers next I spied,
 Spreading nets on every side,
 Watching long, by skill or hap
 Fleeting Cupids to entrap.
 But if one at length was ta'en,
 After mickle time and pain,
 Whether golden wing'd or blue,
 Roseate, variegated, of hue,
 When they put him in their cage
 He grew meagre as with age,
 Plumage ruffled, colour coarse,
 Voice unfrequent, sad, and hoarse ;
 And little pleasure had they in him
 Who had spent the day to win him.

TO PHILIPPINA.

LADY fair, lady fair,
 Seated with the scornful,
 Though your beauty be so rare,
 I were but a born fool
 Still to seek my pleasure there.

To love your features and your hue,
 All your glowing beauty,
 All, in short, that's good of you,
 Was and is my duty,
 As to love all beauty too.

But now a fairer face I've got,
 A Picture's—and believe me,
 I never looked to you for what
 A picture cannot give me.
 All you've more, enhances not.

Your queenly lips can speak, and prove
 The means of your uncrowning ;
 Your brow can change, your eyes can move,
 Which grants you power of frowning ;
Hers have Heav'n's one thought, of Love.

So now I give good-bye, *ma belle*,
 And lose no great good by it.
 You're fair, well!—I can smile farewell,
 As you must shortly sigh it,
 To your bright, light, outer shell.

WE TWO.

I.

LET all your looks be grave and cold,
Or smile upon me still ;
And give your hand, or else withhold ;
Take leave howe'er you will.
No lingering trace within your face
Of love's regard is seen :
We two no more shall be—
Never!—what we've been.

II.

It is not now a longing day
Divides us, nor a year ;
Your heart from mine has turn'd away,
Nor henceforth sheds a tear.
The winter snow will come and go,
New May-times laugh in green :
We two no more shall be—
Never!—what we've been.

III.

Ah, never! Countless hours, that bring
Full many a chance and change,
May choose a beggar-boy for king,
Or cleave a mountain range.
The salt-sea tide may yet be dried
That rolls far lands between :
We two no more can be—
Never!—what we've been.

A WIFE.

THE wife sat thoughtfully turning over
A book inscribed with the school-girl's name ;
A tear, one tear, fell hot on the cover
So quickly closed when her husband came.

He came, and he went away,—it was nothing ;
With commonplace words upon either side ;
But, just with the sound of the room-door shutting,
A dreadful door in her soul stood wide.

Love she had read of in sweet romances,
Love that could sorrow, but never fail ;
Built her own palace of noble fancies,
All the wide world like a fairy-tale.

Bleak and bitter, and utterly doleful
Spread to this woman her map of life :
Hour after hour she look'd in her soul, full
Of deep dismay and turbulent strife.

Face in hands, she knelt on the carpet ;
The cloud was loosen'd, the storm-rain fell.
Oh ! life has so much to wilder and warp it,
One poor heart's day what poet could tell ?

A SAD SONG.

I.

LOVE once kiss'd me,
 Unfolded his wings, and fled.
 Hath friendship miss'd me?
 Is faith in all friendship dead?
 If a spell could summon
 These phantoms that come and go,
 Of men and women,
 Their very selves to show,
 I might find (alas me!)
 My seeking both night and day.
 But I pass them, they pass me,
 And each on a lonely way.

II.

Soul, art thou friendless,
 A loser, sorrowful, weak?
 Life is not endless,
 Death is not far to seek.
 Thou sailest ever,
 Each moment, if sad or kind,
 Down the great river;
 It opens, it closes behind;
 Far back thou see-est
 The mountain-tops' faint azure;
 Below, as thou flee-est,
 The ripple, the shadow's erasure.

III.

Why dost thou, weeping,
 Stretch forth thine arms in vain?
 It breaks thy sleeping;
 O drop into trance again.
 In dreams thou may'st go where
 Child's Island is flowery grass'd,
 Deep-skied,—it is nowhere
 Save in the Land of the Past.
 Time is dying,
 The World too; forget their moan;
 The sad wind sighing
 Let murmur, this alone.

LOVE REMEMBERED.

LOVE, after long exilement from my breast,
 Came as of yore last night, and gave to view
 ('Twas only in a dream) the face I knew
 And loved so well. Ah me, that time was best!
 O pure and perfect joy, when I possess
 Thy soul in mine, when life was love of you,
 And all the fairness of the world most true,
 Love being God's truth, and chief among the rest

Was I through ignorance or folly glad
 In those lost days, not having found as yet
 The secret of the world, which drives men mad,
 With one cold poison-drop for remedy?
 Or have the Powers of Darkness grip on me
 Because I flung away mine amulet?

HALLOWED MEMORY.

STILL in my pray'rs and in my dreams,
Tho' from my hourly thoughts exiled,
As spirit-bright thine image beams
As ever saint on hermit smiled.

I used to breathe thy name in pray'r
With human feeling warm and deep ;
Now breathed as those that angels bear,
Where love is never taught to weep.

I used to dream thy hand in mine,
And waken with a longing pain ;
But now the dream is too divine
To link itself with earth again.

Oh, early found and early lost !
Though on my course thou sheddest now
No light, no strength when tempest-tost,
Still in my pray'rs and dreams art thou.

RESEMBLANCE.

PALE little country girl, you could not guess
Why such a glance to your vague glance hath
 flown,
And why my words of earnest, tender tone
Expected the reply with so much stress.
You moved a heart-thought which were not your
 own
Of your own right, altho' that prettiness
Were form's perfection, and the fitting dress
Of truest inward beauty, tried and known.

Likeness and Memory, commingling shades,
That realizing this, and this in turn
Hallowing the other, made my spirit yearn
With sudden thrill, as suddenly that fades :
But not so this fresh longing which invades
The longing, lonely heart, to bid it burn.

LOVE'S GIFTS.

I.

THIS dark-brown curl you send me, Dear,
Shall save its freshness of to-day
In gentle shrine, when year on year
Have turn'd its former fellows gray ;
So shall your image in my breast
With never-fading beauty rest.

II.

What love hath once on love bestow'd,
Translated in its dew of youth
To some remote divine abode,
Withdraws from risk of time's untruth.
Keeping, we lose ; but what we give
Like to a piece of Heav'n doth live.

LONG DELAYED.

OFT have I search'd the weary world in vain,
And all the rest find love and peace of heart,
But I can only find a sluggish pain,
As one by one the sombre days depart,
Presenting many a toy and useless gain :
Sweet Friend, my longing, wheresoe'er thou art,
O come at length ! out of thine ambush start !
The light on field and hill begins to wane.

O dreaming fool (I said), have done, have done !
How should a miracle be wrought for thee ?—
When lo, joy came, like verdure to a tree
That, long time stretching wintry arms aloft,
Replieth to a day of vernal sun
With multitudes of leaflets green and soft.

THE GLANCE.

MINE—mine—
O Heart, it is thine—
A look, a look of love!
O wonder! O magical charm!
Thou summer-night, silent and warm!
How is it a glance
Can make the heart dance
That was weary and dull before?
Hush! whisper and question no more;
Nor to wind, nor to wave, nor to starlight above
Tell thy joy; let it rest
Like a bird in the nest,
Fall asleep without thinking, content to be blest,
And to know that this world is divine.
It is mine—mine—
O Heart, it is thine—
The glance of love—of love!

LOVE'S FEARS.

A SHORT hour parted—
A year!
I am doleful-hearted
My dear.

All day together,
Thine, mine;
Celestial weather,
Soul's wine!

And why not treasure
Word, kiss,
Wealth beyond measure
Of bliss?

Why picture you dead, love,
Or gone,—
A dark world instead, love,
And lone?

Whence are my fears now?
As tho',
Through tears and years now,
A low

Long vista show'd me
Thy star,
One sad ray allow'd me
From far.

TO BEATA.

I KNOW, I see, that you are fair,
 And so do other lips declare ;
 I love your face, I love your form ;
 My eyes grow dim, my heart grows warm,
 With tender joy and pure affection,
 At sight of these, or recollection.

And yet I could not nicely trace
 From memory now your form and face ;
 I never sought to scrutinize
 Your loveliness with curious eyes ;
 When with you, 'tis enough that I
 So richly feel that you are nigh.

For I adore with fondest love
 The earthly shape in which you move,
 As being yours—not loving you
 (Though you can gain such homage too)
 Because your looks do also make
 The promise which so many break.

The promise there is more than kept ;
 And deep love-founts, I know, have slept
 In some hearts, till the power of God
 In beauty's light material rod
 Took shape and work'd a miracle—
 But my love is a natural well.

A natural well, a centre given
 To springs of earth and show'rs of heaven ;
 Whose earth-transmitted tinge of clay
 Subsides at once, or melts away,
 And leaves its heavenly birthplace shown,
 In trembling softness of its own.

THE HAPPY MAN.

NO longer any choice remains ;
 All beauty now I view,
 All bliss that womankind contains,
 Completely summ'd in you.

Your stature marks the proper height ;
 Your hair the finest shade ;
 Complexion—Love himself aright
 Each varying tint hath laid.
No longer, &c.

Your voice—the very tone and pitch
 Whereto my heart replies !
 Blue eyes, or black, or hazel,—which
 Are best? *Your-colour'd eyes.*
No longer, &c.

Your manners, gestures, being of you,
 Most easily excel.
 Have you defects? I love them too,
 I love yourself so well.
No longer, &c.

To me, once careworn, veering, vex't,
 Kind fate my Queen hath sent ;
 In full allegiance, unperplex't,
 I live in sweet content.

*No longer any choice remains ;
 All beauty now I view,
 All bliss that womankind contains,
 Completely summ'd in you.*

A DAY OF DAYS.

EACH rose before the sun, and saw the moon
A slender golden curvature embost
On the green eastern sky, which brighten'd soon
Till in its crimson wavelets she was lost,
And so began a perfect Day of June.
The river sparkled, birds voiced, breezes tost
A laughing world of flow'rs; blue shadows crost
The sunshine of the long warm afternoon.

But who inherited this wondrous Day?
Two happy Lovers. It was made for them,
Of time not measured by the moon or sun.
Both felt that it would never pass away.
And now, when music in the dusk was done,
King Love had all the stars for diadem.

GEORGE;
OR,
THE SCHOOLFELLOWS.



GEORGE ;

OR, THE SCHOOLFELLOWS.

THE noisy sparrows in our clēmatics
Chatted of rain, a pensive summer dusk
Shading the little lawn and garden-ground
Between our threshold and the village street ;
With one pure star, a lonely altar-lamp
In twilight's vast cathedral ; for the clouds
Were gravely gathering, and a fitful breeze
Flurried the window-foliage that before
Hung delicately painted on the sky,
And wafted, showering from their golden boss,
The white-rose petals.

From our garden wall,
Being low within, the great Whiterose-bush lean'd
A thousand tender little heads, to note
The doings of the village all day long ;
From when the labourers, trudging to their toil
In earliest sunshine, heard the outpost cocks
Whistle a quaint refrain from farm to farm,
Till hour of shadow, silence, and repose,
The ceasing footstep, and the taper's ray.

Up to the churchyard fence, down to the brook,
 And lifted fields beyond with grove and hedge,
 The Rose-bush gazed; by-goers, on their part,
 Feeling a little message of delight,
 Glanced up to find the sweetness in its bower;
 School-children, one arm round a comrade's neck,
 Would point to some rich cluster, and repay
 Our flying bounty with their happy looks.

In that warm twilight, certain years ago,
 At sunset, with the roses in a trance,
 And many another blossom fast asleep,
 One Flow'r of Flow'rs was closing like the rest.
 Night's herald star which look'd across the world
 Saw nothing prettier than our little child
 Saying his evening pray'r at mother's knee,
 The white skirt folding on the naked feet
 Too tender for rough ways, his eyes at rest
 On his mother's face, a window into heaven.
 Kiss'd now, and settled in his cot, he's pleased
 With murmuring song, until the large lids droop
 Slowly and surely, slumber's regular breath
 Not parting the soft mouth. So Annie's boy
 And mine was laid asleep. I heard her foot
 Stir overhead; and hoped we should have time
 Before the rain to loiter half an hour,
 As far as to the poplars down the road,
 And hear the cornerakes through the meadow vale,
 And watch the childhood of a virgin moon,
 Above the faded sunset and its clouds,
 A floating crescent.

Sweetheart of my life!—

As then, so now; nay, dearer to me now,
 For love, that fills the soul, expands it too,
 And thus it holds more love, and ever more—
 O sweetheart, helpmate, guardian, better self!
 Green be those downs and dells above the sea,
 Smooth-green for ever, by the plough unhurt,

Nor overdrifted by their neighbouring sands,
 Where first I saw you; first since long before
 When we were children at an inland place
 And play'd together. I had often thought,
 I wonder should I know that pleasant child?—
 Hardly, I fear'd. I knew her the first glimpse,
 While yet the flexile curvature of hat
 Kept all her face in shadow to the chin;
 And when a breeze to which the harebells danced
 Lifted the sun a moment to her eyes,
 The ray of recognition flew to mine
 Through all the dignity of womanhood.
 Like dear old friends we were, yet wondrous new.
 The others talk'd; but she and I not much.
 Hearing her ribbon whirring in the wind
 (No doubting hopes nor whimsies born as yet)
 Was pure felicity, like his who sleeps
 Within a sense of some unknown good fortune,
 True, or of dreamland, undetermined which;
 My buoyant spirit tranquil in its joy
 As the white seamew swinging on the wave.
 Since, what vicissitude! We read the past
 Bound in a volume, catch the story up
 At any leaf we choose, and much forget
 How every blind to-morrow was evolved,
 How each oracular sentence shaped itself
 For after comprehension.

Thus I mused,

Then also, in that buried summer dusk,
 Rich heavy summer, upon autumn's verge,
 My wife and boy upstairs, I leaning grave
 Against the window; and through favourite paths
 Memory, as one who saunters in a wood,
 Found sober joy. In turn that eve itself
 Rises distinctly. Troops of dancing moths
 Brush'd the dry grass. I heard, as if from far,
 The tone of passing voices in the street.

Announced by cheerful octaves of a horn,
 Those rapid wheels flew, shaking our white rose,
 That link'd us with the modern Magic Way,
 And all the moving million-peopled world.
 For every evening, done our share of work,
 In happy hour came in the lottery-bag,
 Whose messenger had many a prize for us :
 The multifarious page ephemeral,
 The joy at times of some brave book, whereby
 The world is richer ; and more special words,
 Conveying conjured into dots of ink
 Almost the voice, look, gesture that we knew,—
 From Annie's former house, or mine, from shore
 Of murky Thames, or rarer from hot land
 Of Hindoo or Chinese, Canadian woods,
 Or that vast isle of kangaroos and gold,
 Magnetic metal,—thus on the four winds
 One's ancient comrades blown about the world.
 Where's George, I often thought, our hope, our pride ?
 "Saint George," we called him, glory of the school,
 With Greek and Latin at those fingers' ends
 That sway'd the winning oar and bat ; a prince
 In look, demeanour, generosity ;
 A Cribb in biceps, Cicero in tongue ;
 Already victor, when his eye should deign
 To fix on any summit of success.
 I made his picture many a time myself,
 Slaying all sorts of dragons, or with ten
 Spitted upon his spear ; for he would hint
 In haughty, careless tone (why should he care ?)
 "I've got to push my fortune by-and-by."
 We worshipp'd George in those days, one and all.
 But when I went to college, he was off,
 They said to travel, and he took away
 Mentor conjoin'd with Crichton from my hopes—
 No trifling blank. George had done little there,
 But could—what could he not ? . . . And now, perhaps,

Some city, in the strangers' burial-ground,
 Some desert sand, or hollow under sea,
 Hides him without an epitaph. So men
 Slip under, fit to shape the world anew ;
 And leave their trace—in schoolboy memories.

