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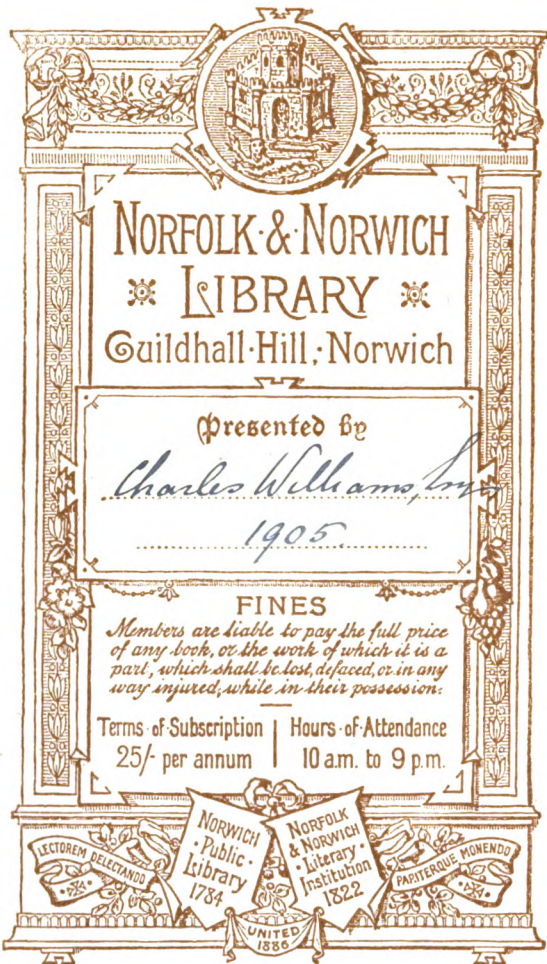
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ALFORD'S
POETICAL WORKS.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY ROBSON, LEVEY, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street, Fetter Lane.



S^{ta} MARIA.

S^o IOANNES.

"RISE AND DEPART, THOU HIGHLY FAVOURED ONE,
FROM THE SAD CROSS, BY THINE ADOPTED LED."

Vide p. 131.

THE
POETICAL WORKS

OF
HENRY ALFORD.

◆
IN TWO VOLUMES.

Munus ecce fictile
Inimus intra regiam salutis;
Attamen vel infiam
Deo obsequelam præstitiase prodest.
Quidquid illud accidit,
Invabit ore personasse Christum.
PRUDENTIUS.

VOLUME I.

CONTAINING
THE ABBOT OF MUCHELNAVE, THE BALLAD OF GLASTONBURY,
MINOR POEMS, AND SONNETS.

LONDON:
FRANCIS & JOHN RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE.

M.DCCC.XLV.

TO
THE PLAYMATE OF HIS CHILDHOOD,
THE JOY OF HIS YOUTH,
AND
THE DEAR COMPANION OF HIS CARES AND STUDIES,
These Poems are dedicated
BY
HER AFFECTIONATE HUSBAND.

PREFACE.

THE present volumes are mainly a republication of Poems written some years ago. If the spirit of them be found, in some cases, *behind* the present usually-uttered sentiments on the same subjects, it must be remembered, that our progress has been beyond example rapid; and that some passages in these volumes may yet possess an interest, as having been, when they were written, offered as one of the humblest of contributions to bring about our awakening to better things. No one could in 1832 and 1833 have foreseen the springing up of that fount of fresh and holy feeling, whose waters now flow out from the minds of so many writers amongst us. Many fervent wishes in these Poems, uttered in the yearning of solitude, are now fulfilled in living men; many bright visions, built on what was then hardly become hope, have now been embodied in substantial fact. For all this thank God; and for the instruments, many of them apparently the most unlikely, which He has used in this His work. It is no small cause of thankfulness, to look back on our former thoughts, and find that what was once the timid venturing on untried ground, has resulted in firm advance; that enter-

prise then nascent can now chronicle its victories; that seed, almost thrown away in despondency, has sprung up and given food and shelter.

If this republication may yet serve, in the least degree, the further progress of the same principles; if the motto prefixed to these volumes may indicate more work yet reserved for them to do,—no further apology will be needed.

Wymeswold, November 15, 1845.

The Abbot of Muchelnaye.¹

CANTO THE FIRST.

I.

WITH pale ray—for she hath no fellow yet—
The eve-star shineth out above the west ;
The sheep-bell tinkles, and the fold is set ;
The swinkt² kine, one by one, are laid to rest ;
The rooks have ceased from chattering in their nest ;
And shepherds whistle homeward through the grey
And misty flats, where from the elm-wood's breast
Forth rise, empurpled with the parting day,
The dim embattled tops of solemn Muchelnaye.

II.

Before the rosy streak had vanishèd
From the last cloud that look'd upon the sun,
In yonder abbey-pile the mass was said,
The psalm was chanted, and the vespers done :

¹ Muchelney—' the great island '—is a village in the moors of Somersetshire, two miles south-west of Langport. There are the remains of a Benedictine abbey, founded by King Athelstan. The buildings are of the later Gothic, or *perpendicular* style.

² Wearied.

The holy men are singly pent each one
 In chamber climbed by solitary stair ;
 And he who labour'd in far fields alone
 Late passing, hears upon the twilight air
Tu, Jesu, salva me — their deep and secret prayer.

III.

The abbot sitteth in his chamber lone,
 But now he laid his sacred vestment by,
 And leaned his crosier on the fretted stone ;
 He prayeth not, but out into the sky
 He looketh forth with wild and dreamful eye,
 Under the quatre-foils of many hues
 Carved in the clustered mullions broad and high ;
 Full sorrowfully seems his heart to muse,
 And fetches other sighs than holy abbots use.

IV.

Belike he hath called up his youthful days,
 Before he gave his soul to wait on Heaven,
 When his steps wandered into downward ways ;
 And he has thought of sins to be forgiven,
 Like thunder-strokes athwart his conscience riven ;—
 But all the fond admissions of his youth
 Long since by prayer and penance have been shriven ;
 And he hath offered up, in shame and sooth,
 His sad and peccant soul at the bright shrine of Truth.

V.

But he hath much to do with earthly sighs ;
 There is a vision of pure loveliness,
 Link'd to a thousand painful memories
 That sear his inner soul with deep distress ;

He kneeleth to his prayer, but not the less
That rising sorrow will not be repress :
He prayeth, but his lot he may not bless ;
He drops his arms, erewhile that crossed his breast,
And counsels how his sad heart he may lighten best.

VI.

Yet time has been when he was bold and gay,
A boy of open brow and lordly mien ;
Him on his proud steed, at the rise of day,
First in the field his father's hills have seen,
To rouse the forest deer ; and time has been
When he hath whispered words in lady's bower,
And wandered not alone in sward-paths green,
What time he wooed and won, in luckless hour,
The high-born Lady Agnes of St. Dunstan's tower.

VII.

One life-consuming thought his peace destroys ;
Before his memory pass in wild array,
As they have passed full often, all the joys
That rose and set upon his bridal day ;
Oh, might he see that priest, who could betray
The secret trusted to his troth to keep,
And could that morn the solemn service say
With inward plot of treachery dark and deep ;—
But let him rest — for vengeance will not always sleep.

VIII.

That form of saintly beauty, robed in white,
With yielded hand ; his heart in bliss intense
High-throbbing with the triumph of delight ;
Those downward eyes of maiden innocence ;

That first sweet look of wedded confidence ;—
 And then the armèd grasp, the short reply,—
 The dizzy swoon that fetter'd all his sense ;—
 The waking underneath the portal high,
 In the faint glimmering light, with pale monks stand-
 ing by.

IX.

He hath had power ; but, all athirst for love,
 He passed it by, and tasted not : the earth
 Each summer-tide, in meadow and in grove,
 Teemed with the riches of her yearly birth ;—
 High music and the sounds of holy mirth,
 Evening and morning, fell upon his ear ;—
 But all this, heard or seen, was nothing worth,
 So there were wanting one sweet voice to cheer ;
 Were this his Eden-ground, he finds no helpmate here.

X.

His not “ the sickening pang of hope deferred,”
 Nor calm dismissal of a treasure lost ;
 But anguish deep, unwritten and unheard,
 Of the full heart amidst fulfilment crost ;
 When most assured, then downward smitten most.
 Yet did the lamp of love burn upward bright ;
 Yet did the flame, though by fierce tempest tost,
 With ever-constant and consoling light
 In solitude pierce through his spirit's darkest night.

XI.

His waking thoughts with sorrow trafficked most :
 But when the gentle reign of sleep began,

Then through a varied and uncounted host
Of pleasant memories his free fancy ran ;
Sometimes the heavenly harps their strain began,
Responsive quiring to each angel-hand ;
And brightest throned amidst the high divan,
Sweetest in voice of all the sainted band,
Was she—his wedded spouse—the glory of that land.

XII.

Sometimes through twilight fields or summer grove
They went in converse ; and the wondrous power
Of world-creation viewed by light of love ;
Sometimes he saw her with a blessed dower
Of fairest children, and each little flower
Grow into beauty, and its station keep
Around their common life ;—thus the night-hour
Would pass dream-hallowed, and then faithless sleep
Steal from his widowed couch, and he would wake and
weep.

CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

It is the solemn midnight ; and the moon
Hard by the zenith holds her solemn state,
And yon flushed star will westward dip full soon
Behind the elms that gird the abbey-gate ;—
There stair and hall are drear and desolate ;
And even Devotion doth her votaries spare,
Save the appointed ones on Heaven that wait,
Wafting upon the hushed unlistening air
Tu, Jesu, salva nos—their deep and night-long prayer.

II.

In low flat lines the slumbering dew-mist broods
 Along the reaches of the Parret-stream;¹
 And on the far-off vales and clustered woods
 Dwells, like the hazy daylight of a dream;
 Piled over which, the dusky mountains seem
 As a new continent, whose headlands steep
 Within his day's fair voyage now doth deem
 Some mariner, whose laden vessels creep
 Across the dim white level of the severing deep.

III.

In the mid prospect, from its shadowy screen
 Rises the abbey-pile; each pinnacle
 Distinct with purest light; save where, dark green,
 The ivy-clusters round some buttress dwell,
 The sharp and slender tracery varying well;
 Perfect the group, and to poetic gaze
 Like a fair palace, by the potent spell
 Of old magician summoned from the haze,
 Some errant faery knight to wilder with amaze.

IV.

But list! the pendant on the wicket-latch
 Hath rung its iron summons; and the sight
 Through the uncertain shadowings may catch
 A muffled figure, as of some lone wight
 Belated in the flats this summer night,
 And seeking refuge in the abbey near:

¹ The river Parret, which, rising in the Dorsetshire hills, flows across the moors of Somersetshire, and empties itself into the Bristol Channel, below Bridgewater.

Again those strokes the slumbering band affright,
 And cause the wakeful choir, in doubt and fear,
 To pause amid their chant, and breathless bend to hear.

V.

Slow moves the porter, heavy with the load
 Of age and sleep ; some newly happened ill—
 Some way-side murder—doth his heart forebode ;
 And at the wicket come, he pauseth still,
 And on his brow the icy drops distil ;
 Till a faint voice admission doth implore—
 “ Open, blest fathers,—the night-damps are chill ;
 So may your abbot’s holy aid restore
 One whose life falters now at death’s uncertain door.”

VI.

The smaller wicket first he inward turns
 For caution and assurance ; then as slow
 By the dim taper-light that flickering burns,
 Scans well the stranger, whether friend or foe ;
 Then stooping draws the massy bolt below,
 Well satisfied that such a form as stands
 Before him now no treachery can know,
 Can bear no weapon in those trembling hands,
 Nor be the wily scout of nightly prowling bands.

VII.

A holy woman is it, who desires
 Speech with the abbot’s reverence : “ For fear
 Of God in heaven, who each one’s life requires
 At each one’s brother’s hand, call thou him here,
 Or point me where he rests, that I may clear

My soul of that wherewith I am in trust ;
 For she who sent me to her end is near :
 And who shall make amendment, or be just,
 When the pale eye hath mingled with its kindred dust ?”

VIII.

“ Sister,—for by thy russet garb I guess
 Thou art of yonder saintly company
 Whose frequent hymns our holy Mother bless,
 Borne hither from St. Mary’s Priory,¹—
 Hard is it for one chilled with age like me
 To do thine urgent bidding ; close behind
 The landing of yon steep stair dwelleth he
 Of whom thou speakest ; sleep doth seldom bind
 His eyelids ; wakeful unto prayer thou shalt him find.”

IX.

Up the strait stair the long-robed figure glides,
 The while the aged man his taper’s light
 Trims, and with friendly voice the stranger guides,
 Till the dark buttress hides her from his sight ;
 And then he peers abroad into the night,
 Crossing himself for fear of aught unblest ;
 For sprites and fairies, when the moon is bright,
 Weave their thin dances on the meadow’s breast,
 And sharp rays pierce the tombs, and rouse the dead
 from rest.

X.

He looks not long,—for down the stairs of stone
 Footsteps are sounding, and from forth the pile

¹ Its ruins yet remain, within sight of the abbey at Muchelney,
 just across the river.

Passes the stranger, but not now alone.
“ Here, brother Francis, let thy keys awhile
Rest in my keeping ; I will thee assoil
From aught that in mine absence may befall ;
So wilt thou spare thyself thy watch and toil
For my return ; my blessing guards ye all ;
For I must forth, when sorrow for my help doth call.”

XI.

The abbot speaks ; and they two glide along
In the dim moonlight, till the meadow haze
Enwraps them from the sight : the trees among,
And down the windings of the gleamy ways
They pass ; and cross the Parret-stream, ablaze
With flickering ripples ; then they track the moor,
Even till they reach St. Mary's Priory ;
Ere which, the dark-robed stranger goes before,
And without speech admits them through a lowly door.

XII.

It is an humble chamber ; and a group
Of holy sisters, in their work of love,
Over some prostrate form are seen to stoop,
And in the feeble glimmering slowly move ;
And now the abbot sees, bending above,
One stretched in anguish on the pavement there ;
In wild unrest her white arms toss and rove ;
On the dank floor is spread her tangled hair,
And with convulsive gasps she draws the sounding air.

XIII.

But see, she beckons, and he draweth near ;
Again she beckons ; and that sisterhood

Slowly retreat from what they may not hear ;
 The last is gone ;—and now, with life endued,
 The abbot's form that lady rose and viewed ;
 " Sir monk, I am not as I seem this hour !"
 He trembles—nay, let no chill doubt intrude—
 It is, it is—thine own, thy bridle, thy flower,
 The high-born Lady Agnes of St. Dunstan's tower !

 CANTO THE LAST.

I.

" HERE is no place for greeting : fly afar
 Before the absent sisterhood return.
 In my well-sembled agony, yon star
 I watched, whose westering rays now faintly burn :
 It symbols forth my fate ; and wouldst thou learn
 What bodes this meeting, ere it dips below
 The mountain-range which thou canst just discern,
 Safe refuge must be won ; for as we go,
 Shining, it bodeth joy—but sunken, tears and woe."

II.

She speaks, and forth into the gleamy night
 They pass together ; dim and ill-defined
 Their thoughts ;—now wandering with the mazy light
 Of the wan moon, now with the moaning wind.
 Thus do great issues of a sudden joined
 Benumb men's spirits ; who in thrall endure
 Waiting the judgment of the ordering mind,
 Who clears the vision with her influence pure,
 And lights up memory's lamps along the steep obscure.

III.

But whither shall they fly?—the night's high noon
Hath past, and she is faint and weary grown :
“ Lady, the abbey-gate is reached full soon :
There can I hide thee ; in those towers of stone
Are secret chambers kenned by me alone,
Where I can tend thee, while the coming day
Shall bring thee rest ; then when its light hath flown,
Mine be it, in maturer thought, to say
How we may shape our course to regions far away.”

IV.

With hurried steps to gain those towers they press ;
But ere they reached them, had that lady's sight
Not earthward drooped for very weariness,
She might have seen that clear symbolic light
First fainter wane, then vanish from the night.
The other marked its dying radiance well ;
But he was one whom omens could not fright :
But, 'spite his better judgment, sooth to tell,
Faintness struck through his heart, and broke joy's
rapturous spell.

V.

The abbot sitteth in his chamber lone,
And by him sits the lady of his love ;
The crosier leans upon the fretted stone,
Swept by the sacred vestment from above :
He prayeth not—for he can never move
His fond eyes from that lovely lady's brow ;
Whose downcast looks seem gently to reprove
The scheme that riseth in their wishes now—
To doff the saintly veil, and break the chartered vow.

VI.

They gaze upon each other earnestly,
 Scarce daring to discover but in look
 What each might read of in the other's eye.
 Belike ye wonder, what such question shook
 The firm resolve that erst their spirits took ;—
 In sooth, God's vows were on them both ; but yet
 The first law in the heaven-descended book,
 Firmer than veil or chartered vow, is set—
Quos Deus junxit, homo ne quis separet.

VII.

Oh, who can sound the depth of human joy,
 The fathomless tranquillity of bliss !
 Clear shine the eyes, when in their calm employ
 They scan some form which they have wept to miss ;
 Quick through the being thrills the mystic kiss
 Of wife, or clinging child ; light pass the days
 Though sad, with such to cheer ; and sweet it is
 To sit, and even unto tears to gaze
 On flowers which Love hath given to bloom beside our
 ways.

VIII.

Long hours have flown, to wedded rapture given ;
 And now upon the dusk and dawning air,
 Which murmurs, with its quick shrill pulses riven,
 The matin-bell sounds forth, calling to prayer
 The abbey-brotherhood and hamlets near :
 Then spoke the abbot : “ Part we for an hour ;
 Then follow me into a refuge near,
 A hiding-place within this solid tower,
 Known but to those who here have held this highest
 power.”

IX.

He leadeth her a dark and narrow way,
 Along the windings of that hidden stair ;
 They might see nothing of the rising day,
 Until that he had brought his lady dear
 Unto a chamber, rudely fashioned, near
 The top roof of the abbey-pile, and lit
 By one small window, where the hour of prayer
 Secure from rude intrusion she might sit,
 And watch the morning clouds along the landscape flit.

* * * * *

X.

“ Say ye, she left Saint Mary’s Priory
 This night ?—perchance she roameth in the glade,
 Or seeketh some lone cottage wearily :
 Strict search for her in this our abbey made
 Hath found no trace ; each hiding-place displayed
 Shews no such tenant : and our holy chief
 Tells how he left her on your pavement laid,
 What time she sunk exhausted by her grief,
 After confession gave her prisoned woes relief.”

* * * * *

XI.

Past is all peril now—the search is done,
 Past the spare meal, and spent the hour of prayer ;
 The holy men are singly pent each one
 In chamber climbed by solitary stair :

And quickly as the anxious lover dare
 He seeks with throbbing heart that nest secure :
 “ Rejoice, my wedded love, my life, my fair !
 Our way is straight, our course is safe as pure,
 Our life of love and joy from disappointment sure.”

XII.

He found her,—as ye find some cherished bud
 Of early primrose, when the storm is past,
 Crushed by the vexing of the tempest-flood ;—
 Prostrate and pale she lay, for Death had cast
 His gorgon-spell upon her : thick and fast
 The abbot’s bursting heart did upward beat.
 A while benumbed he stood : Reason at last
 Fled with the wild crash from her central seat,
 And all his soul within him burned with maddening
 heat.

* * * * *

XIII.

Three hundred years, above the tall elm-wood
 One ivied pinnacle hath signified
 The place where once the abbey-pile hath stood.
 A hundred years before, the abbot died,—
 A man of many woes : one summer-tide
 They found his coffin in the churchyard-wall ;
 And when they forced the stony lid aside,
 Gazed on his face beneath the mouldered pall,
 Even as the spirit left it—pale and tear-worn all.

XIV.

And often, down that dark and narrow way,
Along the windings of that hidden stair,
Sweeps a dim figure, as the rustics say,
And tracks the path even to the house of prayer :
What in the dusky night it doeth there,
None may divine, nor its return have met ;
Only, upon the hushed and listening air
Strange words, as men pass by, are sounding yet :
Quos Deus junxit, homo ne quis separet.

The Ballad of Glastonbury.

INTRODUCTION.

Glastonbury, anciently called Avalon, is a place much celebrated both in tradition and history. It was here, according to old legends, when the neighbouring moors were covered by the sea, that St. Joseph of Arimathea landed, and built the first church in England. It was here that the glorious king Arthur was buried, with the inscription :

Hic jacet Arturus, rex quondam, rexque futurus.

It was here that the scarcely less glorious King Alfred took sanctuary, and hence that he went into voluntary obscurity when the Danes invaded England. Here also was built that magnificent abbey, whose riches and hospitality were known to all Christendom. Its last abbot was murdered on the Tor-hill by order of Henry the Eighth, and the building was sacrificed to the misguided fury of the Reformation. The very ruins are now fast perishing.

The Quantock Hills, alluded to in the following poem, are in the autumn profusely covered with the mingled blossoms of heath and furze.

I.

The prospect of the western plains.

THE hills have on their royal robes
Of purple and of gold,
And over their tops the autumn clouds
In heaps are onward rolled ;
Below them spreads the fairest plain
That British eye may see—
From Quantock to the Mendip range,
A broad expanse and free.¹

¹ The magnificent views from the Quantock hills above Nether Stowey, where this poem was written, embrace the whole of the moor district of Somersetshire, with the bare hills and wooded capes which bound this singular tract of country, and the Tor of Glastonbury and Mendip hills in the distance.

II.

As from those barriers, grey and vast,
 Rolled off the morning mist,
 Leaving the eyesight unrestrained
 To wander where it list,
 So roll, thou ancient chronicler,
 The ages' mist away ;
 Give me an hour of vision clear,
 A dream of the former day.

An invocation of
 Time, to
 open the
 days past.

III.

At once the flood of the Severn sea
 Flowed over half the plain,
 And a hundred capes, with huts and trees,
 Above the flood remain :
 'Tis water here and water there,
 And the lordly Parret's way
 Hath never a trace on its pathless face—
 As in the former day.

A vision is
 vouchsafed.

IV.