Then I went thinking how much changed I was
 Since those old school-times, not so far away,
 Yet now like pre-existence. Can that house,
 Those fields and trees, be extant anywhere ?
 Have not all vanished—place, and time, and men ?
 Or with a journey could I find them all,
 And myself with them, as I used to be ?
 Sore was my battle after quitting these.
 No one thing fell as plann'd for ; sorrows came
 And sat beside me ; years of toil went round ;
 And victory's self was pale and garlandless.
 Fog rested on my heart ; till softly blew
 The wind that clear'd it. 'Twas a simple turn
 Of life,—a miracle of heavenly love,
 For which, thank God !

When Annie called me up,
 We both bent silent, looking at our boy ;
 Kiss'd unaware (as angels, maybe, kiss
 Good mortals) on the smoothly rounded cheek
 Turn'd from the window, where a fringe of leaves,
 With outlines melting in the darkening blue,
 Waver'd and peep'd and whisper'd. Would she walk ?
 Not yet a little were those clouds to stoop
 With freshness to the garden and the field.
 I waited by our open door ; while bats
 Flew silently, and musk geranium-leaves
 Were fragrant in the twilight that had quench'd
 Or tamed the dazzling scarlet of their blooms.
 Peace, as of Heaven itself, possess'd my heart.
 A footstep, not the light step of my wife,
 Disturb'd it ; then, with slacker pace, a man

Came up beside the porch. Accosting whom,
And answering to my name: "I fear," he said,
"You'll hardly recollect me now; and yet
We were at school together long ago.
Have you forgotten George——?" The word sufficed

He in the red arm-chair; I not far off,
Excited, laughing, waiting for his face:
The first flash of the candles told me all:
Or, if not all, enough, and more. Those eyes,
When they look'd up at last, were his indeed,
But mesh'd in ugly network, like a snare;
And, tho' his mouth preserved th' imperious curve,
Evasion, vacillation, discontent,
Warp'd every feature like a crooked glass.
His hair hung prematurely gray and thin;
From thread-bare sleeves the wither'd tremulous hands
Protruded. Why paint every touch of blight?

Tea came. He hurried into ceaseless talk;
Glanced at the ways of many foreign towns;
Knew all those men whose names are on the lip,
And set their worths punctiliously; brought back
Our careless years; paid Annie compliments;
Admired the pattern of the fragrant cups;
Lauded the cream,—our dairy's, was it not?
A country life was pleasant, certainly,
If one could be content to settle down;
And yet the city had advantages.
He trusted, shortly, under his own roof,
To practise hospitality in turn.
But first to catch the roof, eh? Ha, ha, ha!
That was a business topic to discuss
With his old friend—

For me, I sometimes long'd
To hide my face and groan; yet look'd at him;
Opposing pain to grief, presence to thought.

Later, when wine came in, and we two sat
The dreary hours together, how he talk'd!
His schemes of life, his schemes of work and wealth
Intentions and inventions, plots and plans,
Travels and triumphs, failures, golden hopes.
He was a young man still—had just begun
To see his way. I knew what he could do
If once he tried in earnest. He'd return
To Law, next term but one; meanwhile complete
His great work, "*The Philosophy of Life;*
Or, Man's Relation to the Universe,"
The matter lying ready to his hand.
Forty subscribers more, two guineas each,
Would make it safe to publish. All this time
He fill'd his glass and emptied, and his tongue
Went thick and stammering. When the wine came in
(Perhaps a blame for me—who knows?) I saw
The glistening eye; a thin and eager hand
Made the decanter chatter on the glass
Like ague. Could I stop him? So at last
He wept, and moan'd he was a ruin'd man,
Body and soul; then cursed his enemies
By name, and promised punishment; made vaunt
Of genius, learning; caught my hand again,—
Did I forget my friend—my dear old friend?
Had I a coat to spare? He had no coat
But this one on his back; not one shirt—see!

'Twas all a nightmare; all plain, wretched truth.
And how to play physician? Where's the strength
Repairs a slow self-ruin from without?
The fall'n must climb innumerable steps,
With humbleness, and diligence, and pain.
How help him to the first of all that steep?

Midnight was past. I had proposed to find
A lodging near us; for, to say the truth,

I could not bid my wife, for such a guest
 In such a plight, prepare the little room
 We still call'd "Emma's" from my sister's name.
 Then with a sudden mustering up of wits,
 And ev'n a touch of his old self, that quick
 Melted my heart anew, he signified
 His bed was waiting, he would say good-night,
 And begged me not to stir, he knew his road.
 But arm in arm I brought him up the street,
 Among the rain-pools, and the pattering drops
 Drumming upon our canopy ; where few
 Or none were out of door ; and once or twice
 Some casement from an upper story shed
 Penurious lamplight.

Tediously we kept
 The morning meal in vain expectancy.
 Our box of clothes came back ; the people said
 He paid without a word, and went his way,
 They knew not whither. He returned no more.
 He now is dead.

Through all the summer-time
 The touch of that unhappy visit lay,
 Like trace of frost on gardens, on our life.
 Great cities give events to every hour ;
 Not so that ancient village, small, remote,
 Half-hid in boscaige of a peaceful vale,
 With guardian hills, but welcoming the sun,
 And every group of seasonable stars
 That rise upon the circle of the year ;
 Open to natural influences, far
 From jostling crowds of congregated men.

That village also lies behind us now ;
 Midst other fields abide we, other faces.
 Annie, my darling, we were happy there,
 And Heaven continues happiness and hope
 To us and to our children. May their steps
 Keep the good pathway through this perilous world.

That village is far-off, that year is fled.
 But still, at many a meditative hour
 By day or night, or with memorial flash,
 I see the phantom of our boy Saint George,
 A shifting ghost,—now with his bright young face
 And merry curls ; now haggard and forlorn,
 As when the candles came into the room.

One sells his soul ; another squanders it ;
 The first buys up the world, the second starves.
 Poor George was loser palpably enough ;
 Supernal Wisdom only knows how much.



SHADOWINGS.

SHADOWINGS.

—♦—
MEA CULPA.

I.

AT me one night the angry moon,
Suspended to a rim of cloud,
Glared through the courses of the wind,
Suddenly then my spirit bow'd
And shrank into a fearful swoon
That made me deaf and blind.

II.

We sinn'd—we sin—is that a dream?
We wake—there is no voice nor stir;
Sin and repent from day to day,
As though some reeking murderer
Should dip his hand in a running stream,
And lightly go his way.

III.

Embrace me, fiends and wicked men,
For I am of your crew. Draw back,
Pure women, children with clear eyes
Let Scorn confess me on his rack,—
Stretch'd down by force, uplooking then
Into the solemn skies.



IV.

Singly we pass the gloomy gate ;
 Some robed in honour, full of peace,
 Who of themselves are not aware,
 Being fed with secret wickedness,
 And comforted with lies : my fate
 Moves fast ; I shall come there.

V.

With all so usual, hour by hour,
 And feeble will so lightly twirl'd
 By every little breeze of sense,—
 Lay'st thou to heart this common world ?
 Lay'st thou to heart the Ruling Power,
 Just, infinite, intense ?

VI.

Thou wilt not frown, O God. Yet we
 Escape not thy transcendent law ;
 It reigns within us and without.
 What earthly vision never saw
 Man's naked soul may suddenly see,
 Dreadful, past thought or doubt.

DANGER.

I STROVE for wicked peace, but might not win ;
 The bonds would bite afresh, one moment slack.
 "Then burst them !" . . . instantly I felt begin
 Damnation. Falling through a chasm of black,
 I swiftly sunk thousands of miles therein.
 Soul grew incorporate with gross weight of sin,
 Death clung about my feet : let none dare track
 My journey. But a far Voice called me back.

I breathe this world's infatuating air
 And tremble as I walk. Most men are bold,
 Perchance through madness. O that I could hold
 One path, nor wander to the fen, nor dare
 Between the precipice and wild beast's lair !
 Penalties are establish'd from of old.

CARTAPHILUS.

DAYS, hours, and seasons, all are one dull pain,
 One heavy drag of soul-sick weariness.
 The mocking sunshine I abhor, no less
 Night and the stare of stars. My monstrous chain
 (How long?) must be unwinded link by link.
 Drop after drop thus slowly must I drink
 Mine ocean-cup of misery to the lees.
 All places are alike, and yet as tho'
 I had some hope of finding change I go
 Through cities, forests, deserts, mountains, seas.
 Everywhere, like a wandering wind, I roam.
 Thou Earth! in all thy bounds I only crave
 A place of rest,—in all thy lands, one grave.
 O Earth, Earth, cruel, cruel, take me home!
 But thou, most guilty of my wicked birth,
 Hast no remorse, O evil mother Earth!

The unregarded breath of my despair
 Thus makes its moans and groans and words of woe,
 But I am never mad, ev'n when I tear
 This wretched flesh, I never cease to know
 Myself, and watch my own external strife
 With hideous languor. Hap nor mood can bring
 One moment's lull to my disease of Life.
 Sleep's dew that falls on every living thing
 With comfortable balm leaves only me
 Unwetted in the world; my ghastly lamp,
 Hung in a mighty charnel, glimmeringly
 Burns on and on through the sepulchral damp.
 Behold! Cartaphilus the Jew am I,
 Who long hath ceased to live, yet may not die.

I have gone round and round about this Earth,
 Across the halves of morning and of night,
 Urged like the planet's breathing satellite;
 Seen, search'd and sifted all that man can know
 Of matter, from its inorganic birth
 Out of the storm of chaos long ago,
 Through all the upward workings of its life
 By infusion of the element of strife,
 Death ever-moving, save in me, the might
 That makes by hurrying to extinction each
 Successive atom, as a fire keeps bright.
 Fold after fold was drawn within my reach
 Of Nature's veil, until I raised the last.
 Thenceforth I have despised the present, past,
 And future of this world,—where mortals run
 In the old ruts, their foolish toys the same
 That pleased forgotten children with a game
 For ever recommenced, and nothing won;
 Where crowds of bustling idiots mount elate
 Their fancied palace-stairs to rooms of state,
 Whilst underneath their feet the treadmill turns.
 So be it. No more scorn or anger burns.

Men tell of me . . . things that I now forget,
 Nor can believe. But I remember yet
 A former time when I was used to pray,
 Implore the deaf, cold Heavens for my release.
 And, answerless, I question yet. Is peace
 In all the whirling universe, wherein
 An atom conscious but of pain I spin?
 Or hath it unrest to its very core?
 No death?—horrible thought!—away, away!
 There must be rest. I shall find out one day
 Silence, oblivion, peace for evermore.

CROSS-EXAMINATION.

WHAT knowest thou of this eternal code?
As much as God intended to display.

Wilt thou affirm thou knowest aught of God?
Nor, save His works, that creature ever may.

Is not thy life at times a weary load?
Which aimless on my back he would not lay.

Is it all good thy conscience doth forbode?
The deepest thought doth least my soul affray.

When hath a glimpse of Heav'n been ever show'd
Whilst walking straight, I never miss its ray.

Why should such destiny to thee be owed
Easy alike to Him are yea and nay.

Why shouldst thou reach it by so mean a road?
Ask that of Him who set us in the way.

Art thou more living than a finch or toad?
Is soul sheer waste, if we be such as they?

Thou never wilt prevail to loose the node.
If so, 'twere loss of labour to essay.

Nor to uproot these doubts so thickly sow'd.
Nor thou these deeper-rooted hopes to slay.

RECOVERY.

FOR many a day, like one whose limbs are stiff,
Whose head is heavy with some grievous ail,
I felt, from wicked thoughts, the whole world drag
As millstone round my neck, all my force fail,
Dry up, and ravel into dust and rag.
But lo, I slept, and waking glad as if
I had been hearing music in my sleep,
Went forth, and look'd upon the watery deep.

By stretch (O King Unseen!) of some great hand
My sad, confus'd and fearful soul was shriv'n;
I knew the tranquil mind restored to me
To enjoy the colour of that pure blue heav'n,
Violet cloud shadows on the greenish sea,
And rippling white foam up the yellow sand.

A REBUKE.

I.

POET, why dost weep and groan?
(Nature thus rebuked her son)
Never child do I disown,
But thou art a favour'd one.
Strong and apt attendants run
Swiftly to thy call;
Best of every service done
To thy share doth fall.

II.

Greener tree I give to thee,
Rosier rose, of richer scent,
Brighter river, grander sea,
Bluer sky above thee bent;
Dreams on others never spent,
Waking or asleep,
Love and varying wonderment
Almost angel-deep.

III.

Know, my child, I've sent thee down
To instruct and cheer the rest.
On thy mountain brow a frown
Chills and darkens east and west.
Deep within a lordly breast
Hide thy skill in grief,—
Only in a power express'd
For thy friends' relief.

A SINGER.

THAT which he did not feel, he would not sing;
What most he felt, religion 'twas to hide
In a dumb darkling grotto, where the spring
Of tremulous tears, arising unespied,
Became a holy well that durst not glide
Into the day with moil or murmuring;
Whereto, as if to some unlawful thing,
He stole, musing or praying at its side.

But in the sun he sang with cheerful heart,
Of colour'd season and the whirling sphere,
Warm household habitude and human mirth,
The whole faith-blooded mystery of earth;
And I, who had his secret, still could hear
The grotto's whisper low through every part.

TO A BLIND FRIEND.

BEGGARD of thine inheritance of light,
 The glorious eye-possession of the earth,—
 Be thankful still : how few of those with sight
 Can feel or use their privilege aright !
 A soul undimm'd is of far greater worth,
 Outweighs a million times the deepest dearth
 Of flower-frail sense ; and when from this short night
 It shall emerge, how wonderful the Birth !

Emerge, as one who whilst he slowly strains
 Up a dark narrow tower with sigh on sigh,
 The fresh and brilliant air suddenly gains :
 And lo ! created instantaneously,
 A sunbright world far stretching to the sky ;
 Woods, Lakes, and Rivers ; Valleys, Hills, and Plains.

B O N A D E A .

I.

WAKING after dawn of day,
 Warm and full of smiles I lay,
 Safe, come good or evil hap,
 In a queenly mother's lap.

II.

Her waving skirts of flowing wind
 Rustled the grass and swept behind
 On hanging boughs of pathside trees,
 But shook no bud nor leaf from these ;
 Her misty robe was rich and fair,
 As a mountain's clad in soft blue air ;
 Her breath was like the green smells of Spring
 Blowing round birds to make them sing ;
 Her tresses' tinge faint cloudlets hold
 Where sets the sun in a flame of gold,
 The while her pure face stood serene
 And glowing, as the sky between ;
 Brooks and flow'rs her feet to grace,
 All the shoreless Sea of Space
 Round her and above her spread,
 Doming her imperial head,
 Landscapes on her garment's hem,
 The jewell'd night for diadem.

TO A BLIND FRIEND.

BEGGARD of thine inheritance of light,
 The glorious eye-possession of the earth,—
 Be thankful still : how few of those with sight
 Can feel or use their privilege aright !
 A soul undimm'd is of far greater worth,
 Outweighs a million times the deepest dearth
 Of flower-frail sense ; and when from this short night
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III.

Ever she sung a wondrous song,
 Many-toned and full and strong,
 Yet drawn to whisper in my ear
 As though for mine alone to hear.
 The dash of floods and the chime of rills
 Were in it; far on misty hills
 I heard the footsteps of the thunder,
 And bleating sheep in pastures under.
 The lark in airy glitterings
 Sparkling song from his quivering wings,
 The jolly thrush-notes gay and bold,
 The blackbird's vesper in thicket-fold,
 The rail craik-craiking through starry shadows
 Over dim lawn and darkling meadows,
 The carolling redbreast from roadside spray
 Or garden-wall, on an Autumn day,
 And the waving, rustling sea of wheat,
 Foamed at its marge with meadow-sweet,
 And the whispering harebell on the leas,
 And the forest-harp of the playing breeze
 With strings of subtly varied tone,
 Came in that music, every one:
 And the roar and burst of the ocean waves,
 And the water-chimes in heavy caves,
 And the outcast wind condemn'd to grieve
 Through casement-chinks on a winter eve,
 And a strange-familiar melody
 Of cradle-rock and lullaby,
 And purring flame on a shadowy hearth,
 And hum of frost to the dreaming Earth.

IV.