Of shining sails that thronged that stream
 There resteth never a one ;
 But a little ship to that inland sea
 Comes bounding in alone ;
 With stretch of sail and tug of oar
 It comes full merrily,
 And the sailors chant, as they pass the shore,
Tibi gloria Domine.

The ship of
 St. Joseph,
 and how it
 sped.

V.

“ Nights and days on the watery ways
 Our vessel hath slidden on,

THE BALLAD OF GLASTONBURY.

Our arms have never tired of toil,
 Our stores have long been done ;
 Sweet Jesus hath sped us over the wave,
 By coasts and along the sea,
 And we sing, as we pass each rising land,
 Tibí gloria Domíne.

VI.

“ Sweet Jesus hath work for us to do
 In a land of promise fair ;
 Our vessel is steered by an angel-hand
 Until it bring us there :
 To our Captain given, a sign from heave
 Our token true shall be ;
 And we sing, as we wait for the Promise-sign,
 Tibí gloria Domíne.

VII.

The sign
 of promise
 given to
 him ;

“ When a dark green hill shall spire aloft
 Into the pure blue sky,
 Most like to Tabor’s holy mount
 Of vision blest and high ;
 Straight to that hill our bounding prow
 Unguided shall pass and free ;
 Sweet Jesus hath spoken, and we believe ;
 Tibí gloria Domíne.”

VIII.

And ful-
 filled.

Thus far they sung, and at once a shout
 Peeled upward loud and clear ;
 For, lo ! the vessel onward ran
 With never a hand to steer ;

And full in sight that Promise-hill
 Towered up into the sky,
 Most like to Tabor's holy mount
 Of vision blest and high.

IX.

Now raise the song, ye faithful crew,
 Let all the uplands hear ;
 It fitteth Salvation's messengers
 To be of joyous cheer ;
 For Avalon isle ye make the while,
 By angel-pilot's hand ;
 Right onward for that pointed hill,
 Straight to the sloping land.

X.

Each arm is resting, and every eye
 With thankful tear is bright ;
 Thus spake one high upon the prow,
 Feeding his forward sight :
 "The word of God is just and true,
 And the mountains green that stand
 To the left and right in the morning light
 Lead on to our Promise-land.

XI.

"Sweet Jesus hath broken the sepulchre,
 And pours His golden grace,
 Clothing the earth with the joy of birth,
 In every fairest place :
 His servant asked a token sure,
 And a token sure is given ;

And He that lay in the garden-tomb
Is Lord of earth and heaven."

XII.

They bless
God on the
strand of
Avalon.

By this the vessel had floated nigh
To the turf upon the strand,
And first that holy man of joy
Stepped on the Promise-land;
Until the rest, in order blest,
Were ranged, and kneeling there,
Gave blessing to the God of heaven
In a lowly chanted prayer.

XIII.

Then over the brow of the seaward hill
In their order blest they pass,
At every change in the psalmody
Kissing the holy grass;
Till they come where they may see full near
That pointed mountain rise,
Darkening with its ancient cone
The light of the eastern skies.

XIV.

St. Joseph
planteth his
staff as a
token.

"This staff hath borne me long and well,"
Then spake that Saint divine,
"Over mountain and over plain,
On quest of the Promise-sign;
For aye let it stand in this western land,
And God do more to me
If there ring not out from this realm about,
Tibi gloria Domine.

XV.

A cloud is on them—the vision is changed,
 And voices of melody,
 And a ring of harps, like twinkles bright,
 Comes over the inland sea ;
 Long and loud is the chant of praise—
 The hallowed ages glide ;
 And once again the mist from the plain
 Rolls up the Mendip side.

The days of
 the ancient
 Church of
 Britain.

XVI.

With mourning stole and solemn step,
 Up that same seaward hill,
 There moved of ladies and of knights
 A company sad and still ;
 There went before an open bier,
 And, sleeping in a charm,
 With face to heaven and folded palms
 There lay an armed form.

The mort
 d'Arthur.

XVII.

It is the winter deep, and all
 The glittering fields that morn
 In Avalon's isle were over-snowed
 The day the Lord was born ;
 And as they cross the northward brow,
 See white, but not with snow,
 The mystic thorn beside their path
 Its holy blossoms shew.

St. Joseph's
 staff hath
 budded, and
 bloometh at
 Christmas-
 tide.

XVIII.

They carry him where from chapel low
 Rings clear the angel-bell—

He was the flower of knights and lords,
 So chant the requiem well :
 His wound was deep, and his holy sleep
 Shall last him many a day,
 Till the cry of crime in the latter time
 Shall melt the charm away.

XIX.

• The chronicle passeth to the pillage by the Danes.

A cloud is on them—the vision fades—
 And cries of woe and fear,
 And sounds unblest of neighbouring war,
 Are thronging on mine ear :
 Long and loud was the battle-cry,
 And the groans of them that died ;
 And once again the mist from the plain
 Rolls up the Mendip side.

XX.

The great King Alfred in sorrow avoideth the foe.

From the postern-door of an abbaye pile
 Passes with heavy cheer
 A soldier-king in humble mien,
 For the shouting foes are near ;
 The holy men by their altars bide,
 In alb and stole they stand ;
 The incense-fumes the temple fill
 From blessed children's hand.

XXI.

The ancient abbaye is burnt and pillaged.

Slow past the king that seaward brow,
 Whence turning he might see,
 Streaming upon Saint Michael's Tor,
 The pagan blazonry ;

Then a pealing shout and a silence long,
 And rolling next on high
 Dark vapour, laced with threads of flame,
 Angered the twilight sky.

XXII.

The cloud comes on — the vision is changed — But better
 days are
 near.
 And songs of victory,
 And hymns of praise to the Lord of Peace,
 Come over the inland sea ;
 The waters clear, the fields appear,
 The plain is green and wide ;
 And once again the mist from the plain
 Rolls up the Mendip side.

XXIII.

The plats were green with lavish growth,
 And, like a silver cord,
 Down to the northern bay the Brue
 Its glittering water poured :
 Far and near the pilgrims throng,
 With staff and humble mien,
 Where Glastonbury's crown of towers
 Against the sky is seen. It is the
 high prime
 of Glas-
 tonbury's
 glory.

XXIV.

By the holy thorn and the holy well,
 And St. Joseph's silver shrine,
 They offer thanks to highest Heaven
 For the light and grace divine ;
 In the open cheer of the abbaye near,
 They dwell their purposed day,

And then they part, with blessed thoughts,
Each on his homeward way.

XXV.

But pride
cometh

The cloud drops down—the vision is changed—
And an altered sound of pride,
And a glitter of pomp is cast athwart
The meadows green and wide.
The servants of a lowly Lord
On earth's high places ride;
And once again the mist from the plain
Rolls up the Mendip side.

XXVI.

before a
fall.

The strong man armed hath dwelt in peace
Till a stronger hath sacked his home;
And the Church that married the pride of the earth
By the earth is overcome:
There hath sounded forth upon the land
That wicked king's behest,
And Lust and Power from Lust and Power
A blighted triumph wrest.

XXVII.

Villanous
doings for
lucre's
sake.

The winds are high in Saint Michael's Tor,
And a sorry sight is there—
A dark-browed band, with spear in hand,
Mount up the turret-stair;
With heavy cheer and lifted palms
There kneels a holy priest;
The fiends of death they grudge his breath,
To hold their rapine-feast.

XXVIII.

The cloud comes on them—the vision is changed—
 And a crash of lofty walls,
 And the short dead sound of music quenched,
 On the sickened hearing falls ;
 Quick and sharp is the ruin-cry —
 Unblest the ages glide ;
 And once again the mist from the plain
 Rolls up the Mendip side.

The judgment of
 God on
 England.

XXIX.

Low sloping over sea and field
 The setting ray had past,
 On roofs and curls of quiet smoke
 The glory-flush was cast.
 Clustered upon the western side
 Of Avalon's green hill,
 Her ancient homes and fretted towers
 Were lying, bright and still ;

But in it
 He hath re-
 membered
 mercy.

XXX.

And lower, in the valley-field,
 Hid from the parting day,
 A brotherhood of columns old,
 A ruin rough and grey ;
 And over all, Saint Michael's Tor
 Spired up into the sky—
 Most like to Tabor's holy mount
 Of vision blest and high.

XXXI.

The vision changeth not—no cloud
 Comes down the Mendip side ;

THE BALLAD OF GLASTONBURY.

The moors spread out beneath my feet
 Their free expanse and wide ;
 On glittering cots and ancient towers,
 That rise among the dells,
 On mountain and on bending stream
 The light of evening dwells.

XXXII.

I may not write— I cannot say
 What change shall next betide ;
 Whether that group of columns grey
 Untroubled shall abide ;
 Or whether that pile in Avalon's isle
 Some pious hand shall raise,
 And the vaulted arches ring once more
 With pealing chants of praise.

XXXIII.

Speed on, speed on : let England's sons
 For England's glories rise ;
 And England's towers that lowly lie
 Lift upward to the skies :
 Till there go up from England's heart,
 In peace and purity,
 From temple-aisle and cottage-hearth,
Tibi gloria Domine.

Lady Mary.

THOU wert fair, Lady Mary,
As the lily in the sun :
And fairer yet thou mightest be,
Thy youth was but begun :
Thine eye was soft and glancing,
Of the deep bright blue ;
And on the heart thy gentle words
Fell lighter than the dew.

They found thee, Lady Mary,
With thy palms upon thy breast,
Even as thou hadst been praying,
At thine hour of rest :
The cold pale moon was shining
On thy cold pale cheek ;
And the morn of the Nativity
Had just begun to break.

They carved thee, Lady Mary,
All of pure white stone,
With thy palms upon thy breast,
In the chancel all alone :
And I saw thee when the winter moon
Shone on thy marble cheek,
When the morn of the Nativity
Had just begun to break.

LADY MARY.

But thou kneelest, Lady Mary,
With thy palms upon thy breast,
Among the perfect spirits,
In the land of rest :
Thou art even as they took thee
At thine hour of prayer,
Save the glory that is on thee
From the Sun that shineth there.

We shall see thee, Lady Mary,
On that shore unknown,
A pure and happy angel
In the presence of the throne ;
We shall see thee when the light divine
Plays freshly on thy cheek,
And the resurrection morning
Hath just begun to break.

Hymn to the Sun.

METHINKS my spirit is too free
To come before thy presence high,
Obtruding on the earth and sky
Aught but their solemn joy at greeting thee ;
Methinks I should confess
Some awe at standing in the way
Of this thy pomp at birth of day,
Troubling thy sole unrivalled kingliness.

Glorious conqueror, unfolding
Over the purple distance
Thy might beyond resistance
Upon the charmed earth, that waits beholding
The fulness of thy glory, ere she dare
To tell thee she rejoices
With all her myriad voices,
Too modest-mEEK thy first-born joys to share.