I was lapt in full content
 When her mouth my mother bent
 Down to my cheek,—and soon I knew
 Where the primrose treasures grew;

And roll'd in richer garden-mines,
 Tasting scents like fairy wines;
 Centred in the heavens that lie
 Round Childhood's short eternity.

V.

Were they moments, were they years,
 Measured out the sliding spheres—
 The growing, changing, longing, dreaming,
 In Me, the centre of all the seeming,
 Till the hour, the hour of hours,
 When she called me from my flow'rs,
 When she kiss'd me on the lips,
 And reveal'd from long eclipse
 Fateful eyes of infinite blue
 Where the living soul shone through
 Like watching stars that lie soft and bright
 In the violet depths of the midsummer night,
 And ever still in measure sung,
 While a softer spirit-tongue,
 Thrilling, mystical, remote,
 Echo'd every falling note,
 With a ringing crystalline,
 A monotony divine?

VI.

Then a strong and joyous madness,
 Then a dark and heavy sadness,
 Swept across my struggling brain;—
 Deep the rapture, fierce the pain,
 Ere I found myself again!
 And the weak departing fever
 Took away from me for ever
 Much that memory can deplore,
 Much, besides, that grieves me more,
 Because my mind in vain is tost
 To recollect what I have lost.

VII.

But now, to keep me from despair,
 Gifts she brought, of mirrors rare,
 Reflecting sea and earth and air ;
 Mingling with these in magic scope
 Phantoms of Memory and of Hope ;
 Catching her ample robe of blue,
 And lighting the sapphire through and through
 With inner blazes that came and went
 Like angels flushing the firmament ;
 Showing a blossom at her feet
 Orbed into a sphere complete,
 Full of beauty and life and power—
 The careless birth of a sunny hour ;
 Painting one face in colour'd flame,
 With the universe for frame.
 Spiritual-strange did forms appear,
 And the stars and the depths of heaven drew near,
 And blended mystic lights and songs
 With glance and voice of earthly throngs.

VIII.

What was that which lurk'd behind
 To draw a fresh cloud on my mind ?
 For I was tempted to despise
 And look upon all with unholy eyes.
 My mother's pure look and royal clothing
 Fill'd me with weariness and loathing ;
 In gentle words I began to hear
 Pining, and discontent, and fear ;
 In louder tones a continual uttering
 Of hate, and rage, and rebellious muttering
 I saw an omnipotent darkness lurk
 To swallow all light, all life, all work ;
 All growing, changing, feeling, dreaming ;
 And Me, the centre of all the seeming,
 Lying encrusted with painful fate,
 A leper at the palace-gate.

IX.

But again she stoop'd,—I feel it now,
 That heavenly kiss on my scalded brow.
 There were awful thunders rolling round me ;
 Harshlest tearings of bands that bound me ;
 Stretchings of cramped, retorted limbs ;
 Agony of life, as when it brims
 On the wrung-out brain of a rescued man,—
 And I was saved from the crushing ban.

X.

Now I am master in my house ;
 Granted power to bind and loose ;
 In noble heirdom set at one
 With princely earth and kingly sun.
 And ever doth my mother keep
 Steady watch the while I sleep ;
 In hours of sickness still she tends me,
 In hours of danger still befriends me ;
 And with voice that rises clearly,
 Sings the hymn I love so dearly,
 Hymn that seems unfolding slowly
 To a sense profound and holy,
 Etherizing loss and gain,
 And forgetting its own strain.

XI.

She hath kiss'd my cheek, my lips, my brow.
 One other kiss awaits me now,
 One which I shall scarcely feel,
 To close mine eyes with loving seal.
 Bona Dea ! live or die,
 Take me, keep me, thy son am I.

THE MESSENGER.

A MESSENGER, that stood beside my bed,
In words of clear and cruel import said
(And yet methought the tone was less unkind),
"I bring thee pain of body and of mind.

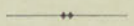
"Each gift of each must pay a toll to me ;
Nor flight, nor force, nor suit can set thee free ;
Until my brother come, I say not when :
Affliction is my name, unloved of men."

I swoon'd, then, bursting up in talk deranged,
Shatter'd to tears ; while he stood by unchanged.
I held my peace, my heart with courage burn'd,
And to his cold touch one faint sigh return'd.

Undreamt-of wings he lifted : "For a while
I vanish. Never be afraid to smile
Lest I waylay thee : curse me not ; nay, love ;
That I may bring thee tidings from above."

And often since, by day or night, descends
The face obdurate ; now almost a friend's.
O ! quite to Faith ; but Frailty's lips not dare
The word. To both this angel taught a pray'r.

"Lord God, thy servant, wounded and bereft,
Feels Thee upon his right hand and his left ;
Hath joy in grief, and still by losing gains ;—
All this is gone, yet all myself remains."



PLACES,

ETC.

PLACES,

ETC.

—♦—
STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

(1597.)

OLD MASTER GRUNSEY AND GOODMAN DODD.

G. God save you, Goodman Dodd,—a sight to see
you!

D. Save you, good Master Grunsey,—Sir, how be
you?

G. Middlish, thank Heav'n! Rare weather for the
wheat.

D. Farms will be thirsty, after all this heat.

G. And so is we. Sit down on this here bench:

We'll drink a pot o' yaäl. Coom then, wench!

My service—ah! I'm well enough, i' fegs,

But for thir plaguey rheum i' both my legs.

Whiles I can't hardly get about: Oh, dear!

D. You see, we don't get younger every year.

G. You're a young fellow yet.

D. Well-nigh threescore.

G. I be your elder fifteen year and more.

Hast any news?

D. Not much. New Place be sold,
And Willy Shakespeare's bought it, so I'm told.

G. What, little Willy Shakespeare bought the
Place!

Lord bless us, how young folk gets on apace!

Sir Hugh's girt house down by the grammar-school!—

This Shakespeare's (take my word upon't) no fool.

I minds him sin' he were so high's my knee;

A gallows little chap as e'er ye see;



One day I cotech'd him peltin' o' my geese
 Below the church; "Yo' let 'em swim i' peace,
 Yong dog!" I says, "or I shall fling 'ee in."
 Will was on t'other bank, and did but grin,
 And call out, "Sir, you come across to here!"

D. I knows old John this five and thirty year.
 In old times many a cup he made me drink;
 But Willy warn't aborn then, I don't think,
 Or might a' been a babe on's mother's arm,
 When I did cart 'en fleeces from our farm.
 I went a-coortin' then, in Avon Lane,
 And, tho' bit furder, I was allays fain
 To bring my cart thereby, upon a chance
 To catch some foolish little nod or glance,
 Or "Meet me, Mary, won't 'ee, Charlcote way,
 Or down at Clopton Bridge, next holiday?"—
 Here to yer, maäster.

G. Säame to yo.' 'Tis hot.
 We might do wuss nor call another pot.
 Good Mistress Nan!

Will Shakespeare, troth, I knew;
 A nimble curly pate, and pretty, too,
 About the street; he'd grow'd an idle lad,
 And like enough, 'twas thought, to turn out bad;
 I don't just fairly know, but folk did say
 He vex'd the Lucys, and so fleed away.

D. He's wuth as much as Tanner Twigg to-day;
 And all by plays in Lunnon.

G. Folk talks big;
 Will Shakespeare wuth as much as Tanner Twigg—
 Tut, tut! Be Will a player-man by trade?

D. O' course he be, o' course he be; and made
 A woundy heap o' money, too, and bought
 A playhouse for himsen like, out and out;
 And makes up plays, beside, for 'en to act;
 Tho' I cawn't tell 'ee rightly, for a fact,
 If out o' books or's owan yead it be.

We'n other work to think on, yo' and me.
 They say Will's doing foinely, howsomiver.

G. Why, Dodd, the little chap were allays cliver.
 I don't know nothing now o' such-like toys;
 New fashions plenty, mun', sin' we were boys;
 Mummins we used to han, wi' scriptur' hist'ries,
 An' puppet-shows, and moralities, and myst'ries;
 The Death o' Judas was a pretty thing,
 "Ju-dass! Ju-dass!" the Divil used to sing.
 But time goes on, for sure, and fashion alters.

D. At th' Falcon, t'other night, says young Jack
 Walters,
 'Willy's a great man now!'

G. A jolterhead!
 What does it count for, when all's done and said?
 Ah! who'll obey, let Will say "Come" or "Go"?
 Such like as him, don't reckon much, I trow.
 Sir, they shall travel first, like you and me,
 See Lunnon, to find out what great men be.
 Ay, marry, must they. Saints! to see the Court
 Take water down to Greenwich; there's fine sport!
 Her Highness i' her frills and puffs and pearls,
 Barons, and lords, and chamberlains, and earls,
 So thick as midges round her,—look at such
 An' ye would talk o' greatness! why, the touch
 Be on their stewards and lackeys, Goodman Dodd,
 Who'll hardly answer Shakespeare wi' a nod,
 And let him come, doff'd cap and bended knee.
 We knows a trifle, neighbour, you and me.

D. We may, sir. This here's grand old Stratford brew;
 No better yaäl i' Lunnon, search it through.
 New Place ben't no such bargain, when all's done;
 'Twas dear, I knows it.

G. Yo' bought better, mun,
 At Hoggin Fields: all ain't alike in skill.

D. Thanks to the Lord above! I've not done ill.
 No more han yo', friend Grunsey, in yer trade.

G. So-so. But here's young Will wi' money made
And money saved; whereon I sets him down,
Say else who likes, a credit to the town;
Tho' some do shake their yeads at player-folk.

D. A very civil man to chat and joke;
I've ofttimes had a bit o' talk wi' Will.

G. How doth old Master Shakespeare?

D. Bravely still.
And so doth madam too, the comely dame.

G. And Willy's wife—what used to be her name?
Older than Willy, six, seven year or so;
Ann something—Hatchard was it? Hatchway?—no.

D. Why, Hathaway, fro' down by Shottery gate.
I don't think she's so much about o' late.
Their son, yo' see, the only son they had,
Died last year, and she took on dreadful bad;
And so the fayther did awhile, I'm told.
This boy o' theirs was nine or ten year old.
—Willy himsen may bide here now, mayhap.

G. He allays were a cliver little chap.
I'm glad o's luck, an' 'twere for old John's sake.
Your arm, sweet sir. Oh, how my legs do ache!

WEIMAR

[October, 1859.]

I.

IN little German Weimar,
With soft green hills enfolded,
Where shady Ilm-brook wanders,
A Great Man lived and wrote;
In life and art and nature
He conn'd their "open secret,"
Of men and hours and fortunes
He reverently took note.
Upon a verge of Europe,
Facing the silent sunsets,
And loud Atlantic billows,
For me, too, rose his thought,—
Turn'd to a shape of stars on high
Within the spiritual sky
Of many an upward-gazing eye.

II.

And now, this new October,
 Within a holy garden,
 'Mid flowers and trees and crosses,
 When dusk begins to fall,—
 Where linden leaves are paling,
 And poplar leaves are gilded,
 And crimson is the wild-vine
 That hangs across the wall,—
 I see the little temple
 Wherein, with dust of princes,
 The body lies of Goethe,
 And may not move at all.
 He mark'd all changes of the year
 He loved to live; he did not fear
 The never-broken silence here.

III.

Slow foots the gray old Sexton,
 The ducal town's Dead-watcher,
 Attending day and night time
 A bell that never rings;
 The corpse upon the pallet,
 A thread to every finger,—
 The slightest touch would sound it,
 But silence broods and clings.
 Beside the room of stillness,
 While yet his couch is warmer,
 This old man hath his bidding,
 Therefrom the key he brings.
 For mighty mortals, in his day,
 He hath unlock'd the House of Clay,—
 For *them*, as we are wont to say.

IV.

By yellow-leafy midwalk
 Slow foots that aged Sexton;
 " *Ja wohl!* I have seen Goethe,
 And spoken, too, with him."
 The lamp with cord he lowers,
 And I, by steps descending,
 Behold, through grated doorway,
 A chamber chill and dim,—
 Gaze on a dark red coffer:
 Full fourscore years were counted,
 When that grand head lay useless,
 And each heroic limb.
 Schiller's dust is close beside,
 And Karl August's not far,—denied
 His chosen place by princely pride.

V.

The day had gloom'd and drizzled,
 But clear'd itself in parting,
 The hills were soft and hazy,
 Fine colours streak'd the west
 (Above that distant ocean),
 And Weimar stood before me,
 A dream of half my lifetime,
 A vision for the rest:
 The House that fronts the fountain,
 The Cottage at the woodside,—
 Long since I surely knew them,
 But still, to see was best.
 Town and Park for eyes and feet:
 But all th' inhabitants I greet
 Are Ghosts, in every walk and street

MOONRISE.

(IN THE ISLE OF MAN.)

I.

ABOVE the massy headlands dim
 A swelling glow, a fiery birth,
 A marvel in the sky doth swim,
 Advanced upon the hush of earth ;

A Globe, o'erhanging bright and brave,
 The pale green-glimmering ocean floor,
 Silvers its wave, its rustling wave,
 Soft folded on the shelving shore.

II.

O lonely Moon, a lonely place
 Thou cheerest with thy welcome face ;
 Three sand-side houses, and afar
 The steady beacon's faithful star,
 Are all the tokens few and weak
 That here of human effort speak.

III.

But this very moment risen
 Full above the mighty City,
 Viewing palace, viewing prison,
 Calmly, without pride or pity,
 Strik'st thou its lamplit ranges wan,
 Witching all thou gazest on.
 Thou hast one mysterious pattern made
 Over the multiform enormous bound ;
 Halving church-towers and endless streets with shade

Entering a million rooms, from rich to bare,
 With countless human scenes and groupings there ;
 Piercing to many a lurking-place profound ;
 Marking those aits of melancholy ground
 Where 'mid the rush of life the dead repose ;
 Pale sliding through with sad unnoticed ray
 Skylights of crowded theatres, and long rows
 Of hospital corridors, but glittering gay
 In eyes of youth, and love, and merriment ;
 Flooding the suburbs with effulgence wide,
 Gleaming upon the River which doth glide
 Serpentine through it all, intent to hide
 Its secrets, crossed by many a dotted Bridge.
 —Here's but the sea, the shadowy mountain-ridge.

IV.

Little Town by other shores,
 Girt with other mountains ;
 No Italian city pours
 Such a wealth of fountains
 As in thee my footsteps meet
 Gushing up in every street
 Of recollections full and sweet,
 Childhood's home of vanish'd bliss,
 Still the heart's metropolis.
 O Moon, a calm ascent is thine
 Above that well-known mountain-line,
 There, while I look, ascendest thou,
 Its towering westward bastion now
 To golden sunset bids goodnight
 And eastward it receives thy ghostly light,
 Art thou truly looking down
 Into the lanes of the little Town
 Where I know every chimney's place,
 Every door and window's face ?
 Hast thou set before thee clear,
 As in many a by-gone year

Before the years began to change,
 One small roof, familiar—strange,
 Opening wide to many a vision
 Grim, fantastic, or elysian?
 Yes,—on that other River glancing,
 In its ripples merrily dancing,
 Swallowed in the gloomy arches
 Where beneath the Bridge it marches
 (One long bridge, with not a light
 Whether in black or shiny night),
 Beaming unopposed and wide
 O'er the Harbour's mingling tide,
 Touching with a wand of power,
 Landmark gray, the old Church-tower,
 Yet disturbing not its sleep
 Nor the slumber, far more deep,
 Its solitary precincts claim,
 Paved with many a well-known name,—
 As thou wilt thou goest free
 In the place where I would be.
 There the Fall for ever tolls,
 And the Bar, through nights and days,
 Booms from sandhills by the sea
 When the Atlantic billow rolls
 Heavily and solemnly,
 Now whitened with thy rays.
 The narrow tide I gaze on here
 With thee, O Moon, less kindly greets
 Mine eyes than that which fiercely beats
 The stern Atlantic cliffs along;
 Its voice, a stranger's, far less strong,
 Less soothes mine ear.

v.