As the mingled blazing
Of a pomp of armed bands,
Over a strait into other lands,
Gladdens the sea-boy from the cliff-side gazing ;
Watching the dazzling triumph pass,
Rolling onward deep and bright
With shifting waves of light,
From floating of crimson banners, and horns of
wreathed brass ;

As the beacon to that scout of old,
 Searching the benighted sky
 With watch-wearied eye,
Brought sudden gratulation manifold ;
Bridging all the furrowed waves between
 Ida and Athos, and the Lemnian steep,
 And Ægiplanctus, and the deep
Roll of the bay of Argos, with a track of sheen ;*

So joyous on this eastward-fronting lawn
 After the keen-starred night
 The lifting of thy light
Fulfilleth all the promise of the dawn ;
Like the bursting of a golden flood
 Now flowing onward fast
 Over the dewy slopes, now cast
Among flushed stems on yonder bank of wood.

With such a pomp methinks thou didst arise
 When hand in hand, divinely fair,
 The fresh-awakened pair
Stood gazing from thick-flowered Paradise ;
Uncertain whether thou wert still the same
 They saw sink down at night,
 Or some great new-created light,
Or the glory of some seraph as he downward came.

Thus didst thou rise that first unclouded morn
 Over the waters blank and still,
 When on the Assyrian hill
Rested the ark, and the new world was born ;

* Æschyl. Agamemnon. The scout was set on the palace of Agamemnon at Mycenæ to receive by beacons the intelligence of the capture of Troy.

And when upon the strange unpeopled land,
 With hands outspread and lifted eyes,
 Stood round the primal sacrifice,
Under a bright-green mount, the patriarchal band.

With seven-fold glory thou shalt usher in
 The new and mighty birth
 Of the latter earth ;
With seven days' light that morning shall begin,
Waking new songs and many an Eden-flower ;
 While over the hills and plains shall rise
 Bright groups and saintly companies,
And never a cloud shall blot thee—never a tempest
 hour.

Hymn to the Sea.

WHO shall declare the secret of thy birth,
Thou old companion of the circling earth?
And having reached with keen poetic sight
Ere beast or happy bird
Through the vast silence stirred,
Roll back the folded darkness of the primal night?

Corruption-like, thou teemedst in the graves
Of mouldering systems, with dark weltering waves
Troubling the peace of the first mother's womb;
Whose ancient awful form,
With inly-tossing storm,
Unquiet heavings kept—a birth-place and a tomb.

Till the life-giving Spirit moved above
The face of the waters, with creative love
Warming the hidden seeds of infant light:
What time the mighty word
Through thine abyss was heard,
And swam from out thy deeps the young day heavenly
bright.

Thou and the earth, twin-sisters as they say,
In the old prime were fashioned in one day;
And therefore thou delightest evermore
With her to lie and play
The summer hours away,
Curling thy loving ripples up her quiet shore.

She is a married matron long ago,
 With nations at her side ; her milk doth flow
 Each year : but thee no husband dares to tame ;
 Thy wild will is thine own,
 Thy sole and virgin throne—
 Thy mood is ever changing—thy resolve the same.

Sunlight and moonlight minister to thee ;—
 O'er the broad circle of the shoreless sea
 Heaven's two great lights for ever set and rise ;
 While the round vault above,
 In vast and silent love,
 Is gazing down upon thee with his hundred eyes.

All night thou utterest forth thy solemn moan,
 Counting the weary minutes all alone ;
 Then in the morning thou dost calmly lie,
 Deep-blue, ere yet the sun
 His day-work hath begun,
 Under the opening windows of the golden sky.

The Spirit of the mountain looks on thee
 Over an hundred hills ; quaint shadows flee
 Across thy marbled mirror ; brooding lie
 Storm-mists of infant cloud,
 With a sight-baffling shroud
 Mantling the grey-blue islands in the western sky.

Sometimes thou liftest up thine hands on high
 Into the tempest-cloud that blurs the sky,
 Holding rough dalliance with the fitful blast,
 Whose stiff breath, whistling shrill,
 Pierces with deadly chill
 The wet crew feebly clinging to their shattered mast.

Foam-white along the border of the shore
Thine onward-leaping billows plunge and roar ;
 While o'er the pebbly ridges slowly glide
 Cloaked figures, dim and grey,
 Through the thick mist of spray,
Watchers for some struck vessel in the boiling tide.

Daughter and darling of remotest eld —
Time's childhood and Time's age thou hast beheld ;
 His arm is feeble, and his eye is dim :
 He tells old tales again —
 He wearies of long pain : —
Thou art as at the first : thou journeyedst not with him.

To a Drop of Dew.

SUN-BEGOTTEN, ocean-born,
Sparkling in the summer morn
Underneath me as I pass
O'er the hill-top on the grass,
All among thy fellow-drops
On the speary herbage-tops,
Round, and bright, and warm, and still,
Over all the northern hill ;—
Who may be so blest as thee,
Of the sons of men that be ?
Evermore thou dost behold
All the sunset bathed in gold ;
Then thou listenest all night long
To the leaves' faint undersong
From two tall dark elms, that rise
Up against the silent skies :
Evermore thou drink'st the stream
Of the chaste moon's purest beam ;
Evermore thou dost espy
Every star that twinkles by ;
Till thou hearest the cock crow
From the barton¹ far below ;
Till thou seest the dawn-streak
From the eastern night-clouds break ;

¹ A word in use in the west of England for a farm-yard.

Till the mighty king of light
Lifts his unsoiled visage bright,
And his speckled flocks has driven
To batten in the fields of heaven ;
Then thou lightest up thy breast
With the lamp thou lovest best ;
Many rays of one thou makest,
Giving three for one thou takest ;
Love and constancy's best blue,
Sunny warmth of golden hue,
Glowing red, to speak thereby
Thine affection's ardency : —
Thus rejoicing in his sight,
Made a creature of his light,
Thou art all content to be
Lost in his immensity ;
And the best that can be said,
When they ask why thou art fled,
Is, that thou art gone to share
With him the empire of the air.

To a Mountain Stream.

I NAMED thee once ' the silver thread,'
When, in the burning summer day,
I stept across thy stony bed
Upon my homeward way.

For down an old rock's mossy steep,
Thy thin bright stream, as I past by,
Into a calm pool, clear and deep,
Slid down most peacefully.

But now it is the autumn eve,
Dark clouds are hurrying through the sky ;
Thy envious waters will not leave
One stone to cross thee by.

And all about that old steep rock
Thy foamy fall doth splash and roar,
Troubling with rude incessant shock
The pool so still before.

Thus happy childhood evermore,
Beneath unclouded summer suns,
On to its little lucid store
Of joy most calmly runs.

But riper age, with restless toil,
Ever for ampler pleasures frets ;
And oft with infinite turmoil
Troubles the peace it gets.

On the aged Oak at Oakley, Somerset.

I WAS a young fair tree :
Each spring with quivering green
My bows were clad ; and far
Down the deep vale, a light
Shone from me on the eyes
Of those who past—a light
That told of sunny days,
And blossoms, and blue sky :
For I was ever first
Of all the grove to hear
The soft voice under ground
Of the warm-working spring ;
And ere my brethren stirred
Their sheathèd buds, the kine,
And the kine's keeper, came
Slow up the valley-path,
And laid them underneath
My cool and rustling leaves ;
And I could feel them there
As in the quiet shade
They stood, with tender thoughts,
That past along their life
Like wings on a still lake,
Blessing me ;—and to God,
The blessèd God, who cares
For all my little leaves,

Went up the silent praise ;
And I was glad, with joy
Which life of labouring things
Ill knows,—the joy that sinks
Into a life of rest.

Ages have fled since then :—
But deem not my pierced trunk
And scanty leafage serves
No high behest ; my name
Is sounded far and wide :
And in the Providence
That guides the steps of men,
Hundreds have come to view
My grandeur in decay ;
And there hath passed from me
A quiet influence
Into the minds of men :
The silver head of age,
The majesty of laws,
The very name of God,
And holiest things that are,
Have won upon the heart
Of humankind the more,
For that I stand to meet
With vast and bleaching trunk
The rudeness of the sky.

On the Evening of a Village Festival.

WHILE our shrub-walks darken,
And the stars get bright aloft,
Still we sit and hearken
To the music low and soft ;
By the old oak yonder,
Where we watch the setting sun,
Listening to the far-off thunder
Of the multitude as one :

Sit, my best belovèd,
In the waning light ;
Yield thy spirit to the teaching
Of each sound and sight :
While those sounds are flowing
To their silent rest ;
While the parting wake of sunlight
Broods along the west.

Sweeter 'tis to hearken
Than to bear a part ;
Better to look on happiness,
Than to carry a light heart :
Sweeter to walk on cloudy hills
With a sunny plain below,
Than to weary of the brightness
Where the floods of sunshine flow.

Souls that love each other
Join both joys in one ;
Blest by other's happiness,
And nourished by their own :
So with quick reflection,
Each its opposite
Still gives back, and multiplies
To infinite delight.

Last Words.

REFRESH me with the bright-blue violet,
And put the pale faint-scented primrose near,
For I am breathing yet :
Shed not one silly tear ;
But when mine eyes are set,
Scatter the fresh flowers thick upon my bier,
And let my early grave with morning dew be wet.

I have passed swiftly o'er the pleasant earth,
My life hath been the shadow of a dream ;
The joyousness of birth
Did ever with me seem :
My spirit had no dearth,
But dwelt for ever by a full swift stream,
Lapt in a golden trance of never-failing mirth.

Touch me once more, my father, ere my hand
Have not an answer for thee ;— kiss my cheek
Ere the blood fix and stand
Where flits the hectic streak ;
Give me thy last command,
Before I lie all undisturbed and meek,
Wrapt in the snowy folds of funeral swathing-band.

ἱερὸν ὕπνον
κοιμᾶται.

“ FATHER, wake — the storm is loud,
The rain is falling fast ;
Let me go to my mother’s grave,
And screen it from the blast :
She cannot sleep, she will not rest,
The wind is roaring so ;
We prayed that she might lie in peace —
My father, let us go.”

“ Thy mother sleeps too firm a sleep
To heed the wind that blows ;
There are angel-charms that hush the noise
From reaching her repose.
Her spirit in dreams of the blessed Land
Is sitting at Jesu’s feet ;
Child, nestle thee in mine arms and pray
Our rest may be as sweet.”

The Ancient Man.

THERE is an ancient man who dwells
Without our parish-bounds,
Beyond the poplar-avenue,
Across two meadow-grounds ;
And whensoe'er our two small bells
To church call merrily,
Leaning upon our churchyard gate
This old man ye may see.

He is a man of many thoughts,
That long have found their rest,
Each in its proper dwelling-place
Settled within his breast :
A form erect, a stately brow,
A set and measured mien—
The satisfied unroving look
Of one who much hath seen.

And once, when young in care of souls,
I watched a sick man's bed,
And willing half, and half ashamed,
Lingered, and nothing said :
The ancient man, in accents mild,
Removed my shame away—
“ Listen !” he said ; “ the minister
Prepares to kneel and pray.”

These lines of humble thankfulness
Will never meet his eye ;
Unknown that old man means to live,
And unremembered die.
The forms of life have severed us—
But when that life shall end,
Fain would I hail that reverend man
A father and a friend.

The Little Mourner.

“CHILD, whither goest thou
Over the snowy hill?
The frost-air nips so keen
That the very clouds are still:
From the golden folding curtains
The sun hath not looked forth,
And brown the snow-mist hangs
Round the mountains to the north.”

“Kind stranger, dost thou see
Yonder church-tower rise,
Thrusting its crown of pinnacles
Into the looming skies?—
Thither go I:—keen the morning
Bites, and deep the snow;
But, in spite of them,
Up the frosted hill I go.”

“Child, and what dost thou
When thou shalt be there?—
The chancel-door is shut—
There is no bell for prayer;
Yester morn and yester even
Met we there and prayed;
But now none is there
Save the dead lowly laid.”

“Stranger, underneath that tower,
On the western side,
A happy, happy company
In holy peace abide;
My father, and my mother,
And my sisters four—
Their beds are made in swelling turf,
Fronting the western door.”

“Child, if thou speak to them,
They will not answer thee;
They are deep down in earth,—
Thy face they cannot see.
Then wherefore art thou going
Over the snowy hill?
Why seek thy low-laid family
Where they lie cold and still?”

“Stranger, when the summer heats
Would dry their turfy bed,
Duly from this loving hand
With water it is fed;
They must be cleared this morning
From the thick-laid snow;
So now along the frosted field,
Stranger, let me go.”

A Dream.

THE night that is now past hath been to me
A time of wakeful, sleepful fancies: oft
Have I been whirled aloft and rapt away
By some fierce gale: oft in some garden-plot
Laid, in the scent of woodbine and of lilac,
While the laburnum hung its yellow locks
Above me, prisoning in, with flowery chains,
A slumbrous nook, aglow with golden light.
Before that night a weary time had past,
A night of anxious thoughts and prayers,
And they have left their traces on my spirit,
Now that pure calm hath come, and thankful joy.
But most of all, one dream I will relate,
Of import not obscure:—'tis a strange tale—
An errant, broken tale; and as the tale,
The measure wanders. Listen: it ran thus.

THE DREAM.

I.

LIGHT was upon the sea—
The calm unbroken mirror
Of the level sea!
And ye might look around
For many a league each way,
And ye should see no moving thing,

Nor object that had shape :
 But light upon the sea !
 The calm unbroken mirror
 Of the level sea !

A dimple in the centre of the view !
 And then a spreading circle,
 One and then another,
 Onward, outward spreading :
 Even to the verge of heaven
 Do those circles calmly roll ;
 And the sleeping light
 Is all disquieted,
 And leaps among the shining furrows
 Of the waveful sea !

From the centre rising
 Is a pillar mist-enwapt,
 A shining chrysalis
 Of some being beautiful ;
 For, lo, the mist is clearing,
 And a perfect form
 Is hovering o'er the gently swelling waves ;
 A perfect form, but small
 As is some fairy sprite
 Of mediæval tales.

II.

The mighty sea again !
 And now the eastern sun
 Shone freshly on the water,
 That leapt and sparkled bright,

As joyous for the sheen ;
Each wavelet had its crest
Of dancing shivering foam ;
And far as ye might see
Into the glowing south
They chased each other merrily.
Not as before, unbounded,
Was the gladsome sea :
A shore with beetling cliffs
Hung o'er the breaking spray,
And pure white sands beneath
Bordered a breezy bay ;
And sporting on those sands
That same fair form I saw.

Now would he lie and gaze
Up to the deep-blue heaven ;
Now count the sparkling stones
Within his infant reach ;
Now listen the curved shells
Answering the ocean's roar ;
Now would he tempt those waters
Unclothed and beautiful
As is some ancient marble
Of love's winged god,
And float in ecstasy
Over the floating waves,
And let them bear him onward
To the smooth sand's verge.

III.

I saw the sea again !
But it was now once more

The great unbounded ocean,
But not mirror-calm,
Nor in wavelets broken :
It was in tumult dire
Of angry tossing billows,
Like unquiet monsters
Rolling in their agony
Over their watery couch.

And ere I long had looked,
Again appeared that form,
Now stronger knit, and grown
Even to years mature.
His strength had trial sore ;
For in that plunge of waters
A little boat he guided,
Rowing with all his power,
And guiding while he rowed :
Loud creaked his burdened barque
Not long : a crested billow
Fell headlong, and the vessel
Was seen no more ; but him
I saw with vigorous stroke
Mounting the valley-sides
Between the towering waves.

IV.

Still the cliff-bounded sea !
And it was summer noon,
And all the land was still ;
But on the water's face

The merry breeze was playing,
Whitening a chance wave here and there ;
And the dipping sea-birds
Sported, and screamed around ;
And numberless white sails
Spotted the pleasant water—
It was a sight of joy,
That made the bosom full !

Anon a gay and gallant boat
Flew by with canvass stretched
And straining to the wind,
Crushing each wave and making music harsh
As on its way it sped.
In it was that same form,
The spectre of my dream,
Now in mid years, and pale
Methought, and over-watched ;
But he was not alone :
A light and lovely shape,
Beside him sitting there,
Steered that his boat along.

Right joyously she went,
And merry was the sound
Of voice, and voice replying,
Just wafted to my ears
As the trim vessel passed.

v.

'Tis evening on the sea !
The fiery orb of heaven

Hath hid his last bright twinkle
Under yon western line ;
And no star yet looks forth
From the blank unvaried sky.
Again 'tis breathless calm
Upon the ocean's face ;
And the grey mournful light
Lies still upon the water,
Save where the cliff high-turreted
Is imaged deep beneath.

Among the rocks, surf-whitened,
Sitting, or wandering slow,
Was that same form again —
Alone, and sorrow-marked ;
His eye was lustreless,
And ever and anon
He raised his hands aloft,
And spoke to one above him ;
But, as it seemed, none heard,
For still he wandered sad,
And I could see the tears
Spring from his brimming eyes,
And fall upon those rocks.

And once again he looked
Into the fading sky,
Where one scarce-visible star
Had lit its twinkling lamp ;
Which when he saw, he smiled,
And a more copious flood
Of tears rained down his cheek ;

Till on those barren stones,
 For very weariness of grief,
 He laid him down to die.

VI.

It was the noon of night—
 Upon the ocean's breast
 The vast concave of heaven
 Was downward imaged, bright
 With throbbing stars: no rest
 The roving eye might find;
 Horizon there was none,
 But vast infinitude
 Spread over and below.

Down from the upper air
 Self-poised, a pillar glided,
 Such as I saw erewhile,
 But dark and mournful all:
 Then first was manifest
 The polished ocean-surface;
 For into its calm breast
 Passed this array of woe;
 And I could see, as slow
 It sunk, that same appearance,
 But in a dismal garb
 Of death-array. The sea
 Closed over, without noise.

My dream was done; but as I woke, clear sounds
 As of celestial music were around me;

And spite of that last scene of death and woe,
My spirit was all-joyous; and the day
Throughout, some voice was sounding in my ear,
'He is not here, but risen!'

My dream was, LIFE.

May 8, 1840.

A Spring Scene.

*A mossy bank : a young mother sits with her babe
and an elder child.*

MOTHER.

So thou hast brought thy bosom full of daisies
And gilded celandine. There, pour them forth —
A pretty April snow-storm. Now enfold
Thine arms about thy little sister's neck,
And gladden her with kisses.

[They are silent awhile.]

Thou bright ineloquent blue of the vast heaven,
Thou ocean studded with thine isle of light,
And thou all-wrapping, all-sufficing air —
How full are ye of mystery! what hosts
But now are winging through this visible round
Their spirit-way! what throbbings of deep joy
Pulsate through all I see, from the full bud
Whose unctuous sheath is glittering in the noon,
Up through the system of created things,
Even to the flaming ranks of seraphim!
And I and my beloved ones are part
Of the world's hymn of praise,—a happy group
Of the Eternal's moulding,—gazed upon
Perchance of angels; thicker with rich gems
Of his own setting, than the guardian shrine
Of some cathedraled saint with offered jewels.
Shame upon Time, that will write age and care

Upon your velvet cheeks, my little ones—
That will dry up the bosom where ye nestle—
Yea, that in one short day can turn the vault
Of this unspotted, glorious firmament
Into a dark-grey wilderness of clouds
Hurrying to blot heaven's light! Shame upon Time!

CHILD.

Mamma, will the weather be as fine in heaven?

MOTHER.

Thanks for that artless question. I was growing
Mindless of that great spring which knows no check.
Yes, little prattlers, you may fancy heaven
A sky for ever blue—a laughing sun
That knows no flitting shadows—a fair lawn
Besprinkled with your favourite flowers, and birds
Pouring around their gushing melodies;
And you, and this soft little one, and me,
Sitting as we sit now, but all enwrapt
With lustrous beauty and unearthly light.
Thus now;—but you will grow, and then your fancy
Will alter—and your heaven no more be this,
But the lone walk with one whom love hath knit
Into your very soul; while nightingale
From blosmy hawthorn's heart awakes the night
To praise—and o'er ye both, from myriad stars,
The mighty presence of the Eternal Love
Falls, as the dewy odours on the air,
The incense of the temple where ye roam.
Then life perchance will change afresh; and love
Be reft of its support, and stand alone:
And then your heaven will be a loftier thing,

A gazing on the open face of God,—
 Knowledge, and light, and the unbounded sea
 Of presences seraphic. Then, my child,
 Life will go onward yet, and will become
 Labour and sorrow, and your beauty-dreams
 Will have passed by, and all your high desires
 Have sunk away ;—and then your heaven will be
 Wherever there is rest ; and so the way
 Down to the grave—a thing you love not now—
 Will be smoothed off and altered as it nears,
 Till you shall e'en desire it for its sake.

CHILD.

Sing me a song about the sky in heaven.

MOTHER.

Fade, fade away,
 Close by night, and droop by day,
 Little gilded flower :
 Thou hast brethren up above
 Watered by Eternal Love,
 In our Father's bower.

Roll, onward roll,
 Veil the sun and gloom the pole,
 Dark and dismal cloud :
 There are skies in heaven above
 Where the glorious sun of love
 Shines without a shroud.

Inscription

FOR THE RUIN OF A VILLAGE CROSS, HATHERN, LEICESTERSHIRE.

THE simple folk once used to throng
These mouldering steps beneath,
And every child that passed along
Its soft petitions breathe,
In pious days of yore.

The working men at dawn of day
Were here assembled kneeling,
And to their labour bore away
A calm of holy feeling,
In Christian days of yore.

Till once a stalwart company
Of men with gloomy faces,
Unlike the men ye used to see
In such-like holy places,
In quiet days of yore,

With savage hands pulled down the sign
Of our Redeemer's sorrow,
And promised in more force to join,
And break the rest to-morrow,—
Hating the days of yore.

But Providence from then till now
This remnant hath befriended,
And by this shaft and time-worn steps
The memory hath defended
Of the good days of yore.

And still, whene'er the good and great
On common times pass nigh me,
Though no petition they repeat,
Nor kneel in silence by me,
As in the days of yore ;

Yet blessed thoughts upon their hearts
From heaven come gently stealing ;
And each from this grey ruin parts
With calmer, holier feeling,
Blessing the days of yore.

The Dead.

THE dead alone are great!
While heavenly plants abide on earth,
The soil is one of dewless dearth;
But when they die, a mourning shower
Comes down and makes their memories flower
With odours sweet though late.