But, Lily of the Lake of Heaven,
 Thou Wellhead pure and deep of silver light
 O'erflowing mistily a world of dreams,

Claim'st thou no homage for thyself to-night?—
 Watcher of Earth, full many a Mountain-range
 River and Wilderness and City strange
 Within thy ken,—Empress of ocean-streams
 And stormier human souls, to whom is given
 To fling great waves ashore and make men wild,—
 Powerful Enchantress with so calm a face,
 By whom are reconciled
 The contradictories of Time, of Space,
 Of things that seem to be.
 The passing moment and the present place
 Merge, melt, when look'd upon by Thee,
 Into Eternity.

W. W.

(April 23rd, 1850).

ONE April found a Youth on Mona's shore,
 With daily prospect of the Cumbrian Hills,
 Cloud-wreath'd or sunlit, o'er the Irish Sea.
 "A Prince dwells there," he said, "and I shall walk
 Through landscapes that confess him suzerain
 Under the SOVEREIGN LORD of earth and men,—
 May see the Prince himself, may humbly meet
 His venerable eye, may hear his voice."
 And day by day new Spring upon the fields
 And waves grew brighter.

One day brought this word—
 "The wise old Poet of the mountain-land
 Is gone away for ever. You may seek
 But never shall you find him crooning song
 Among the shadows of the folded hills,
 By lonely tarn or dashing rivulet,
 Down the green valley, up the windy fell,
 In rock-built pass, or under whispering leaves,
 Or floating on the broad translucent mere
 Between two heavens. You will but find his grave."

The poet-loving Youth went forth; and clear
 Stood the far coast across a glittering tide;
 But how forlorn those faint-blue rocky tops!
 How emptied of its joy the enchanted ground!
 He paced the strand, and raised his eyes anew,
 And saw as 'twere a halo round the peaks.
 Something of Him abides there, and will stay;
 Those Mountains were in WORDSWORTH'S soul; his
 soul
 Is on those Mountains, now, and evermore.

THREE SISTERS OF HAWORTH.

THREE sisters, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne,
 Afar in Yorkshire wolds they live together;
 Names that I keep like any sacristan;
 The human registry of souls as pure
 As sky in hermit waters on a moor,
 Those liquid islands of dark seas of heather;
 Voices that reach my solitude from theirs;
 Hands that I kiss a thousand miles away,
 And send a thousand greetings of my own—
 But these, alas! only the west wind bears.
 Nay, they have vanish'd. Hills and vales are lone
 Where Earth once knew them. What is now to say?
 Three strangers dead—'tis little to endure:
 Great crowds of strangers vanish every day.
 Yet will I see those gravestones if I may.

IN THE TRAIN.

NOW, with its precious human freight,
 Barr'd and link'd in long array,
 Slowly moves th' enormous weight,
 Smoothly glides away ;

Quick and quicker, panting loud,
 Finds the narrow ledges true.
 Over fields a torn white cloud
 Lingers into dew.

Swiftly with dismaying shriek,
 Into cavern gloom we roll,
 Rushing into daylight, seek
 Tirelessly our goal.

Through the mountain's rocky heart,
 Over champaign richly spread,
 Thwart the flood, the chasm we dart,
 Distant streets to tread.

Miracle nor magic spell
 Thus our Flying Village moves ;
 Mind with matter mingled well
 Potent leaven proves.

Partner, not antagonist,
 Nature lends us all that's hers :
 But, the strict conditions miss'd,
 Jealously demurs.

EXPRESS

(From Liverpool, Southwards.)

WE move in elephantine row,
 The faces of our friends retire,
 The roof withdraws, and curtsying flow
 The message-bearing lines of wire ;
 With doubling, redoubling beat,
 Smoother we run and more fleet.

By flow'r-knots, shrubs, and slopes of grass,
 Cut walls of rock with ivy-stains,
 Thro' winking arches swift we pass,
 And flying, meet the flying trains,
 Whirr—whirr—gone !
 And still we hurry on ;

By orchards, kine in pleasant leas,
 A hamlet-lane, a spire, a pond,
 Long hedgerows, counter-changing trees,
 With blue and steady hills beyond ;
 (House, platform, post,
 Flash—and are lost !)

Smooth-edged canals, and mills on brooks ;
 Old farmsteads, busier than they seem,
 Rose-crust'd or of graver looks,
 Rich with old tile and motley beam ;
 Clay-cutting, slope, and ridge,
 The hollow rumbling bridge.

Gray vapour-surges, whirl'd in the wind
 Of roaring tunnels, dark and long,
 Then sky and landscape unconfined,
 Then streets again where workers throng
 Come—go. The whistle shrill
 Controls us to its will.

Broad vents, and chimneys tall as masts,
 With heavy flags of streaming smoke ;
 Brick mazes, fiery furnace-blasts,
 Walls, waggons, gritty heaps of coke ;
 Through these our ponderous rank
 Glides in with hiss and clank.

So have we sped our wondrous course
 Amid a peaceful busy land,
 Subdued by long and painful force
 Of planning head and plodding hand.
 How much by labour can
 The feeble race of man !

THE STOLEN PATH.

HIGHWAYS, byways, such are my ways ;
 Parks like this I detest,
 Grumble to travel on miles of gravel
 Through landscapes robb'd of their zest ;
 Even tho' the gatelodge sentry
 Yields us privilege of entry,
 Lets us view, in passing through,
 Lawns and groves whose loneliness
 Doth imprisonment express
 Not freedom, rhododendron flowers
 Lording it over woodland bowers,
 Wandering rill damm'd up to make
 A lazy, languid pleasure-lake,
 (Who therein doth pleasure take ?)
 Clipt yews ; geometric beds ;
 All 'twixt gate and gate that spreads.
 Where is that old Pathway's line,
 Which, could we find it, is yours and mine,
 Free from before King Alfred's day ;
 A winding walk, a pleasant way,
 By mead and heath, by grove and glen,
 Belonging to the feet of men
 Past, present, and to come ; that show'd
 The prospect, saved the dusty road ?

Those who already have too much
 Would fain get all into their clutch ;
 The demon greed of robber kings
 Is busy here in lesser things ;
 The Path is gone ; not shut by law,
 But filch'd with shameless cunning paw
 And swallow'd : none at hand to dare
 Beard the culprit in his lair,
 The Great Man, to whose mind are known
 No rights at all except his own,
 Who fain would shut from every eye
 Th' old landscape and more ancient sky,
 Save upon sufferance. Honour'd sir,
 Reflect ! Art thou indeed a cur,
 A caitiff ? What, beneath the sun,
 Hast thou, have those before thee, done,
 To earn so huge an overshare
 Of the world's good things ? Have a care,
 Lest, when your Worship sits on high,
 A pilferer of twigs to try,
 Or casual poacher, some one cry
 In accents of contempt and wrath,
 " Who stole our ancient Public Path ?"
 — A crime incomparably worse
 Than his who merely takes a purse,
 Poor devil ! with the treadmill near ;
 No Magistrate, M.P., or Peer.

PER CONTRA.

THIS old hereditary ground
 Welcomes within its peaceful bound
 All peaceful comers. Push the gate :
 What miles of oak and fern await
 Our footsteps ; unmolested space
 As fair and free for you and me
 As for His Grace who owns the place,
 Whose ownership is not the same
 As selfishness, with finer name,—
 Long live such noble dukes as he !
 In lieu of herald's meagre leaves,
 The grateful Fancy richlier weaves,
 And doth the whole wide woodland set
 For garland round this coronet.

PLACES AND MEN.

IN Sussex here, by shingle and by sand,
 Flat fields and farmsteads in their wind-blown trees,
 The shallow tide-wave courses to the land,
 And all along the down a fringe one sees
 Of ducal woods. That "dim discover'd spire"
 Is Chichester, where COLLINS felt a fire
 Touch his sad lips; thatch'd Felpham roofs are these,
 Where happy BLAKE found Heav'n more close at hand.

Goodwood and Arundel possess their lords,
 Successive in the towers and groves, which stay;
 These two poor men, by some right of their own,
 Possess'd the earth and sea, the sun and moon,
 The inner sweet of life; and put in words
 A personal force that doth not pass away.

Littlehampton.

IN DREAM-WORLD.

I DREAM'D that I, being dead a hundred years,
 (In dream-world, death is free from waking fears)
 Stood in a City, in the market-place,
 And saw a snowy marble Statuette,
 Little, but delicately carven, set
 Within a corner-niche. The populace
 Look'd at it now and then in passing-by,
 And some with praise. "Who sculptured it?" said I,
 And then my own name sounded in mine ears;
 And, gently waking, in my bed I lay,
 With mind contented, in the newborn day.

The Old Tune.

AIR: Colleen Dhas.

Musical notation for the first system, featuring a treble and bass clef with a 9/8 time signature. The melody is marked with dynamics *f* and *p*.

Musical notation for the second system, including a first ending marked '1. 'Mongst the' and a second ending marked '2. Next'. Dynamics *f* and *p* are indicated.

Musical notation for the third system, with lyrics: "green i-rish hills I love dearly, At the close of a bright summer day, I day was the last look of Erin; 'Twas almost like death to de-part; And". Dynamics *f* and *p* are indicated.

[Note.—The right pronunciation of Erin (*Eirinn*) is 'Ayr-in.']

Musical notation for the first system on page 79, with lyrics: "heard an old tune ill - ted clear-ly, That sooth'd half my sor-rows a - way. And since, in my for - eign way-far-ing, That tune's like a thread round my heart. Still". Dynamics *ppp* are indicated.

Musical notation for the second system on page 79, with lyrics: "far o'er the wide-rolling ocean Methinks I am hearing it now, As a back to the dear old Green Island It draws me, I cannot tell how, The".

Musical notation for the third system on page 79, with lyrics: "farewell of tender e-motion; } whisper in music of my land; } 'The Pret-ty Girl milking her Cow." Dynamics *f* are indicated.

Musical notation for the fourth system on page 79, concluding the piece.

THE OLD TUNE.

AIR—*Colleen Dhas.*

I.

'MONGST the green Irish hills I love dearly,
At the close of a bright summer day,
I heard an old tune lilted clearly,
That sooth'd half my sorrows away.
And far o'er the wide-rolling ocean
Methinks I am hearing it now,
As a farewell of tender emotion,—
"The Pretty Girl Milking her Cow."

II.

Next day was the last look of Erin ;
'Twas almost like death to depart ;
And since, in my foreign wayfaring,
That tune's like a thread round my heart.
Still back to the dear old Green Island
It draws me, I cannot tell how,
The whisper in music of *my* land,—
"The Pretty Girl Milking her Cow."

BRIDEGROOM'S PARK.



BRIDEGROOM'S PARK.

I.—FROM THE HIGHWAY.

"FRIEND Edward, from this turn remark
The sweep of woodland. 'Bridegroom's Park'
We call it, shut while you were here
By selfish Cupid, who allows
A sunny glimpse through beechen boughs
Of dells of grass with fallow deer,
And one white corner of the house
Built for the young Heir's wedding-day,
The dull old walls being swept away.
Wide and low, its eaves are laid
Over a slender colonnade,
Partly hiding, partly seen,
Amid redundant veils of green,
Which garland pillars into bowers,
And top them with a frieze of flowers ;
The slight fence of a crystal door
(Like air enslaved by magic lore)
Or window reaching to the floor,
Divides the richly furnish'd rooms
From terraces of emerald sward,
Vases full of many blooms,
And little gates of rose to guard
The sidelong steps of easy flight ;
Or, with a touch, they all unite.
All's perfect for a Bride's delight,
And She most worthy of it all ;
Gold-hair'd (I've seen her), slim and tall ;

With—O! a true celestial face
Of tender gravity and grace,
And gentle eyes that look you through,
Eyes of softly solemn blue.

Serene the wealthy mortal's fate,
Whose last wild-oats is duly sown!
Observe his Paradise's gate,
With two heraldic brutes in stone
For sentries.

Did the coppice move?
A straggling deer perhaps. By Jove!
A woman brushing through: she's gone.
Now what the deuce can bring her there?
Jog, lad; it's none of our affair.

Well—you're to voyage, and I'm to stay.
Will Lucy kiss you, some other day,
When you carry your nuggets back this way?
You must not grow so rich and wise
That friends shall fail to recognise
The schoolboy twinkle in your eyes.
Each his own track. I'll mind my farm,
And keep the old folks' chimney warm.
But however we strive, and chance to thrive,
We shall scarcely overtake this Youth,
Who has all to his wish, and seems in truth
The very luckiest man alive."

II.—BY THE POND.

"These walls of green, my guarded Queen!
A labyrinth of shade and sheen,
Bar out the world a thousand miles,
Helping the pathway's winding wiles
To pose you to the end. Now think,

What thanks might one deserve for this—
Which lately was a swamp, and is
An elfin lake, its curving brink
Embossed with rhododendron bloom,
Azaleas, lilies, jewelries,
(Ruby and amethyst grow like these
Under our feet) on fire to dress,
Round every little glassy bay,
The sloping turf with gorgeousness?
As right, we look our best to-day;
No petal dropt, no speck of gloom.

Emmeline, this faery lake
Rose to its margins for your sake;
As yet without a name, it sues
Your best invention; think and choose.
Its flood is gather'd on the fells,
(Whose foldings you and I shall trace)
Hid in many a hollow place;
But through Himalayan dells,
Where the silvery pinnacles
Hanging faint in furthest heaven
Catch the flames of morn and even,
Round their lowest rampart swells
The surge of rhododendron flow'rs,
Indian ancestry of ours:
And the tropic woods luxuriantly
By Oronooko's river-sea
Nurtured the germs of this and this;
And there's a blossom first was seen
In dragon-vase of white and green
By the sweetheart of a mandarin,
Winking her little eyes for bliss.

Look, how these merry insects go
In rippling meshes to and fro,
Waltzing over the liquid glass,
Dropping their shadows to cross and travel
Like ghosts, on the pavement of sunny gravel.

Maybe to music, whose thrills outpass
 Our finest ear,—yes, even yours,
 Whom the mystery of sound allures
 From star to star. In this gulf beyond,
 Silent people of the pond
 Slip from noonday glare, to win
 Their crystal twilights far within.
 See the creatures glance and hide,
 Turn, and waver, and glimmer, and glide,
 Jerk away, ascend, and poise,
 Come and vanish without noise,
 Mope, with mouth of drowsy drinking,
 Waving fins and eyes unwinking,
 Flirt a tail, and shoot below.
 How little of their life we know !
 Or these birds' life that twittering dart
 To the shrubbery's woven heart.
 Which is happier, bird or fish ?
 Have they memory, hope, and wish ?
 Various temper ? perverse will—
 That secret source of boundless ill ?
 Why should not human creatures run
 A careless course through shadow and sun ?
 Ah, Love, that may never be !
 We are of a different birth,
 Of deeper sphere than the fishes' home,
 Higher than bird's wings may roam,
 Greater than ocean, air, and earth.

The Summer's youth is now at prime.
 Swiftly a season whirls away.
 Two days past, the bladed corn
 Whisper'd nothing of harvest-time ;
 Already a tinge of brown is born
 On the barley-spears that lightly sway ;
 The plumes of purple-seeded grass
 Bowing and bending as you pass,

Our mowers at the break of day
 Shall sweep them into swaths of hay.
 So the season whirls away.
 And every aspect we must learn,
 Every changing mood discern ;
 All sides, over the country speed,
 'She upon her milk-white steed,
 And he upon his gray,' to roam
 Gladly, turn more gladly homie ;
 Plan, improve, and see our tenants ;
 Visit neighbours, for pleasure or penance ;
 Excellent people some, no doubt,
 And the rest will do to talk about.
 June, July, and August : next
 September comes ; and here we stand
 To watch those swallows some clear day
 In a birdish trouble, half perplex'd,
 Bidding adieu their tribe's old way,
 Tho' the sunbeam coaxes them yet to stay ;
 Swinging through the populous air,
 Dipping, every bird, in play,
 To kiss its flying image there.
 And when Autumn's wealthy heavy hand
 Paints with brown gold the beechen leaves,
 And the wind comes cool, and the latest sheaves,
 Quivers fill'd with bounty, rest
 On stubble-slope,—then *we* shall say
 Adieu for a time our fading bow'rs,
 Pictures within and out-of-doors,
 And all the petted greenhouse flow'rs.
 But, though your harp remains behind
 To keep the piano company,
 Your light-strung Sprite of Serenades
 Shall watch with us how daylight fades
 Where sea and air enhance their dyes
 A thousand-fold for lovers' eyes.
 And we shall fancy on far-off coast

The chill pavilions of the frost,
 And landscapes in a snow-wreath lost.
 —You, the well-fenced nun like child,
 I, the bold youth, left loose and wild,
 Join'd together for evermore,
 To wander at will by sea and shore,—
 Strange and very strange it seems!
 More like the shifting world of dreams.