The dead alone are fair!
While they are with us, strange lines play
Before our eyes, and chase away
God's light: but let them pale and die,
And swell the stores of memory—
There is no envy there.

The dead alone are dear!
While they are here, long shadows fall
From our own forms, and darken all:
But when they leave us, all the shade
Is round our own sad footsteps made,
And they are bright and clear.

The dead alone are blest!
While they are here, clouds mar the day,
And bitter snow-falls nip their May;
But when their tempest-time is done,
The light and heat of Heaven's own Sun
Broods on their land of rest.

Written on Christmas Eve, 1836.

THE earth is clad
For her bridal glad ;
Her robe is white
As the spotless light ;
O'er field and hill
Its folds are still.

From her aery throne
The moon looks down,
Clothing with glory
The tree-tops hoary,
Which glittering are
Like purest spar.

A star or two
Diamond-blue
Through the space peers
Where the vapour clears,
And in long white masses
Silently passes.

The wind is awake,
And his voice doth shake
The frost from the trees ;
Then by degrees
Swells with a louder sound,
Till it dies on the level ground.

February 10, 1840.

THEY saw thee kneel with lowly mien,
In faith a child, in state a queen ;
No circlet girt thy marble brow
While at that altar thou didst bow ;
And tears sprung forth from many an eye
In all that gorgeous company.

Around that brow, so high and fair,
The symbol of a kingdom's care,
They bound a royal diadem,
Flashing with many a rarest gem ;
And British hearts were proud to own
Thy peaceful sway, thy virgin throne.

Again thou kneelest—on that brow
A snowy veil is trembling now ;
And as the solemn words pass by,
Thy woman's heart is throbbing high ;
Nor e'er did cottage maid rejoice
In purer love—in freer choice.

Young Queen, as through the shadowy past
For glimpses of thy lot we cast,
And the dim things to come espy
Through the stern present's gathering sky,
Our tears fall from us as we pray
For blessings on thy bridal day!

The Dirge of the Passing Year, 1840.

BRING flowers—but not the gay,
The tender, or the sweet ;
But such as winter's chill winds lay
Faded and dank across the spray,
Or strew beneath the feet.

Bring flowers to strew the bier :
He will be ready soon ;
Already are his beauties sere ;
And the much-hailed, time-honoured year
To death is passing down.

He hath a warrior been ;*
And in the hallowed clime,
Where spiry rock and dark ravine
Guard the old cedar's solemn green,
Hath sped the march of Time.

He hath, in happy mood,
Turned priest, and charmed the spot
Where in her queenly womanhood
Our nation's hope betrothed stood,
Blest beyond queenly lot.

And he hath bent in prayer
To the great God above,
In peril that dear life to spare,
And o'er that young and royal pair
To spread his shield of love.

* The capture of St. Jean d'Acre.

He hath his voice upsent,
In minster and in aisle,
“Ye creatures of the dust, repent!
He comes to claim what He hath lent—
’Tis yet a little while!”

His duties have been hard,
Yet hath he done them well:
He smote not where he should have spared;
But where his God the victim bared,
His sword of justice fell.

The friend, the wife, the child—
Some took he, and some left;
He hath been cursed with curses wild—
Yet with his healing influence mild
Soothed he the soul bereft.

And he is dying now:
But yet once more again
Shall we behold him, not as now,—
But a dread form with awful brow,
Judging the sons of men.

Then will he tell his tale—
All hidden shall be shewn:
Then will the iron-hearted quail,
The proud fall low, the strong man fail,
When all his words are known.

Then bring sweet flowers and gay—
Of holy thought and deed;
Deck well his bier, that so we may
Look on him at that wrathful day
From fear and anguish free.

Nottingham Mechanics' Exhibition, 1840.*

BRIGHT glowed the canvass, or with chastened light
Of the wan moon was tinted ; features mild
With hopes angelic — glorious visions wild,
Fixed by Eternal Art—were there ! the sight
Might rest on marble forms, perfect in grace
Symmetric, nymph, or hero half divine,
Or the calm hush of slumber infantine ;—
Nature had sent her stores to fill the place :
All dazzling plumes on bird or moth bestowed,
Clear spiry crystals, grots of massive spar :—
So that it seemed all choicest things that are
Within those precincts had their blest abode ;
And he who through these halls unknowing went,
Might ask for what high presence all was meant ?

Nor long should he inquire, ere he should meet
Not sweeping trains of pomp and courtly pride,
Illustrious visitant, or fêted bride,
Or whispering fall of beauty's dainty feet,
But the hard tramp of rustic, and the gaze
Of the pale-faced mechanic, and the eye
Unused before to stretch its aim so high,
Lit with the promise of aspiring days.

* The nobility and gentry of the county and neighbourhood lent their pictures and works of art for this exhibition: an example now not unfrequent, and every where to be followed.

Prosper such work of love ; and may the halls
Which, in glad zeal to feed the nation's heart,
Have lacked awhile their gorgeous stores of art,
Teem with pure joy—the while their envied walls
Shine with adornments richer and more rare—
For the ten-thousands who their beauties share.

Lines written Oct. 23, 1836,

A FEW HOURS AFTER THE BIRTH OF MY FIRST CHILD.

BEAUTIFUL babe, I gaze upon thy face
That bears no trace of earth—thy silk-soft cheek
Gladdens me even to tears—and thy full eyes,
Blue as the midnight heaven;—what thoughts are they
That flit across thy being, now faint smiles
Awakening, now thy tiny fairy fingers
Weaving in restless play?—above thee bends
An eye that drinks sweet pleasure from thine own,
A face of meaning wonderful and deep,
A form in every member full of love.
Once thou wert hidden in her painful side,
A boon unknown, a mystery and a fear;
Strange pangs she bore for thee; but He, whose name
Is everlasting Love, hath healed her pain,
And paid her suffering hours with living joy.

Thou gentle creature, now thine eyes are hid
In soft Elysian sleep:—a holy calm
Hath settled on thee, and thy little hands
Are folded on thy breast. Thus could I look
For ever on thee, babe, with yearning heart
And strange unwonted pleasure.

And thou too,
Sweet mother, hast been dallying with sleep
Till thou hast yielded—and I sit alone,

Alone, as if by Providence divine,
To watch in spirit, and in peaceful verse
To speak my thankfulness and purest joy.
—Some, with the gift of song, have prophesied
High duties for their offspring,—and the words,
Fresh from the parent heart, have wrought a charm
Upon their childhood and their growing youth;
And life hath taken colour from their love.
—And thou, my little Alice, now so frail,
So new to the new world, in after-years
Shalt feel the wondrous tide of poesy
Rise in thy swelling breast;—the happy earth,
And every living thing—spring with its leaves,
And summer clad in flowers, and autumn flush
With ripe abundance, and the winter frost,
Shall lay the deep foundations of thy soul
In peace and purity—thence thou shalt love
The tale of strange adventure;—watch the dance
Of moonlit fairies on the crisping grass,—
And nurse thy little joys unchecked and free
With rhymes antique and laughter-loving sports,
With wanton gambols in the sunny air,
And in the freshening bath of rocky streams.

But God hath knowledge of the years between :
Fair be thy lot, my first and early born—
The pledge and solace of our life-long love.

Christmas Eve, 1836.

THE stars are clear and frosty, and the Earth
Is laid in her first sleep, secure and calm ;
The glorious works of God, as at the first,
Are very good. It is the blessed night
When, if the say of ancient chronicles
Deceive not, no ill spirit walks abroad ;
A night for holy prayers and fancies pure ;
A night when solitude in bed and board
Might frame itself celestial company
Out of its peopled thoughts.

But here with me
Are two, on whom toil and the quiet time
Have wrought sweet slumber ; and by breathings soft
They testify their presence to my heart,
And waken kindly thoughts.

My earliest loved—
Thou who, in laughing childhood and ripe youth,
Wast ever mine—with whose advancing thought
I grew entwined—and who, in time, didst yield
Thy maiden coyness, and in mystic band
Didst link thyself to me—one heart, one life
Binds us together ; in the inmost soul
Either is known to other ; and we walk
The daily path of unrecorded life
Blest with a double portion of God's love.

And thou, in thy warm nook beside our bed,
Peacefully wrapt in slumber infantine,
Thou treasure newly found of springing joy—
Thou jewel in the coronet of love—
Thou little flower, a choice plant's earliest gem—
Thou brightest morning-star, by Love divine
Set on the forehead of the hopeful east,—
Thou reckest not of time; our human names
Mould not thy varying moods; if marking aught,
Measuring thy days by still-expected hours
Of soft appliance to thy mother's breast;
And yet methinks so hallowed is the time,
That even thy cushioned cheek hath trace of it,
Clothed in a deeper and peculiar calm.

The blessings of a kindly Providence
Light on ye both: the way of life, not dark
With gathering storms as yet, invites us on;
We must advance, in threefold union strong,
And strong in Him who bound our lives in God.

Written in a Copy of "The Revolt of Islam,"

GIVEN AS A WEDDING-PRESENT TO HER WHO IS ADDRESSED IN THE FOLLOWING LINES, BUT ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO MYSELF BY THE LAMENTED ARTHUR HENRY HALLAM.

BELoved, to whose wedded hand I trust
This treasure of sweet song, it is but meet
That thou shouldst know its value; that the gift
May have its honour, and the giver share
His meed of grateful love.

No common price
Attends this wedding-gift; for blessed eyes
Have looked upon its pages—eyes whose light
Gladdened a circle of united hearts,
While yet they shone; and now that they are quenched
In the cold grave, they dwell upon our souls,
A memory that can never die—a power
That may not pass away. 'Twas not thy lot
To know and love him: let it be enough
That oft his lips pronounced thy name with love,
As one he fain would know, in happy days
Of youthful confidence and sacred joy.

He lived in love; and God, whose son he was,
Not willing that the spirit pure should pass
Into the dim and damping atmosphere
Of these our earthly haunts and scenes of care,
While yet the hills and skies and common sights
O'erflowed his soul with joy, and wondrous thoughts

Sprung burning in his heart, fetched him away
To the unwithering banks and deep-green glades
Where flows the River of Eternal Truth.

Be then by thee this gift as precious held
As is his memory by the giver ; look
On every page with inly fervent heart ;
Learn lessons of pure beauty, and to shun
Only the errors of the poet's creed,
Yielding free duty to his code of love.

Inscription

FOR A BLOCK OF GRANITE ON THE SURFACE OF THE MER DE GLACE.*

SEE me, by elemental warfare torn
From yonder peak's aerial crest,
Now on the rifted breast
Of this ice-ocean borne
By ministring ages without fail
Down to my rest
Among the shattered heaps in yonder deep-set vale.

Grey am I, for my conflict with the powers
Of air doth never cease ; around
My lifted head doth sound
The voice of all the hour
Struck forth in tempest ; from my fretted side
The snows rebound :
The avalanche's spray-balls in my rifts abide.

Glory and ruin doth my course behold ;
After each wild and dreadful night
The day-birth heavenly bright
Floods all this vale with gold ;
And when the day sinks down, on every peak
Last shafts of light
The downward fading sky with lines of ruby streak.

* We were informed by our Chamounix guide that these blocks are borne downwards by the slow motion of the whole of the vast glacier on which they are lying, and that from year to year their change of place is just perceptible.