Choose at will your path, my Queen,
 Through this labyrinth of green,
 As tho' 'twere life's perplexing scene.
 To go in search of your missing book,
 You careless girl? one other search?
 Wood or garden, which do you say?
 'Twere only toil in vain; for, look—
 I found it, free of spot or smirch,
 On a pillow of wood-sorrel sleeping
 Under the Fox's Cliff to-day.
 Not so much as your place is lost,
 Given to this delicate warden's keeping,—
 Jasmin that deserves to stay
 Enshrined there henceforth, never toss'd
 Like other dying blooms away.

Summer, autumn, winter—yes,
 And much will come that we cannot guess;
 Every minute brings its chance.

Bend we now a parting glance
 Down through the peaceful purity,
 The shadow and the mystery,
 As old saints look into their grave.
 Water-elves may peep at me;
 Only my own wife's face I see,
 Like sunny light within the wave,
 Dearer to me than sunny light.
 It rose, and look'd away my night;
 Whose phantoms, of desire or dread,
 Like fogs and shades and dreams are fled."

III.—THROUGH THE WOOD.

"A fire keeps burning in this breast.
 The smoke ascending to my brain
 Sometimes stupefies the pain.
 Sometimes my senses drop, no doubt.
 I do not always feel the pain:
 But my head is a weary, weary load.
 What place is this?—I sit at rest,
 With grass and bushes round about;
 No dust, no noise, no endless road,
 No torturing light. Stay, let me think,
 Is this the place where I knelt to drink,
 And all my hair broke loose and fell,
 And floated in the cold, clear well
 Hung with rock-weeds? two children came
 With pitchers, but they scream'd and ran;
 The woman stared, the cursèd man
 Laugh'd—no, no, this is not the same.
 I now remember. Dragging through
 The thorny fence has torn my gown.
 These boots are very nearly done.
 What matter? so's my journey, too.

Nearly done . . . A quiet spot!
 Flowers touch my hand. It's summer now.
 What summer meant I had forgot;
 Except that it was glaring hot
 Through tedious days, and heavy hot
 Through dreadful nights.

The drooping bough
 Is elm; its shadow lies below.
 Gathering flowers we used to creep
 Along the hedgerows, where the sun
 Came through like this; then, everyone,
 Find out some arbour close and cool,

To weave them in our rushy caps,
Primroses, bluebells, such a heap,
Stay, now!—the girls are hid perhaps—
It may be all a dream—

You fool!

Was it for this you tramp'd your way
And begg'd your way by night and day
To find this place? . . . It's his domain:
Each tree is his, each blade of grass
Under my feet. How dare I pass,
A tatter'd vagrant, half insane,
Scarce fit to slink by the roadside,
These lordly bounds, where, with his Bride—
I tell you, kneeling on this sod,
He is, before the face of God,
My husband!

I was innocent

The day I first set eyes on him,
Eyes that no tears had yet made dim,
Nor fever wild. The day he went,
(That day, O God of Heaven!) I found,
In the sick brain slow turning round,
Dreadful forebodings of my fate.
A week was not so long to wait:
Another pass'd,—and then a third.
My face grew thin—eyes fix'd—I heard
And started if a feather stir'd.
Each night 'to-morrow!' heard me say,
Each morning 'he will come to-day.'
Who taps upon the chamber door?
A letter—he will come no more.
Then stupor. Then a horrid strife
Trampling my brain and soul and life,—
Hunting me out as with a knife
From home—from home—

And I was young,
And happy. May his heart be wrung

As mine is! learn that even I
Was something, and at least can die
Of such a wound. In any case
He'll see the death that's in my face.
To die is still within the power
Of girls with neither rank nor dower.

This his place, and I am here.
The house lay that side as one came.
How sick and deadly tired I am!
Time has been lost: O this new fear,
That I may fall and never rise!
Clouds come and go within my eyes.
I'm hot and cold, my limbs all slack,
My swollen feet the same as dead;
A weight like lead draws down my head,
The boughs and brambles pull me back.
Stay: the wood opens to the hill.
A moment now. The house is near.
But one may view it closer still
From these thick laurels on the right,
. . . What is this? Who come in sight?
He, with his Bride. It sends new might
Through all my feeble body. Hush!
Which way? which way? which way? that bush
Hides them—they're coming—do they pause?
He points, almost to me!—he draws
Her tow'rds him, and I know the smile
That's on his face—O heart of guile!
No, 'twas the selfish gaiety
And arrogance of wealth. I see
Your Bride is tall, and graceful too.
That arch of leaves invites you through.
I follow. Why should I be loth
To hurt her? . . . Ha! I'll find them both.
Six words suffice to make her know.
Both, both shall hear—it must be so!"

IV.—MOSSGROWN.

“Seven years gone, and we together
 Ramble as before, old Ned!
 Not a brown curl on your head
 Soil'd with touch of time or weather.
 Yet no wonder if you fear'd,
 With that broad chest and bushy beard,
 Lucy might scarce remember you.
 My letters, had they painted true
 The child grown woman?”

Here's our way.

Autumn in its last decay;
 The hills have misty solitude
 And silence; dead leaves drop in the wood;
 And free across the Park we stray,
 Where only the too-much freedom baulks.
 These half-obliterated walks,
 The tangling grass, the shrubberies choked
 With briars, the runnel which has soak'd
 Its lawn-foot to a marsh, between
 The treacherous tufts of brighter green,
 The garden, plann'd with costly care,
 Now wilder'd as a maniac's hair,
 The blinded mansion's constant gloom,
 Winter and summer, night and day,
 Save when the stealthy hours let fall
 A sunbeam, or more pallid ray,
 Creeping across the floor and wall
 From solitary room to room,
 To pry and vanish, like the rest,
 Weary of a useless quest,
 The sombre face of hill and grove,
 The very clouds which seem to move
 Sadly, be it swift or slow,—
 How unlike this you scarcely know,
 Was “Bridegroom's Park” seven years ago.

Human Spirits, line by line,
 Have left hereon their visible trace;
 As may, methinks, to Eye Divine,
 Human history and each one's share
 Be closely written everywhere
 Over the solid planet's face.
 A sour old Witch,—a surly Youth,
 Her grandson,—three great dogs, uncouth
 To strangers (I'm on terms with all),
 Are household now. Sometimes, at fall
 Of dusk, a Shape is said to move
 Amid the drear entangled grove,
 Or seems lamentingly to stand
 Beside a pool that's close at hand.
 Rare are the human steps that pass
 On mossy walk or tufted grass.

Let's force the brushwood barrier,
 No path remaining. Here's a chair!
 Once a cool delightful seat,
 Now the warty toad's retreat,
 Cushion'd with fungus, sprouting rank,
 Smear'd with the lazy gluey dank.
 No doubt the Ghost sits often there—
 A Female Shadow with wide eyes
 And dripping garments. This way lies
 The pool, the little pleasure-lake,
 Which cost a pretty sum to make;
 Stoop for this bough, and see it now
 A dismal solitary slough,
 Scummy, weedy, ragged, rotten,
 Shut in jail, forsook, forgotten.

Most of the story you have heard:
 The bower of bliss at length prepared
 To the last blossom, line of gilding,
 (Never such a dainty building)
 One day, Bride and Bridegroom came;
 The hills at dusk with merry flame

Crowning their welcome : they had June,
Grand weather—and a honeymoon !
Came, to go away too soon,
And never come again.

The Bride

Was in her old home when she died,
On a winter's day in the time of snow,
(She never saw that year to an end),
And he has wander'd far and wide,
And look'd on many a distant hill,
But not on these he used to know
Round his park that wave and bend,
And people think he never will.

Who can probe a spirit's pain ?
Who tell that man's loss, or gain ?
How far he sinn'd, how far he loved,
How much by what befell was moved,
If there his real happiness
Began, or ended, who shall guess ?
Trivial the biographic scroll
Save as a history of the soul,
Perhaps whose mightiest events
Are dumb and secret incidents.
A man's true life and history
Is like the bottom of the sea,
Where mountains and huge valleys hide
Below the wrinkles of the tide,
Under the peaceful mirror, under
Billowy foam and tempest-thunder.

Rude the flow'r-shrubs' overgrowth ;
Dark frowns the clump of firs beyond ;
At twilight one might well be loth
To linger here alone, and find
The story vivid in one's mind.
A Young Girl, gently bred and fair,
A widow's daughter, whom the Heir
Met somewhere westward on a time,

Came down to this secluded pond,
That's now a mat of weeds and slime,
One summer-day seven years ago,
Sunshine above and flowers below.
Neglect had driven her to despair.
And, poor thing, in her frenzied mood
Bursting upon their solitude,
She drown'd herself, before the face
Of Bride and Bridegroom. Here's the place.

Now mark—that very summer day
You, Ned, and I look'd down this way,
And saw the girl herself—yes, we !
Skirting the coppice—that was She.

Imagine (this at least is known)
The frantic creature's plunge ; the Bride
Swooning by her husband's side ;
And him, alone, and not alone,
Turning aghast from each to each,
Shouting for help, but none in reach.
He sees the drowning woman sink,
Twice—thrice—then, headlong from the brink,
He drags her to the grass—too late.
There by his servants was he found,
Bewilder'd by the stroke of fate ;
With two pale figures on the ground,
One in the chill of watery death,
One with long-drawn painful breath
Reviving. Sudden was the blow,
Dreadful and deep the change. We'll go
And find the house.

Suspicion pries
From wrinkled mouth and peering eyes,
You old deaf Dame ! but friends are we.
Else should I never grasp this key,
Or tread this broad and lonely stair,
Or let this unexpected glare
Of outdoor world insult the gloom

That lives in each forsaken room,
 Through which the gammer daily creeps,
 And all from dust and mildew keeps.
 Few hands may slide this veil aside,
 To show—a picture of the Bride.
 Is she not gently dignified?
 Her curving neck, how smooth and long;
 Her eyes, that softly look you through,
 To think of violets were to wrong
 Their lucency of living blue.

The new hope of that fair young wife,
 The sacred and mysterious life
 Which counts as yet no separate hours,
 Yielding to sorrow's hurtful powers,
 Quench'd its faint gleam before a morn;
 And when her breathless babe was born
 Almost as still the mother lay,
 Almost as dumb, day after day,
 Till on the fifth she pass'd away;
 And (far too soon) her marriage-bell
 Must now begin to ring her knell.
 Old man, and child, and village lass,
 Who stood to see her wedding pass—
 No further stoops the hoary head,
 The merry maid is still unwed,
 The child is yet a child, no more,
 Watching her hearse go by their door.
 Her bridal wreath one summer gave,
 The next, a garland for her grave.

Close the shutter. Bright and sharp
 The ray falls on those shrouded things,—
 A grand piano and a harp,
 Where no one ever plays or sings.

No, truly,—He will not forget.
 But things go on; he's a young man yet;
 His life has many a turn to take;

He may fell this wood, fill up the lake,
 Throw down the house (so should not I),
 Or sell it to you, Ned, if you'll buy;
 Or, perhaps, come thoughtfully back some day,
 With humble heart and head grown gray.

Homeward now, as quick as you will;
 These afternoons are short and chill.
 There's my haggart, under the hill;
 Through evening's fog the cornstacks rise
 Like domes of a little Arab city
 Girt by its wall, with a bunch of trees
 At a corner—palms, for aught one sees.
 Sister Lucy is there alone;
 The good old father and mother gone;
 And I'm not married—more is the pity!
 Seem I old bachelor in your eyes?
 —Well, Ned, after dinner to-night,
 When a ruddy hearth gives just the light
 We used to think best, you'll spread your sail
 And carry us far, without wave or gale!
 And we'll talk of the old years, and the new,
 Of what we have done, and mean to do."



BERRIES.

7-2

BERRIES.

“WHY, yes—we’ve pass’d a pleasant day ;
While life’s true joys are on their way.”
Ah, me ! I now look back afar,
And see that one day like a star.

EVERYTHING passes and vanishes ;
Everything leaves its trace ;
And often you see in a footstep
What you could not see in a face.

THIS patchwork world of things confus’dly named,
What voice a frank account thereof could give
And not be almost for a devil’s blamed ?
Dear trusting eager Spirits, how shall I
To your incessant questionings reply ?
Children ! they make me heartily ashamed
That we amid such rubbish-mountains live,
And true horizons hardly can espy.



IN a sad infernal glen
 I saw Ghosts of Famous Men,
 Writhing, groaning, "Tell me why?"
 "Waiting till our bad books die.
 Help with fire! Each new edition
 Brings new torture, new contrition.
 O the word!—the poison drop!
 The little seed!—the dreadful crop!"

TWELVE SEVENS.

SEVEN years he lives a merry, careless Child,
 Seven, Boy, excited, simple, curious, wild;
 Seven, Lad, bold, eager, vexed with pains of growth;
 Seven, Young Man, seeking work and pleasure both;
 Seven, Man, with all his active powers in swing;
 Seven, Man matured,—if virtuous, then a king;
 Seven, Man composed, serene; seven elderly,
 Grave, retrospective Senior. Sixty-three
 Has brought him to the frontier of Old Age.
 At seventy he has reach'd its second stage;
 Its third with trembling steps in seven years more.
 And if his sevens drag on to eighty-four,
 Full welcome be the friendly, shadowy door!

LEAVE me but quiet for a thousand years!
 No duties, troubles, pleasures, hopes, or fears,
 No sun or moon with sad returning beam,
 Only a faintly glimmering world, half dream,
 To faintly touch my senses; rest I would,
 Forget the tangled life, the bad and good,
 And everything that has been,—drinking deep
 The freshness of regenerating sleep;
 Ages and æons of celestial rest;
 To wake—I know not when: sleep now were best.

MAN'S found by his event. Not whirlwind Chance
 Blows round the mystic multitudinous dance,
 But Music, heard by ear the finest touch,
 Sways all in order. Wisdom's ear is such.

"NEW Heavens and New Earth,"—must all be new-
 created?
 No. One touch to *your microcosm* may do whatsoever
 is fated;
 One touch on yourself can alter the Heavens and
 Earth for you,
 Change your old Heavens and Earth in a twinkling
 into new.



FAIRIES,
ETC.



Donegal County Library Service

VIVANT !

NO need, I hope, to doubt my loyalty ;
From childhood I was fond of Royalty ;
To Kings extravagantly dutiful,
To Queens yet more, if young and beautiful.

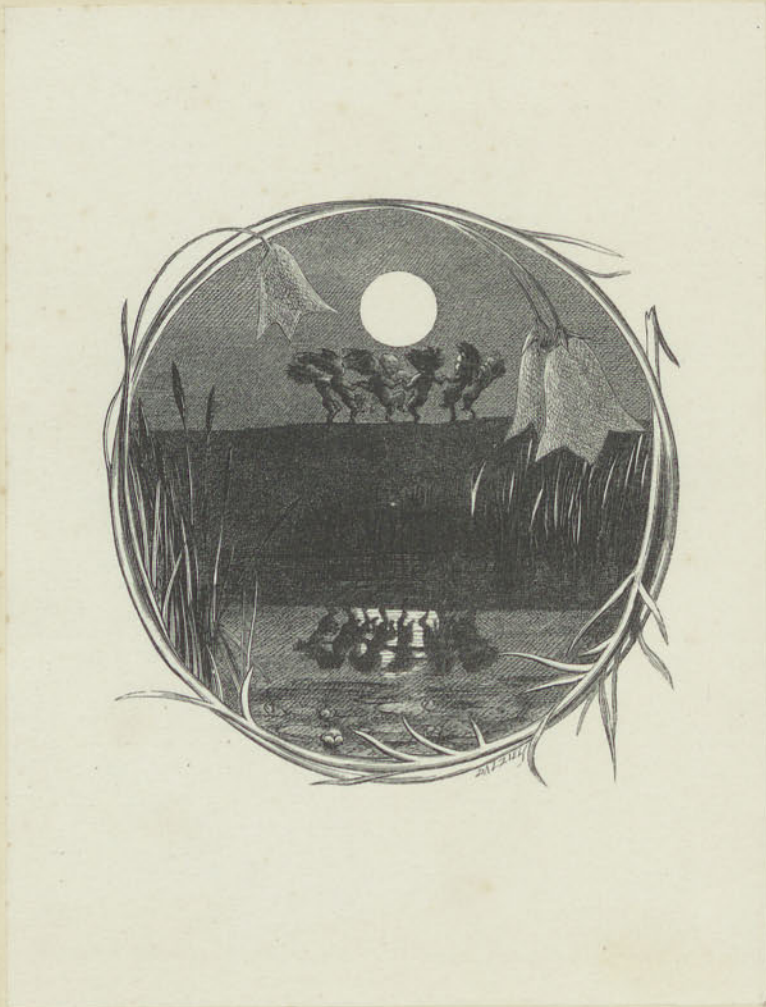
How rich their robes ! what crowns they all had too !
And yet how friendly to a small lad too !
At glorious banquets highly gracing him,
Beside the lovely Princess placing him.

Their kingdoms' names I did not care about ;
They lay in Fairyland or thereabout ;
Their date, though, to forget were crime indeed, —
Exactly, "Once upon a time" indeed.

And still they reign o'er folk contented, there :
I hope to have my son presented there —
At every joyous court in Fairyland,
Its Cave-Land, Forest-Land, and Airy-Land.

So down with democratic mania !
Long live great Oberon and Titania,
Imperial Rulers of those regions ! — he
Be shot who wavers in allegianey !

And bless all Monarchs in alliance with them,
Who've no enchanters, dragons, giants with them,
To keep sweet ladies under lock and key,
And answer challenges in mocking key !



PRINCE BRIGHTKIN.

SCENE: *A Forest in Fairyland.*

DAWN.

First Fairy. Fairies and Elves!
Shadows of night
Pale and grow thin,
Branches are stirr'd;
Rouse up yourselves;
Sing to the light,
Fairies, begin,—
Hark, there's a bird!

Second. For dreams are now fading,
Old thoughts in new morning
Dull spectres and goblins
To dungeon must fly.
The starry night changeth,
Its low stars are setting,
Its lofty stars dwindle
And hide in the sky.

First. Fairies, awake!
Light on the hills!
Blossom and grass
Tremble with dew;
Gambols the snake,
Merry bird shrills,
Honey-bees pass,
Morning is new.

Second. Pure joy of the cloudlets,
All rippled in crimson!
Afar over world's edge
The night-fear is roll'd;
O look how the Great One
Uplifts himself kingly;
At once the wide morning
Is flooded with gold!

First. Fairies, arouse!
Mix with your song
Harplet and pipe,
Thrilling and clear.
Swarm on the boughs!
Chant in a throng!
Morning is ripe,
Waiting to hear.

Second. The merle and the skylark
Will hush for our chorus,
Quick wavelets of music,
Begin them anon!
Good-luck comes to all things
That hear us and hearken,—
Our myriads of voices
Commingling in one.

General Chorus. Golden, golden
Light unfolding,
Busily, merrily, work and play
In flowery meadows,
And forest shadows,
All the length of a summer day,
All the length of a summer day!

Sprightly, lightly,
Sing we rightly!
Moments brightly hurry away:
Fruit-tree blossoms,
And roses' bosoms—
Clear blue sky of a summer day,
Dear blue sky of a summer day!
Springlets, brooklets,
Greeny nooklets,
Hill and valley, and salt-sea spray:
Comrade rovers,
Fairy lovers,—
All the length of a summer day,
All the livelong summer day!

FORENOON.

Enter two Fairies separately.

- First.* Greeting, brother!
- Second.* Greet thee well!
Has thou any news to tell?
How goes sunshine?
- First.* Flowers of noon
All their eyes will open soon,
While ours are closing. What hast done
Since the rising of the sun?
- Second.* Four wild snails I've taught their paces,
Pick'd the best ones for the races.
Thou?
- First.* Where luscious dewdrops lurk,
I with fifty went to work,
Catching delicious wine that wets
The warm blue heart of violets;
Last moon it was hawthorn flower,
Next moon 'twill be virgin's bower,
Moon by moon, the varied rose,—

To seal in flasks for winter mirth,
When frost and darkness wrap the earth.
Which wine delights you, fay?

- Second.* All those;
But none is like the Wine of Rose.
With Wine of Rose
In midst of snows
The sunny season flows and glows!
- First.* Elf, thou lovest best, I think,
The time to sit in a cave and drink.
- Second.* Is't not well to have good reason,
Thus, for loving every season?
White rose wine
Is pure and fine,
But red-rose dew, dear tippie of mine!
The red flow'rs bud
In our summery blood,
And the nightingale sings in our brain like a
wood!
- First.* Some who came a-gathering dew,
Tasting, sipping, fresh and new,
Tumbled down, an idle crew,
And there among the grass they lie,
Under a toadstool; any fly
May nip their foolish noses!
- Second.* Soon
We shall hear the Call of Noon.
- First.* They cannot stir to any tune.
No evening feast for them, be sure,
But far-off sentry on the moor.
Whence that sound of music?—hist!

Second. Klingoling, chief lutanist,
A hundred song-birds in a ring
Is teaching all this morn to sing
Together featly, so to fill
The wedding-music,—loud and shrill
Soft and sweet, and high and low,
Singled, mingled. He doth know
The art to make a hundred heard
Like one great surprising bird.

First. Here comes Rosling! He'll report
All the doings of the Court.

Enter a Third Fairy.

Greeting, brothers!

First. Greet thee well!
Hast thou any news to tell?
Our Princess dear, what shadow lies
Drooping on her blissful eyes?
Her suitors plague her!—is it so?

Third. So in truth it is. But, lo!
Who comes our way? Fairy, whence?
Thou'rt a stranger.

Enter a Fourth Fairy.

Fourth. No offence,
I trust, altho' my cap is blue,
While yours are green as any leaf.
Courteous fays! No spy or thief
Is here, but one who longs to view
Your famous Forest; chiefly there
Your Princess fair, the praised in song
Wheresoever fairies throng.
Oft you see her?

Third. Every day.

Fourth. And is she lovely as they say?

Third. Thou hast not seen her? Dost thou think
Blue and golden, white and pink,
Could paint the magic of her face?
All common beauty's highest place
Being under hers how far!—

Fourth. How far?

Third. A glow-worm to the evening star.

First. Scarce Klingoling could say so well!
'Tis true: so much she doth excel.
Come, fairy, to our feast to night,
Two hours from sunset; then you may
See the Forest Realm's Delight.

Fourth. But were it not presumptuous?

First. Nay,
Thou art, I ween, a gentle fay,
And sure of welcome.

Fourth. It is said
Her Highness shortly means to wed!

Third. Next full moon, by fairy law,
She must marry, no escape,
Were it marsh-sprite, kobold, shape
Creeping from earth-hole with horn and claw!

Fourth. And hath she now a suitor?

Third. Three;
Bloatling, Rudling, Loftling; she
Loathes them all impartially.

The first is ugly, fat, and rich,
Grandson of a miser witch ;
He sends her bossy peonies,
Fat as himself, to please her eyes,
And double poppies, mock flow'rs made
In clumsy gold, for brag display'd ;
Ten of the broadest-shoulder'd elves
To carry one must strain themselves.

First. Ay ! so I've seen them.

Second. This is more.
Than I ever heard before.

Third. Field-marshal Rudling, soldier fay,
His beard a broom to sweep away
Opposition, with his frown
Biddeth common fairies, "Down !
Down on your knees !" and then his smile,
Our lovely Lady's heart to wile—
Soft as a rat-trap ! and his voice—
Angry jay makes no such noise
When bold marauders threat (as you,
Little Jinkling, sometimes do)
Her freckled eggs.

Fourth. And Loftling ?

Third. True,
Prince Loftling's chin, so grand is he,
Is where another's nose would be ;
His proud backbone the wrong way bends
With nobleness. He condescends
To come in state to our poor wood ;
And then 'tis always understood
We silence every prattling bird,
Nor must one grasshopper be heard ;

Which tasks our people ; she, meanwhile,
Our Lady, half dead with his vile
Ceremonial and precision,—
"Madam, with your august permission,
I have the honour to remark—
Ah hum ! ah haw !" from dawn to dark.

Fourth. He will not win her !

Third. No, no, no !
Dreary the wood if that were so,
Good stranger. But enough, I ween,
Of gossip now.

Fourth. Kind Caps o' Green,
I thank ye for your courtesies !
Brightkin's my name, my country lies
Round that blue peak your scout espies
From loftiest fir-tree on the skies
Of sunset. So I take my leave
Till the drawing-on of eve.

Third. They call me Rosling, gentle fay.
Adieu ! forget not ! here I'll stay
To meet thee and to show the way.

All. Adieu ! adieu ! till close of day.

THE NOON CALL.

Hear the call !
Fays, be still !
Noon is deep
On vale and hill.
Stir no sound
The Forest round !
Let all things hush
That fly or creep,—

Tree and bush,
Air and ground!
Hear the call!
Silence keep!
One and all
Hush and sleep!

NEAR SUNSET.

Two Fairies: ROSLING and JINKLING.

Ros. Little Jinkling! friend of mine!
Where dost lurk when fairies dine?
At the banquet round and round
Searching, thee I never found.
Comest thou late? The feast is done;
Slowly sinks the mighty sun.

Jink. Nay, fay! I was far away.
Over the tree-tops did I soar
Twenty leagues and twenty more.
Swift and high goes the dragon-fly,
And steady the death's-head moth,
But the little bird with his beak awry
Is a better saddle than both!
The lovely Lady of Elfin-Mere,
I had a message for her ear.

Ros. Of state?

Jink. Of state: of import great,
I must not even to thee relate.

Ros. And is she fair?

Jink. Thrice fair is she?
The pearly moon less delicately
Comes shining onward than this Lady
From her water-palace shady

Floats across the lucent lake,
And all her starry lilies make
Obeisance; every water-sprite
Gazing after with delight,
Only wishing he might dare
Just to touch her streaming hair,
Meanwhile, crowds of fairies glide
Over, under, the crystal tide,
Some on swimming-birds astride,
Some with merry fish at play,
Darting round her rippling way.

Ros. There was your banquet!

Jink. There, indeed,
Among the lily and the reed.
Wavy music, as we feasted,
Floating round us while we floated,
Soothed our pleasure and increased it;
Mirth and jest more briskly glancing
Than the water-diamonds dancing
Down the lake where sunshine smote it
Bright and gay!—might not stay!—
White the hand I kiss'd, O fay,
Leap'd on my bird, and sped away.
Hast any news to tell me?

Ros. Much!
Never didst thou hear of such.

Jink. A fight with spiders?—hornets?—perils
Teasing owls, or chasing squirrels?
Or some little elf, poor soul,
Lost in a winding rabbit-hole?
Are the royal trees in danger?

Ros. Dost thou mind the Blue-cap Stranger,
Brightkin by his name, that we
Met ere noontide lullaby?

Jink. Came he to your Feast?

Ros. My friend,
Ask no more questions, but attend!
To the Feast he came with me,
The chamberlain most courteously
Placing us nigh the upper end.
Her Highness bow'd, and Brightkin gazed
On her face like one amazed,
While our Beauty's tender eyes
Rested with a sweet surprise
Upon the stranger-fairy: round
Went cates and wine, and Klingoling
With five new birds began to sing.
Then came a page on errand bound
To ask the stranger's name and realm:
"Brightkin of the Purple Helm,
From the Blue Mountain, fairy knight,
Flown thence to view the Forest,—might
It please her Highness." It did please.
So by-and-by we sat at ease
In shadowy bow'r, a favour'd ring,
Now talking, now with Klingoling
Join'd in a waft of harmony;
And evermore there seem'd to be
'Twixt Brightkin and our Princess dear
A concord, more than string with string
And voice with voice rejoice one's ear.
And then *he* took the lute and sung,
With modest grace and skilfully,
For tipt with honey seem'd his tongue;
At first a murmuring melody,
Like the far song of falling rills
Amid the foldings of the hills,

And ever nearer as it flew,
Shaping its figure, like a bird,
Till into Love's own form it grew
In every lovely note and word.
So sweet a song we never heard!
When, think what came?

Jink. I cannot think.

Ros. A trumpet-blast that made us wink!
A hailstorm upon basking flowers,
Quick, sharp!—we started to our feet,
All save her Highness, mild and sweet,
Who said, "See who invades our bowers."

Jink. Who was it, Rosling? quickly say!

Ros. The King of the Blue Mountains, fay,
Seeking audience, without delay.
Fierce and frowning his look at first,
Like that uncivil trumpet-burst;
But all his blackness alter'd soon,
Like clouds that melt upon the moon,
Before the gentle dignity
Of Her, Titania's child, whom we
Obey and love.

Jink. Blest may she be!
But wherefore came the haughty King?

Ros. Hear briefly an unusual thing.
His only Son, the prince and heir,
Kept with too strict and jealous care
Within the mountain boundaries,
To-day o'erleaps them all, and flies,
No elf knows whither: flies to-day—
The Lord of Gnomes being on his way,
Bringing to that mountain Court

His gem-clad heiress. Here was sport!
 Then couriers told the angry king
 They saw the Prince on gray-dove's wing
 Threading our forest; and again
 That he had join'd our Lady's train
 "Madam! is't so?" "If this be so,
 Great sir, I nothing know." When lo!
 Brightkin outspringing kneels. "My son!"
 Exclaims the King, "Ho! seize and bind him!"
 But swift her Highness—"Stay! let none
 Move hand or foot! Great King, you find him
 Here in the Forest Realm, my rule
 Whereof no fairy power may school,
 Saving imperial Oberon.
 Free came he hither, free shall go."
 Then says the Prince, "If you command,
 I leave you, Pride of Fairyland,
 Else never!" Briefly now to tell,
 As quickly all these things befell,
 'Twas clear as new-born star they loved;
 The Mountain-King their love approved;
 And all were happy.

Jink. Where are they,
 The King and Prince?

Ros. They fly away
 On the sunset's latest ray.
 To-morrow they will come again,
 With a countless noble train:
 And next full moon—the Wedding Feast!

Jink. O joy! the greatest and the least
 Will join the revelry, and bring
 A marriage-gift of some fine thing.
 I know a present she will prize—
 A team of spot-wing'd butterflies,

Right in flight, or else with ease
 Winding through the tops of trees,
 Or soaring in the summer sky.

Ros. Well done, Jinkling!—Now good-bye;
 Sleepy as a field-mouse I,
 When paws and snout coil'd he doth lie.

Jink. Hark to Klingoling's lute-playing!
 On the poplar-spire a-swaying
 Gently to the crescent moon.

Ros. I cannot stay to hear the tune.

Jink. I linger in the yellow light.

Ros. And so, good-night!

Jink. And so, good-night!

AFTER SUNSET.

Klingoling and a Faint Chorus.

Moon soon sets now;
 Elves cradled on the bough.
 Day's fays drop asleep;
 Dreams through the forest creep.

Chorus. When broadens the moonlight, we frolic and
 jest;
 When darkles the forest, we sink into rest.

Shine, fine star above!
 Love's come, happy love!
 Haste, happy wedding night,
 Full moon, round and bright!

Chorus. And not till her circle is low in the west
We'll cease from our dancing, or couch us to
rest!

Lute, mute fall thy strings!
Hush, every voice that sings!
Fade away, drowsy song,
Dim forest-aisles along!

Chorus. Of all thy dear music a love-song is best!
Thou hushest — we're silent — we sink into
rest.

TWO FAIRIES IN A GARDEN.