All summer long the moan of many woods
Comes to me, and from far conveyed
The tumbling of the low cascade,
And rush of valley-floods.
The lavish rock-rose clothes with crimson hue
Each upward glade,
And the Alp-violet strews its stars of brightest blue.

Thus slowly down long ages shall I pass,
Unnoticed, save by practised eye
Of them who use thus high
The traveller's steps to lead ;
Then when the years by God apportionèd
Shall have past by,
Leap from the lofty brink, and fill the vale with dread.

To a Moonbeam, by our Fire-side.

WHAT dost thou here?
A drop of strange cold light
After thy airy flight
Of many a thousand league of sky?
Like glowworm, or the sparkling eye
Of snake, dost thou appear
By this my nightly fire, among these faces dear.

Why art thou come?
Is it that night is bleak,
And thou in vain dost seek
Some refuge from the chilly wind?
And thou no better nook couldst find
In earth or heaven's high dome,
To nestle and be warm, than this our peopled home?

Now thou art gone,
And all thy light dost shroud
In some swart-bosomed cloud,
Or waitest on thy mother dear,
Bridging her way with opal clear,
Till vapour there is none,
And silver-bright she walks her peaceful path alone.

Here and away,
Bound on no great behest,
A fleeting spark at best;
So high is heaven, or I so low,
That the least things that come and go
My wandering moods obey,
In thoughts that linger by me many a busy day.

A Village Tale :

RELATED ALMOST IN THE WORDS OF THE NARRATOR.

HE was a blessed father ; and he taught
Us, his four children (for in that my day
There were no schools as now) the way to read
The wonderful account, how this large world
Came into being, and the sun and moon,
And all the little stars that deck the heavens.
He loved my mother ; and when her he lost,
And first came home among the sable train
Of mourners, and his desolation sank
Into his soul, we thought his heart would burst.
But soon he built him up another home
In a new partner's breast. She loved us all
As if we were her own : and 'twould have made
Your heart rejoice to see my father sit
After his daily labour, self-deceived
Into domestic happiness, and blest
With us his rosy circle. But stern Death
Envied the healing of the breach he made,
And took our second mother. By this time
My father was in years ; and I believe,
Without the two chairs filled beside the fire,
And some one to be busy and bear rule
In the house-matters, and to share his bed,
He would have known no peace. Therefore a third
He led to church, and brought to live with us—
But, oh, how changed was now our quiet hearth!—
A strange and wayward woman—one who went
From church to meeting, and then back to church,

And got no good from either. She would be
 Days without speaking ; and in sudden mood
 Pour forth such hours of wild and rambling talk,
 That we all shook to hear her. Happily
 My father knew not all ; unsensing age
 Came fast upon him, and his daily meal
 And daily fire, and journey to his bed,
 Were all he sought or knew.

One winter night

I woke from sleep, and heard, or seemed to hear
 Fierce struggling in their room, which joined our own.
 There was no door ; I left my bed, and crept
 To the open ground-sill ; but 'twas quiet all,
 And pitch, pitch dark. Whether she heard me there
 I know not ; but I had scarce regained my bed
 When she came to me, flying like distraught,
 " Jenny, your father's lying stiff and still,
 And will not be awaked." I thought it strange
 That she should try to wake him at mid night ;
 But I said nothing.

Sir, I said before

He was a blessed father ; and we mourned
 Our very hearts out. Long before this time
 My sisters had been married : so 'twas mine
 To live with my strange mother. We were then
 In the old meeting-house that was ; you know
 The place : the stones that were beside the hearth
 Were coverings of graves. 'Tis a lone house—
 A dismal dismal place.

Well—from the hour

My father died, this woman had no peace.
 By day she never kept to the same chair

Five minutes at a time. Now she would rise
And stir the fire, now stare into the street,
Now work a stitch or two; then fling her out
Without a hat or shawl, and roam about
The village and the fields; and in the night—
Oh, sir, 'twas dreadful—she would never go
Upstairs; but she and I slept in a bed
Placed in the lodging room, and all among
The grave-stones—trust me, 'twas a dismal thing.
All night she never slept; and when I woke,
Whether at midnight or in dawn of morn,
I felt her beating with her lifted hand
Backward and forward, all about her breast:
“Mother,” said I, (for though she was not so,
We always *mother'd* her,) “you have not yet
Done beating of him off.” So she went on:
And happy, sir, was I when the time came
For me to leave her, and set up a home
Some twenty houses off, in love and peace,
With my own husband. We'd been married now
Some fifteen weeks, when, as I sat at work,
A neighbour came in haste, with wildered looks,
“Go to your mother.” Up I rose and went;
And oh, sir, what a scene: the doctor stood
With hands and arms all bloody, sewing up
A hideous wound. “O mother, what a deed
Have you been doing!” After that she lived
Three weeks, but never spoke; and as she lived,
So, sir, she died—a wretched, wicked woman,
With strange unbridled thoughts; and deeds—God
knows
What were her deeds: one day they will be shewn.

Ballad: 1845.

RISE, sons of merry England, from mountain and from
plain ;
Let each light up his spirit, let none unmoved remain ;
The morning is before you, and glorious is the sun ;
Rise up, and do your blessed work before the day be
done.

“ Come help us, come and help us,”—from the valley
and the hill
To the ear of God in heaven are the cries ascending
still :
The soul that wanteth knowledge, the flesh that want-
eth food ;—
Arise, ye sons of England, go about doing good.

Your hundreds and your thousands at usage and in
purse,
Behold a safe investment, which shall bless and never
curse !
Oh, who would spend for house or land, if he might but
from above
Draw down the sweet and holy dew of happiness and
love ?

Pour out upon the needy ones the soft and healing
balm ;
The storm hath not arisen yet—ye yet may keep the
calm :

Already mounts the darkness,—the warning wind is
loud ;
But ye may seek your fathers' God, and pray away the
cloud.

Go thron'g our ancient churches, and on the holy floor
Kneel humbly in your penitence among the kneeling
poor ;
Cry out at morn and even, and amid the busy day,
“ Spare, spare, O Lord, Thy people ;—oh, cast us not
away ! ”

Hush down the sounds of quarrel ; let party-names
alone ;
Let brother join with brother, and England claim her
own.
In battle with the Mammon-host join peasant, clerk,
and lord :
Sweet charity your banner-flag, and GOD FOR ALL
your word.

SONNETS.

SONNETS.



I.

If thou wouldst find what holiest men have sought,
Communion with the power of Poesy,
Empty thy mind of all unquiet thought,—
Lay bare thy spirit to the vaulting sky
And glory of the sunshine : go and stand
Where nodding briars sport with the water-break,
Or by the plashings of a moonlight creek,—
Or breast the wind upon some jutting land :—
The most unheeded things have influences
That sink into the soul ; in after-hours
We oft are tempted suddenly to dress
The tombs of half-forgotten moods with flowers :
Our own choice mocks us ; and the sweetest themes
Come to us without call, wayward as dreams.

II.

WEEP ye and howl, for that ye did refuse
 God's feast of bounties when most largely spread ;—
 Sunrise and set, and clustering overhead
 The nightly stars— for that ye did not choose
 To wait on Beauty, all content to lose
 The portion of the Spirit's offered bread
 With which the humble wise are daily fed,
 That grows from yielding things despised their dues.
 Therefore your solitary hours unblest
 Shall not be peopled with the memories dear
 Of field, and church-way path, and runnel clear :
 Therefore your fading age shall not be drest
 With fresh spring-flowers : because ye did belie
 Your noblest life, in sorrow ye shall die.

III.

BUT deck the board—for hither comes a band
 Of pure young spirits, fresh-arrayed in white,
 Glistening against the newly risen light ;
 Over the green and dew-impearlèd land
 Blithesomely tripping forward, hand in hand :
 Deck ye the board—and let the guests be dight
 In Gospel wedding-garment rich and bright,
 And every bud that summer suns expand.
 For you, ye humble ones, our thickets bloom :
 Ye know the texture of each opening flower,
 And which the sunshine, and which love the gloom.
 The shrill of poisèd larks for many an hour
 Ye watch ; and all things gentle in your hearts
 Have place, and play at call their tuneful parts.

IV.

OUT, palsied soul, that dost but tremble ever
 In sight of the bright sunshine ;— mine be joy,
 And the full heart, and eye that faileth never
 In the glad morning :— I am yet a boy ;—
 I have not wandered from the crystal river
 That flowed by me in childhood : my employ
 Hath been to take the gift and praise the Giver ;
 To love the flowers thy heedless steps destroy.
 I wonder if the bliss that flows to me
 In youth, shall be exhaled and scorched up dry
 By the noonday glare of life : I must not lie
 For ever in the shade of childhood's tree ;
 But I must venture forth and make advance
 Along the toiled path of human circumstance.

V.

MY own dear country ! thy remembrance comes
 Like softly-flowing music on my heart ;
 With thy green sunny hills, and happy homes,
 And cots rose-bowered, bosomed in dells apart :
 The merry pealings of our village-bells
 Gush ever and anon upon mine ear ;
 And is there not a far-off sound that tells
 Of many-voicèd laughter shrill and clear ?
 Oh ! were I now with thee—to sit and play
 Under the hawthorn on the slope o' th' hill,
 As I was wont to do ; or pluck all day
 The cowslip and the flaunting daffodil,
 Till shepherds whistled homeward, and the west
 Folded the large sun in her crimson breast !

VI.

OH, what doth it avail, in busy care
The summer of our days to pass away
In-doors—nor forth into the sunny ray,
Nor by the wood nor river-side to fare,
Nor on far-seeing hills to meet the air,
Nor watch the land-waves yean the shivering spray?
Oh, what doth it avail, though every day
Fresh-catered wealth its golden tribute bear?
Rather along the field-paths in the morn
To meet the first laugh of the twinkling east,
Or when the clear-eyed Aphrodite is born
Out from the amber ripples of the west,
'Tis joy :— to move under the bended sky,
And smell the pleasant earth, and feel the winds go by.

VII.

TRUTH loveth not to lavish upon all
The clear down-shining of her heavenly smile ;
She chooseth those on whom its light shall fall,
And shuts them from the earthly crowd the while :
But they whom she hath lightened tread this earth
With step and mien of heavenly gentleness ;
Ye shall not see them drunk with over-mirth,
Or tangled in the world's thick wilderness ;
For there hath shone upon their path of life
Mild beamings from a hidden glory's ray ;
A calm hath passed upon their spirit's strife,
The bounding of young hopes hath sunk away,
And certain bliss hath dawned, with still uprise,
Like the deep rest of joy in spirits' Paradise.

VIII.

COME to me often, sportive Memory ;
 Thy hands are full of flowers ; thy voice is sweet ;
 Thine innocent uncareful look doth meet
 The solitary cravings of mine eye ;
 I cannot let thee flit unheeded by,
 For I have gentle words wherewith to greet
 Thy welcome visits ; pleasant hours are fleet,
 So let us sit and talk the sand-glass dry.
 Dear visitant, who comest, dark and light,
 Morning and evening, and with merry voice
 Tellest of new occasion to rejoice ;
 And playest round me in the fairy night
 Like a quaint spirit, on the moonlight beams
 Threading the mazy labyrinth of dreams.