1. "Whither goest, brother Elf?"
2. "The sun is weak—to warm myself
In a thick red tulip's core.
Whither thou?"
1. "Till day be o'er,
To the dim and deep snow-palace
Of the closest lily-chalice,
Where is veil'd the light of noon
To be like my Lady's moon.
Thou art of the day, I ween?"
2. "Yet I not disown our Queen,
Nor at Lyse' am backward found,
When the mighty Feast comes round;
When She spreads abroad her power
To proclaim a midnight hour
For the pale blue Fays like thee
And the ruddy Elves like me
To mingle in a charmed ring
With a perfect welcoming;
Guarded from the moon-stroke cold,
And wisp that scares us on the wold."
1. "Swift that Night is drawing near,
When your abrupt and jovial cheer,
Mixes in our misty dance,
Meeting else by rarest chance.
We love dark undew'd recesses
Of the leafy wildernesses,
Or to hide in some cold flow'r,
Shelter'd from the sunlight hour
And more afflictive mortal eye."

2. "Gladly, gladly, do I spy
Human children playing nigh,
Feel, and so must you, the grace
Of a loving human face.
Else why come you in this place?
Oh, my Sister, if we might
Show ourselves to mortal sight
Far more often! if they knew
Half the friendly turns we do!
Even now, a gentle thought
Would pay my service dimly wrought
Round these winding garden-walks,
Fruits and flow'rs and leaves and stalks,
Paler favourites of the moon,
Can ye give or take such boon?"
1. "Chantings, Brother, hear you might,
Softly sung through still of night;
Calling from the weird North
Dreams like distant echoes forth,
Till through curtain'd shades they creep,
To inlay the gloomy floor of sleep
For babes, and souls that babe-like are:
So we bless them from afar
Like a faint but favouring star.
—But tell me how in fields or bowers
Thou hast spent these morning hours?"
2. "Through the tall hedge I have been,
Shadowy wall of crusted green,
Within whose heart the birds are seen.
Speeding swiftly thence away
To the crowning chestnut-spray,
I watch'd a Tyrant steal along
Would slay the sweet Thrush in her song;
Warn'd, she soon broke off from singing,
There we left the branchlet swinging.

- Whispering Robin, down the walk,
News of poising, pouncing Hawk,
The Sycamore I next must strew
On every leaf with honey-dew,
And hither now from clouds I run,
For all my morning work is done."
1. "Alas, I wither in the sun,
Witless drawn to leave my nest
Ere the day be laid to rest!
But to-night we lightly troop
By the young Moon's silver hoop;
Weaving wide our later ranks
As on evening river-banks
Shifting crowds of midges glance
Through mazes of their airy dance:
O might you come, O might you see
All our shadow'd revelry!
Yet the next night shall be rarer,
Next and next and next, still fairer;
We are waxing every night,
Till our joy be full and bright;
Then as slowly do we wane
With gentle loss that makes no pain.
For thus are we with life ended:
Ye, I trow, have rougher food."
2. "Yes: with fragrant soul we're fed
Of every flower whose cheek is red,
Shunning yellow, blue, and white:
And southward go, at the nightingale's flight.
Many the Fairy Nations be.
O how I long, I long to see
The moonèd midnight of our Feast,
Flushing amber through the east,
When every cap in Elfdom
Into that great ring shall come,

Owf and Elf and Fairy blended,
 Till th' imperial time be ended !
 Even those fantastic Sprites
 Lay aside their dear delights
 Of freakish mischief and annoyance
 In the universal joyance,
 One of whom I saw of late
 As I peep'd through window-grate,
 (Under roof I may not enter)
 Haunt the housewife to torment her,
 Tangle up her skeins of silk,
 Throw a mouse into her milk,
 Hide her thimble, scorch her roast,
 Quickly drive her mad almost ;
 And I too vex'd, because I would
 Have brought her succour if I could.
 —But where shall this be holden, say ?
 Far away ?”

1. “Oh, far away,
 Over river must we fly,
 Over the sea, and the mountain high,
 Over city, seen afar
 Like a low and misty star,—
 Soon beneath us glittering
 Like million spark-worms. But our wing,
 For the flight will ne'er suffice.
 Some are training Flittermice,
 I a Silver-moth.”
2. “Be ware
 How I'll thrud the vaulted air !
 A Dragon-fly with glassy wings,
 Born beside the meadow-springs,
 That can arrow-swiftly glide
 Thoro' the glowing eventide,
 Nor at twilight-fall grow slack,
 Shall bear me on his long blue back.
 Dew-stars, meteors of the night

May not strike him with affright,
 He can needle through the wood,
 That's like a green earth-chained cloud,
 Mountain-summits deftly rake
 Draw swift line o'er plain and lake.
 If at Lysco I be last,
 Other elves must journey fast.
 Lu a vo !”

1. “But, Elf, I rede,
 Of all your Herbs take special heed.
 Our Mistress tholes no garden flowers,
 Tho' we have freedom of these bowers.
 Tell me what you mean to treasure,
 Each in 's atom ?”
2. “Gold of Pleasure,
 Medic, Plumeseed, Fountain-arrow,
 Vervain, Hungry-grass, and Yarrow,
 Quatrefoil and Melilot.”
1. “These are well. And I have got
 Moonwort and the Filmy Fern,
 Gather'd nicely on the turn.
 Wo to Fairy that shall bring
 Bugloss for an offering,
 Toad-flax, Barley of the Wall,
 Enchanter's Nightshade, worst of all.
 —Oh, brother, hush ! I faint with fear !
 A mortal footstep threatens near.”
2. “None can see us, none can hear.
 Yet, to make thee less afraid,
 Hush we both as thou hast pray'd.
 I will seek the verse to spell
 Written round my dark flow'r's bell,
 To sing at sunset. So, Farewell !”

FIRESIDE MAGIC.

I.

LISTEN what transporting magic
I have nightly at command,
Here with feet upon the fender,
In the moving of my hand.
O how soft and instantaneous
Is the waftage that I feel!
Words of charm pronouncing softly,
Words the wizard leaves reveal.

II.

Now I'm by a lake enchanted,
Folded in a winding wood;
Gates of lily-crusted marble
Gleam upon the shadowy flood;
Elfin music trembles round it:
Who can tell if that be boat
With a shining spirit-pilot,
Or a golden star afloat?

III.

Now I sweep through dell and greenwood,
With my band of merry men;
Wind the mort upon my bugle,
'Tis a stately stag of ten!
Jovial then our hall of banquet,
With old spears and morions dight;
Sweetly sung, those ancient ballads
To the harp at dim twilight.

IV.

Now I'm with a serious tutor,
Taking me a country walk;
Leaving no field-sight unnoticed
In his meditative talk.
Clumsy-gay, pedantic-humble,
He's a mild and stubborn saint;
Pure and wise, and widely honour'd
Spite of all his Foy-Bells quaint.

V.

Now I'm at a lively picnic,
Rounded with an evening dance:
Sentimental lays are warbled,
Help'd with many a killing glance;
Flirts are in the flower'd balcony,
Masqueraders on the lawn;
Glowing waltzers after supper
Little heed the stealing dawn.

VI.

Now in deep Thessalian valley
Rest I 'mid the summer grass;
Vision-floated round Olympus
With the clouds that slowly pass.
I am 'ware of Fauns and Dryads
Facing through the leafy screen.
More than mist is on the fountain:
Hush!—may Dian's self be seen?

VII.

Now champagne or bolder brandy
At the *buffet* of a "Hell:"
Pledge me, fair one, merrily, deeply!
Philtre this of powerful spell.
Curtains closed make morn and midnight
All alike, as in the grave.
Ha! I take the tide of fortune,
Or a darker, colder wave.

VIII.

Now one May-time, spray-time, gay time,
 In the shrubbery do I rove,
 Chatting to a pretty damsel
 Half in pique and half in love ;
 She's romantic, she's coquettish,
 Eager with her smile or tear.
 Overhead a lark is trilling,
 And the lambs are bleating near.

IX.

Now I'm on a mighty river,
 Swept in foam and misty shroud
 Down through whirlpool, crag, and rapid,
 Valley, precipice, and cloud ;
 Day and night, and storm and splendour,
 Moonlight damm'd with monstrous bars,
 Mines of darkness vein'd with lightning,
 Red sundawn that kills the stars ;
 Meadow wide where Pan yet harbours,
 Distant peak with snowy crown,
 Broad eternal forest-margin ;
 Swiftly borne (O whither ?) down.

X.

Cease awhile from weird journey,
 Close the spreading wings to rest,
 One by one the summon'd spirits
 Smiling friend hath simply guess'd.
 Hast thou so ?—then, whatsoever
 Land or sea our homes divide,
 Open book, and by this magic
 We shall travel side by side.

THE LYRIC MUSE.

ONE night a Sylph or Fairy
 Came to me in a dream,
 And her supporters airy
 The singing-birds did seem.

Aloft they gaily kept her
 On floating feather-down ;
 A lily was her sceptre,
 And roses made her crown.

The birds left off rejoicing,
 A richer song to hear,
 And soon with softest voicing
 These words came to mine ear

“ My roses resting brightly
 One moment on thy brow
 My lily touching lightly
 Thy beating heart below,

“ Would bring a wealth of lyrics
 To thy enchanted tongue,
 Surpassing Robert Herrick's,
 Or aught more lately sung.

“ But seldom is the earthy
 Fit house for the divine,
 And didst thou prove unworthy
 A mournful fate were thine.”

I cried, “ Whate'er may follow,
 O teach me thus to sing ! ”—
 But through the darkness hollow
 Waved but a parting wing.



TO PLUTUS

ETC.



A WEEK-DAY HYMN.

ALMIGHTY Plutus ! Lord of Earth,
And Giver of all Good,
Thou who hast bless'd me from my birth
With lodging, clothes, and food ;

Whose glory brightens every thought,
Inspires every deed ;
In whose great name are wonders wrought ;
Whose smile is virtue's meed ;

Turn not Thy face from him who bends
Untiring at Thy throne !
Repute and station, wife and friends,
I owe to Thee alone.

Thou helping—man dilates in form,
And proudly looks around ;
Without Thee, he's a two-legg'd worm,
But fit for underground.

The braggart sword, the subtle pen,
To Thee are dedicate ;
Yea, all the works and wits of men
Upon Thy service wait.

Barons and dukes are feeble things,
 At Thy goodwill they shine ;
 Mere vassals are the greatest Kings,
 Their fleets and armies Thine.

Before Thy footstool Beauty bows,
 And Rank is cheap as mud,
 And thin as smoke the bands and vows
 Of Honour, Love, or Blood.

His body in Thy service doom'd,
 The Martyr's not afraid ;
 Nay, gives his soul to be consumed
 To cinders, undismay'd.

In every tongue and clime confest,
 In many shapes adored,
 From North to South, from East to West
 The nations own Thee Lord ;

Thou other and thrice-golden Sun
 That dost the world illumine,
 Bright'ning whate'er Thou look'st upon,
 And gilding ev'n the tomb.

For ever may Thy sceptre be
 Supreme o'er land and wave,
 King Plutus ! only bless Thou *me*,
 Thy subject, and Thy slave.

“QUE SÇAIS-JE?”

OLD Michael of the Mountain, strolling past,
 Careless and quiet, now and then would cast
 To right or left a penetrating look ;
 And gather'd waifs and strays up with a hook
 Shaped like the sign of query ; scrap and rag
 In easy reach he clapt into his bag,
 Idly assiduous, mocking his own whim
 With twinkling eyes, and took all home with him,
 Where lazily he sorted them at last.
 What skill or magic in his fingers lay,
 What subtly added he, 'twere hard to say ;
 But somehow, this took substance as a Book
 That shines where all around hath fallen dim.

AN INVITATION.

TO the Wits how writeth Cræsus?
 "Gracious Heav'n hath freely giv'n
 Wealth, and now of Wit we're fain;
 Clever Talker,—Thinker,—Poet,—
 Come and amuse us, lull us, please us;
 Let's each other entertain.
 (But never thwart us, never tease us;
 If you do, we'd have you know it,
 Men of scanty dish and cup,
 Not the least bit or sup
 Of our feast shall fall your way).
 Come, friends, come, talk and dine,
 Drink our wine, and let's be gay!
 Thought, song, wit, are pretty things;
 On nimble wings around they flit,
 Tame little birds, and gently sit
 With pleasant twitter—wit-wit-twit!
Our world, the solid and the true,
 Likes its decorations too,
 And we embellish it with you,
 When we've nothing else to do.
 Food and flattery ready—come!
 Eat, drink, make yourselves at home;
 Nothing ever do or say
 Which might vex us, while you stay;
 Ere you bore us, go away;
 And come again some other day."
 This is *not* how Cræsus writeth:
 Much more blandly he inviteth.

IN A BOOK OF MAXIMS.

"MAXIMS" of wisdom,—minims fittier named,
 If wise in any sense: the nobler part
 Of human nature sneeringly disclaim'd,
 The low put forward with malicious art!
 Chicane at court and cheating in the mart
 All see; but now examine unashamed
 The vanities and failings of the famed,
 The selfishness of good folk: does your heart
 Not feel its cockles tickled? "*We* pretend
 To nothing, you and I, we know too well
 How mean we are; but just observe, my friend,
 More closely these pretensions to excel,
 And with a smile admit that, truth to tell,
 You find us all poor creatures in the end!"

A MODERN PLEASAUNCE.

OUR Garden is full of flowers and bowers ;
 But the toll of a death-bell haunts the air.
 We have tried to drown it with lute and voice,
 Love-songs and banquet-songs for choice,
 But still it is ever tolling there ;
 And who can silence that dreadful bell ?
 Take the grim key-note ; modulate well ;
 Let us keep time and tune with the knell,—
 Sing of mad pleasure and fierce despair,
 Roses, and blood, and the fire of hell !
 With pants and sobs, with shrieks and moans,
 Loud laughter mingled with dying groans ;
 The death-bell knolling pitilessly
 Through all, our key-note,—and what care we,
 In our Garden full of bowers and flowers ?

EQUALITY AT HOME.

“ANTOINE,” cries Mirabeau, returning gay
 From the Assembly, “on and from to-day
 Nobility’s abolish’d—men are men—
 No title henceforth used but Citizen.
 A new thrice-glorious era dawns for France !
 And now, my bath.” “Yes, Citizen.” A glance
 Of flame the huge man at his servant shot ;
 Then, wallowing sea-god like, “Antoine, more hot !”
 He growl’d. “Good, Citizen.” A hand of wrath
 Gript Antoine’s head, and soused it in the bath.
 He spluttering, dripping, trembling—“Rascal ! know,”
 His master thunder’d as he let him go,
 “For you I still remain Count Mirabeau !”

GRAPES, WINE, AND VINEGAR.

WEARY and wasted, nigh worn-out,
 You sigh, and shake white hairs, and say
 "Ah, you will learn the truth one day
 Of Life and Nature, do not doubt!"

Age rhymes to sage, and let us give
 The hoary head its honours due:
 Grant Youth its privileges too,
 And notions how to think and live.

Which has more chance to see aright
 The many-colour'd shows of time,
 Fresh human eyes in healthy prime
 Or custom-dull'd and fading sight?

Gone from the primrose and the rose
 Their diversely delicious breath,
 Since no fine wafting visiteth
 An old, perhaps a snuffy, nose!

Youth has its truth: I'd rather trust,
 Of two extremes, the ardent boy,
 Excess of life and hope and joy,
 Than this dejection and disgust.

Vinegar of Experience—"drink!"
 Why so, and set our teeth on edge?
 Nay, even grant what you allege,
 We'll not anticipate, I think.

Who miss'd, or loses, earlier truth,
 Tho' old, we shall not count him sage:
 Rich the strong mellow'd Wine of Age
 From sunshine-ripen'd Grapes of Youth.

THE HONEST FARMER.

HAPPY I count the Farmer's life,
 Its various round of wholesome toil,
 An honest man with loving wife,
 And offspring native to the soil.

Thrice happy, surely!—in his breast
 Plain wisdom and the trust in God;
 His path more straight from east to west
 Than politician ever trod.

His gain's no loss to other men;
 His stalwart blows inflict no wound;
 Not busy with his tongue or pen,
 He questions truthful sky and ground.

Partner with seasons and the sun,
 Nature's co-worker; all his skill
 Obedience, ev'n as waters run,
 Winds blow, beast, herb their laws fulfil.

An active youthhood, clean and bold;
 A vigorous manhood; cheerful age;
 His comely children proudly hold
 Their parentage best heritage.

Unhealthy work, false mirth, chicane,
 Guilt, needless woe, and useless strife,—
 O cities, vain, inane, insane!—
 How happy is the Farmer's life!

THE BLACKSMITH.

I.

LET who will be lazy, the Blacksmith is not,
 He knows he must strike while the iron is hot ;
 His anvil makes music from morning till night,
 And the swing of his arm keeps it polish'd and bright.
 Bing-bang ! ting-clang !

CHORUS—Success to the Smith in his Forge !
 Long life to the Smith in his Forge !
 Sing, all you good fellows,
 Tongs, hammer, and bellows,
 Hurrah for the Smith in his Forge !

II.

His hands are besmudged, his features the same,
 It's the sign of his trade, and he thinks it no shame,
 A varnish of coal needn't cause him to fret,
 For an honest day's work never soil'd a man yet.

III.

The cinders and embers, now rake them up fast,
 The big snoring bellows shall keep a stiff blast,
 The flames starting ruddy and golden and blue,
 Like flow'rs that in Pluto's grim garden first grew.

IV.

Come, thresh the white iron ! Bing-bang goes the tune.
 Keep time with the hammers, they'll fashion it soon ;
 The stars leap in show'rs under every shrewd blow ;
 Then back to the heart of the fire it must go.

V.

Now view it and turn it and hammer it well,
 Leave no crack or flaw, make it sound as a bell ;
 A dip in the tank its fever will slake,
 And the burnt water hiss like a trod-upon snake.

VI.

How pleasant the square open window a-glow
 In fine evening twilight, or winter and snow,
 Where neighbours peep in with a greeting or smile,
 Or stand in the doorway to gossip awhile.

VII.

With his black hairy arms as he pokes up the fire,
 You'd scarce recognise him in decent attire,
 Of a holiday morning, so clean and so neat,
 In a lily-white shirt as he strolls down the street.

VIII.

He's a good-looking fellow, the Blacksmith, when drest,
 Can swagger, or talk to the girls with the best ;
 And "There goes the Blacksmith !" should anyone cry,
 They're welcome, his trade he will never deny.
 Bing-bang ! ting-clang !-

Success to the Smith in his Forge !
 Long life to the Smith in his Forge !
 Sing, all you good fellows,
 Tongs, hammer, and bellows,
 Hurrah for the Smith in his Forge !
 Bing-bang !

JOHN CLODD.

JOHN CLODD was greatly troubled in his mind,
 But reason for the same could noways find.
 Says he, "I'll go to Mary; I've no doubt,
 If any mortal can, she'll vind it out."
 "Why, John, what *is* the matter? where dost ail?
 In 'ead or stummick! eh, thou dost look pale.
 Can't ait? can't sleep? yet nayther sick nor sore?
 Ne'er felt the like in all thy life afore?
 Why, lad, I'll tell 'ee what,—thou beest in love."

John look'd at Mary, gave his hat a shove,
 And rubb'd his chin awhile, and mutter'd "There!
 Only to think o' that!"—then from a stare
 Broke by degrees into a smile, half-witted,
 "Dang! Mary, I don't know but what you've hit it!
 I thought on no sich thing, but now I see
 'Tis plain as haystack. Yaas, in love I be!
 But *who* be I in love wi', Mary? Come!"
 "Why, can't yo' tell that, John? Art blind, or dumb?
 Is't Emma White? or Liz? or Dora Peak?
 Or pirty little Sue? or Widow Sleek?
 Or Tilda Rudlip, now? or Martha's Jane?
 Or Squire's new Dairymaid? or old Miss Blaine,
 Wi' lots o' money? Don't be angry, John,
 I've guess'd all round,—you hates 'em every one?
 Still, you loves zumbody . . . Mayhap 'tis *me*?"
 "Why, Mary, what a clever lass you be!
 I never once took thought on such a thing;
 But you it is, and no one else, by Jing!"
 "Well, John, that's settled; so 'Good-night' at last."
 "No, Mary, don'tee run away so fast!
 What next are we to do?"

"What next? O bother!
 Get married, I suppose, sometime or other."
 "Right, lass, again! I niver thought o' that.
 How do'ee iver vind out things so pat?
 But stop a minute, Mary,—tell me how
 Does folk — . . . She's off! I'm fairly puzzled now!"

THE MAGIC CAP.

I DON this Magic Cap of mine,
 Whereon the sun's forbid to shine,
 Which takes a hundred shapes, more swift
 Than an air-tost cloud can shift.
 It shoots to point, or spreads to brim,
 Cocks itself to courtly trim,
 Jockey roundness can assume,
 Or sprout a nodding knightly plume,
 Roughen up like cat in a passion,
 Arctic smooth to Paris fashion,
 Nipt below and flatten'd square
 Turn to grave Collegiate wear,
 Rise with added touch of brightness
 Into Lancer's toyish lightness,
 Then relapsed to colours sadder,
 Flap down, like toy Jacob's Ladder,
 As on broad Coalheaver's nape,
 Spin wide round to Quaker shape,
 By heat o' the brain curl'd up as soon
 To Helmet, fit for bold Dragoon.
 It splits, a Mitre it appears,
 Then opens into Ass's Ears,
 Droops, and, lo! a Learned Wig,
 Shrinks to a Cue, again looks big,
 When three long Tails from one unfold,
 Twist like snakes and lie uproll'd
 A Turban huge. It fades to air,
 And saintly Rays are shooting there
 Around my head—not rays at all,
 But Quills that mark a Cannibal!

They bristle up, they strangely wax
 To Three Hats in St. Mary Axe,—
 No, no, I see it plainer now,
 St. Peter's, and upon my brow
 The tall Tiara presses tight :
 To bear and balance it aright
 Asks clever poising. Snatch it off !
 I start : my Magic Cap I doff.

Therewith was presented to me
 Freedom of a City, gloomy,
 Gorgeous, populous, silent, vast,
 Built on a River of the Past,
 Where long-set suns and wanèd moons
 Make the mystic nights and noons,
 And people lost from life one meets
 Walking up and down the streets.
 Strange as the City of Enchanters
 Wandering King at nightfall enters,
 In those regions dim and dread
 Beyond the Sea of Darkness spread.

THE LION AND THE WAVE.

A HAUGHTY Lion, from his burning sand
 And palmtree-shaded wells, found ocean-strand,
 And glared upon the limitless blue plain.
 A huge Wave rose, rush'd on with flying mane,
 Plunged at him, crashing down with furious roar :
 Whereat, with broken growl of terror and wrath
 He bounded back, and fled ; the milky froth
 Filling his footprints on the lone sea-shore.

No peer in his wild kingdom did he brook,
 All living creatures quail'd beneath his look,
 And at his thunderous voice the desert shook :
 But now his heart knew fear ; the matchless pride
 And courage wither'd ; Serpent, Elephant,
 Gorilla, Crocodile, had power to daunt.
 Restless he roamed and dwindled, and the Wave
 Disturb'd his dreams. At last into his cave
 This Lion cowering crept, lay down, and died.

TO PLUTUS.

PLUTUS, God of Riches, at thy shrine
Floated never incense-wreath of mine,
Word of supplication, song of praise ;
I despised thee in my early days,
Thee and all thy worshippers. Behold,
Youthful joy and courage waxing cold,
I am punish'd by thy powerful hand,
Proving well its manifold command.

All earth-hidden treasures are thy dower,
On the earth great mastery and power ;
Park and palace thy goodwill assigns,
Dainty victuals and flow'r-fragrant wines ;
Horses, chariots, pleasure-ships that go
Where the world is sweetest, to and fro ;
Various joy of music, pictures, books,
Soft perpetual service, smiling looks ;
Almost all the Gods I find thy friends ;
Wise is he who at thine altar bends !
Cupid, Hymen, are thy sworn allies,
Scarcely doth Apollo thee despise.
Nay, 'twould seem as if the Powers at large
Gave this earth completely to thy charge.

I am now too old to change my ways ;
Still do I refuse thee prayer or praise ;
Change I will not, I'm too old a week,
Nor thine all-desirèd favour seek.
To thy vengeance, Earth-God !—power thou hast,
Not my adoration, first or last.

POESIS HUMANA,

ETC.



POESIS HUMANA.

WHAT is the Artist's duty?
His work, however wrought,
Shape, colour, word, or tone,
Is to make better known
(Himself divinely taught),
To praise and celebrate,
Because his love is great,
The lovely miracle
Of Universal Beauty.
This message would he tell.

Amid the day's crude strife,
This message is his trust ;
With all his heart and soul,
With all his skill and strength,
Seeking to add at length,
Because he may and must,
Some atom to the whole
Of man's inheritance ;
Some fineness to the glance,
Some richness to the life.

And if he deal, perforce,
 With evil and with pain,
 With horror and affright,
 He does it to our gain ;
 Makes felt the mighty course,
 That sweepeth on amain,
 Planet-like, smooth, severe,
 Of law—whose atmosphere
 Is beauty and delight ;
 For these are at its source.

His own work, be it small,
 Itself hath rounded well,
 Even like Earth's own ball
 Wrapt in its airy shell.
 His gentle magic brings
 The mystery of things ;
 It gives dead substance wings ;
 It shows in little, much ;
 And, by an artful touch,
 Conveys the hint of all.

WHEN I was young and fresh and gay,
 Full moody oft I went ;
 The troubles of the passing day
 So wrought me discontent ;

Those flaws and fallings-short in life
 Which every one must bear,
 Oppressions, hints to rebel strife,
 Enormous wrongs they were ;

Whatever man could have or be,
 Nay, every fancied boon,
 Belong'd, I thought, as much to me
 As share of sun and moon !

Whom Eden could not satisfy
 Is grateful for a flow'r ;
 Who wanted earth and sea and sky
 Loves most a quiet hour ;

To run safe through this earthly lease,
 Be kindly with one's kind,
 Enjoy a little, part in peace,
 Were rare good luck, I find.

THE GENERAL CHORUS.

WE all keep step to the marching chorus,
 Rising from millions of men around.
 Millions have march'd to the same before us,
 Millions come on, with a sea-like sound.
Life, Death ; Life, Death ;
 Such is the song of human breath.

What is this multitudinous chorus,
 Wild, monotonous, low, and loud ?
 Earth we tread on, Heaven that's o'er us ?
 I in the midst of the moving crowd ?
Life, Death ; Life, Death ;
 What is this burden of human breath ?

On with the rest, your footsteps timing !
 Mystical music flows in the song,
 (Blent with it ?—Born from it ?)—loftily chiming,
 Tenderly soothing, it bears you along.
Life, Death ; Life, Death ;
 Strange is the chant of human breath !

CIVITAS DEL.

I.

THE roads are long and rough, with many a bend,
 But always tend
 To that Eternal City, and the home
 Of all our footsteps, let them haste or creep.
 That city is not Rome.
 Great Rome is but a heap
 Of shards and splinters lying in a field ;
 Where children of to-day
 Among the fragments play,
 And for themselves in turn new cities build.

II.

That city's gates and towers,
 Superber than the sunset's cloudy crags,
 Know nothing of the earth's all-famous flags ;
 It hath its own wide region, its own air.
 Our kings, our lords, our mighty warriors,
 Are not known there.
 The wily pen, the cannon's fierce report,
 Fall very short.

III.

Where is it? . . . Tell who can.
 Ask all the best geographers' advice.
 Is t builded in some valley of Japan,
 Or secret Africa? or isle unfound?
 Or in a region calm and warm
 Enclosed from every storm
 Within the magical and monstrous bound
 Of polar ice?

IV.

Where is it? . . . Who can tell?
 Yet surely know,
 Whatever land or city you may claim,
 From otherwhere you came,
 Elsewhither you must go;
 Ev'n to a City with foundations low
 As Hell,
 With battlements Heav'n-high;
 Which is eternal; and its place and name
 Are mystery.

I KNOW not if it may be mine
 To add a song, nay, half a line,
 To that fair treasure-house of wit,
 That more than cedarn cabinet,
 Where men preserve their precious things,
 Free wealth, surpassing every king's.
 I only know, I felt and wrote
 According to the day and hour,
 According to my little power;
 Unskill'd to break and weigh and measure
 The World's materials—as it seem'd
 Lovely, I loved it, worshipp'd, dream'd,
 And sung, for sadness or for pleasure.
 If souls unborn shall take some note
 Or none at all, 'tis their affair;
 I cannot guess, and will not care;
 Yet hoping still that something done
 Has so much life from earth and sun,
 Drawn through man's finer brain, as may
 In mystic form, with mystic force,
 Reach forward from a fleeting day,
 But a profound perennial source,
 To touch upon his earthly way
 Some brother pilgrim-soul, and say
 (A whisper in the wayside grass)—
 "I have gone by, where now you pass;
 Been sorely tried with frost and heat,
 With stones that bruise the weary feet,
 With crag and quag, with fire and flood,
 With desert sands that parch the blood;
 Nor fail'd to find a flowery dell,
 A shady grove, a crystal well:
 And I am gone, thou know'st not whither.
 —Thou thyself art hastening thither.
 Thou hast thy life; and nothing can
 Have more. Farewell, O Brother Man!"

NOTES.

Page 57, STRATFORD-ON-AVON (1597).—The Warwickshire dialect in this piece was revised by no less a hand than George Eliot's. Her letter is printed in the *Life*—"I was born and bred in Warwickshire," &c.

Page 61, WEIMAR.—By help of that kindly Scot, James Marshall, then Secretary to the Grand Duchess, I saw here, among other interesting things the most interesting, Goethe's House just as he left it, at that time jealously shut up from the public by the poet's grandson. Some of the great man's coats and hats hung in a recess (I ventured to try on a hat, and found it extravagantly too large for a large-sized head). In a narrow slip of a place, like part of a passage, stood his few books carelessly on deal shelves. This narrow book-room opened into the working-room, low-ceilinged, squarish, its two small windows looking into a garden with wicket to a quiet back street. Round the working-room ran a continuous breast-high desk, with ledge at top, and between this desk, on which books or papers could lie for reference, and a large, low table in the centre, Goethe paced, dictating to his amanuensis—for the last eight years of his life to the very man who was showing me the place. On the opposite side from the book-room was the door of the small bed-room, with hardly space for more than the curtainless bed, arm-chair, and little table, on which stood a phial marked inside with some brown medicine, and labelled "Herr Geheimerath von Goethe." This was the old part of the house, the Poet's workshop and living place, entered by a furtive door off the wide staircase leading from the Roman hall to the reception-rooms, with their casts of statues, framed engravings, and glass cases of curiosities. The impress of Goethe's personality everywhere was clear and fresh, as tho' he were but gone a week or two.

Page 77, PLACES AND MEN.—William Blake went down to his seaside cottage in September, 1800, and soon after wrote to Flaxman:—"Felpham is a sweet place for study, because it is more spiritual than London. Heaven opens here on all sides her golden gates; her

windows are not obstructed by vapours; voices of celestial inhabitants are more distinctly heard, and their forms more distinctly seen; and my cottage is also a shadow of their houses."

Page 27, GEORGE; OR, THE SCHOOLFELLOWS.—This was first printed in *Household Words*: the Great Novelist's note of acknowledgment is a pleasure of memory,—

'TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Monday Ninth November, 1857

My dear Sir I am happy to retain the Poem, which is mournfully true, and has moved me very much. You shall have a Proof without fail.

Faithfully yours

W. Allingham Esquire.'

CHARLES DICKENS.

Page 78, THE OLD TUNE.—This is one of those tunes which are said in Ireland to have been first learnt by overhearing the Fairies. It is here given from Bunting's Collection. Perhaps it may be permissible to say that Moore's words, metrically skilful as they are, do not well accord with the character of the air, in which, moreover, he changed certain of the notes.

THE END.



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