IX.

TO THE AUTHOR OF "THE RECTORY OF VALEHEAD."

THERE is a sweet well-spring of purity
 In the holy heart, whereout unceasing flow
 Its living waters, freshening as they go
 The weary deserts of humanity :
 There is a spirit in words, which doth express
 Celestial converse and divine employ ;
 A surface of unbroken gentleness,
 With an under-current of deep-running joy.
 I closed thy holy book this Sabbath-morn ;
 And it hath spread like billow-calming oil
 Upon my spirit, in the loud turmoil
 Of ever-striving passions tempest-worn ;—
 Thy Master's peace be thine, even as thou hast
 Over this soul a holy quiet cast.

X.

TO MARY.

ON thy young brow, my sister, twenty years
 Have shed their sunshine—and this April morn
 Looks on thee fresh and gladsome, as new-born
 From veiling clouds the king of day appears :
 Thou scarce canst order back the thankful tears
 That swell in thy blue eyes—nor dare to meet
 The happy looks that never cease to greet
 Thee, the dear nursling of our hopes and fears.
 This Eastertide together we have read
 How in the garden, when that weeping one
 Asked sadly for her Lord of some unknown,
 With look of sweet reproof He turned and said,
 “ Mary ”——Sweet sister, when thy need shall be,
 That word, that look, so may He turn on thee !

XI.

TO THE SAME.

CHEERIEST of maidens, who, with light of bliss
 That waneth never in thy gladsome eye,
 Passest all lightly earth's sad sorrows by,
 Scarce crediting report of aught amiss
 In the wide-wasted world ; on thee the smile
 Of heavenly peacefulness doth ever rest,
 And thou art joying in a region blest,
 With tempests raging round thee all the while.
 So mayest thou ever be, if thou shalt keep
 Unfailing communings with Him above ;
 And in thy sunshine-hours of wakeful love,
 And the unchecked confidings of thy sleep,
 With pure distilment be thy spirit fed
 Of holiest influence, from His presence shed.

XII.

TO WILLIAM JACKSON OF EXETER.

JACKSON, than whom none better skilled to lead
 The willing spirit captive with sweet lays,
 Searching the hidden fountain-heads which feed
 Our love of beauty—thine be all the praise
 Of tuning to our England's hills and dales
 Responsive melodies, whose music dwells
 Among the memories of early tales,
 And far-off chime of unforgotten bells.
 With thee, sick at the boastful ignorance
 Of this dull age, that hath no heart for song,
 My winter hours I spend, and lead along
 My thought in playful or in solemn dance,
 Whether the harp discourse of fields and swains,
 Or meditate high praise in angel-strains.

XIII.

THE MENDIP HILLS OVER WELLS.

How grand beneath the feet that company
 Of steep grey roofs and clustering pinnacles
 Of the massy fane, brooding in majesty
 Above the town that spreads among the dells!
 Hark! the deep clock unrolls its voice of power;
 And sweetly-mellowed sound of chiming bells
 Calling to prayer from out the central tower
 Over the thickly-timbered hollow dwells.
 Meet worship-place for such a glorious stretch
 Of sunny prospect—for these mighty hills,
 And that dark solemn Tor,* and all that reach
 Of bright-green meadows, laced with silver rills,
 Bounded by ranges of pale blue, that rise
 To where white strips of sea are traced upon the skies.

* Glastonbury Tor.

XIV.

GLASTONBURY.

ON thy green marge, thou vale of Avalon,
 Not for that thou art crowned with ancient towers
 And shafts and clustered pillars many an one,
 Love I to dream away the sunny hours ;
 Not for that here in charmed slumber lie
 The holy reliques of that British king
 Who was the flower of knightly chivalry,
 Do I stand blest past power of uttering ;—
 But for that on thy cowslip-sprinkled sod
 Alit of old the olive-bearing bird,
 Meek messenger of purchased peace with God ;
 And the first hymns that Britain ever heard
 Arose, the low preluding melodies
 To the sweetest anthem that hath reached the skies.

XV.

SUNSET AT BURTON PYNSENT, SOMERSET.

How bare and bright thou sinkest to thy rest
 Over the burnished line of the Severn-sea !
 While somewhat of thy power thou buriest
 In ruddy mists, that we may look on thee.
 And while we stand and wonder, we may see
 Far mountain-tops in visible glory drest,
 Where 'twixt yon purple hills the sight is free
 To search the regions of the dim north-west.
 But shadowy bars have crossed thee — suddenly
 Thou'rt fallen among strange clouds ;—yet not the less
 Thy presence know we, by the radiancy
 That doth thy shroud with golden fringes dress ;
 Even as hidden love to faithful eye
 Brightens the edges of obscure distress.

XVI.

RECOLLECTION OF WORDSWORTH'S "RUTH."

HERE are the brows of Quantock, purple-clad
 With lavish heath-bloom : there the banks of Tone.
 Where is that woman love-forlorn and sad,
 Piping her flute of hemlock all alone?
 I hear the Quantock woodman whistling home—
 The sunset flush is over Dunkery :—
 I fear me much that she hath ceased to roam
 Up the steep path, and lie beneath the tree.
 I always fancied I should hear in sooth
 That music— but it sounds not :— wayward tears
 Are filling in mine eyes for thee, poor Ruth—
 I had forgotten all the lapse of years
 Since thy deep griefs were hallowed by the pen
 Of that most pure of poesy-gifted men.

XVII.

AN EVENING IN AUTUMN, NEAR NETHER STOWEY, SOMERSET.

How soothing is that sound of far-off wheels
 Under the golden sheen of the harvest-moon !
 In the shade-chequered road it half reveals
 A homeward-wending group, with hearts in tune
 To thankful merriment ;—father and boy,
 And maiden with her gleanings on her head ;
 And the last waggon's rumble heard with joy
 In the kitchen with the ending-supper spread.
 But while I listening stand, the sound hath ceased ;
 And hark, from many voices lustily
 The harvest-home, the prelude to the feast,
 In measured bursts is pealing loud and high ;
 Soon all is still again beneath the bright
 Full moon, that guides me home this autumn night.

XVIII.

CULBONE,* OR KITNORE, SOMERSET.

HALF way upon the cliff I musing stood
 O'er thy sea-fronting hollow, while the smoke
 Curled from thy cottage-chimneys through the wood
 And brooded on the steeps of glooming oak ;
 Under a dark green buttress of the hill
 Looked out thy lowly house of Sabbath-prayer ;
 The sea was calm below : only thy rill
 Talked to itself upon the quiet air.
 Yet in this quaint and sportive-seeming dell
 Hath, through the silent ages that are gone,
 A stream of human things been passing on,
 Whose unrecorded story none may tell,
 Nor count the troths in that low chancel given,
 And souls from yonder cabin fled to heaven.

XIX.

LINN-CLEEVE, LINTON, DEVON.

THIS onward-deepening gloom—this hanging path
 Over the Linn that soundeth mightily,
 Foaming and tumbling on, as if in wrath
 That aught should bar its passage to the sea,
 These sundered walls of rock, tier upon tier
 Built darkly up into the very sky,
 Hung with thick woods, the native haunt of deer
 And sheep that browse the dizzy slopes on high—
 All half-unreal to my fancy seem,—
 For opposite my crib, long years ago,
 Were pictured just such rocks, just such a stream,
 With just this height above, and depth below ;
 Even this jutting crag I seem to know—
 As when some sightcalls back a half-forgotten dream.

* Culbone is a small village embowered in lofty wooded hills on the coast between Porlock and Linton. For three months in winter its inhabitants are unvisited by the sun.

XX.

WATERS-MEET, LINN, DEVON.

(Recollection of Homer.)

EVEN thus, methinks, in some Ionian isle,
 Yielding his soul to unrecorded joy,
 Beside a fall like this, lingered awhile
 On briery banks that wondrous minstrel-boy ;
 Long hours there came upon his vacant ear
 The rushing of the river, till strange dreams
 Fell on him, and his youthful spirit clear
 Was dwelt on by the power of voiceful streams.
 Thenceforth begun to grow upon his soul
 The sound and force of waters ; and he fed
 His joy at many an ancient river's head,
 And echoing caves, and thunder, and the roll
 Of the wakeful ocean,—till the day when he
 Poured forth that stream divine of mighty melody.

XXI.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF E. S., WHO DIED SEPT. 3, 1832.

(Written at Worthy Farm, near Porlock, Somerset.)

THIS side the brow of yon sea-bounding hill
 There is an alley overarched with green,
 Where thick-grown briers entwine themselves at will ;
 There, twinkling through the under flowers, is seen
 The ever-shaking ocean far below ;
 And on the upper side, a rocky wall
 Where deepest mosses and lithe ivies grow,
 And honeysuckle-blooms in clusters fall.
 There walked I when I last remembered thee ;
 And all too joyfully came o'er my mind
 Moments of pleasure by the southern sea,
 By our young lives two summers left behind ;
 Ah, sad-sweet memory—for that very day
 The gloom came on which may not pass away.

XXII.

THE DYING BED.

(This and the five following sonnets were suggested by the death of
 ——— ———, a young mother.)

BLEST be the taper which hath power to shed
 Light on the features of that angel-face ;
 Blest be the sadness of this solemn place ;
 Blest be the circle round that parting bed,
 Whence many days all earthly hope hath fled ;
 And the spirit which hath well-nigh reached by grace
 The rest of toil, the guerdon of its race,
 Faint, but with hidden manna gently fed.
 Oft have ye tended with unwearied care
 This couch of hers in anxious time of birth :
 Your meed of love, her mother-joys to share ;
 Now hers the joy, and ye are left to mourn :
 For all your care can never keep on earth
 The glorious child that shall to-night be born.

XXIII.

THE DEATH-CHAMBER.

STILL as a moonlight ruin is thy form,
 Or meekness of carved marble, that hath prayed
 For ages on a tomb ; serenely laid
 As some fair vessel that hath braved the storm
 And past into her haven, when the noise
 That cheered her home hath all to silence died,
 Her crew have shoreward parted, and no voice
 Troubles her sleeping image in the tide.
 Sister and saint, thou art a closed book,
 Whose holy printing none may yet reveal ;
 A few days thou art granted us to look
 On thy clasped binding, till that One unseal,
 The Lamb, alone found worthy, and above
 Thou teach sweet lessons to the kings of love.

XXIV.

THE SAME.*

LONG we have mourned ; but now the worst hath come,
 We cannot weep, nor feel as we have felt
 For aught in sorrow : thou art all too calm
 And solemn-silent on thy bed of death ;—
 And that white sunken face hath never a sign
 To make of aught disquieted within.
 'Tis a most awful thing, that face of thine
 Seared with the traces which the soul hath left,—
 The settlement from all the stir of life,
 The fixed conclusion of all modes of thought,
 The final impress of all joys and cares :—
 We dare not whisper when we look on thee ;
 We scarce can breathe our breath when thou art by ;
 Dread image of the majesty of man !

XXV.

THE FUNERAL.

SLOWLY and softly let the music go,
 As ye wind upwards to the grey church-tower ;
 Check the shrill hautboy, let the pipe breathe low—
 Tread lightly on the pathside daisy-flower.
 For she ye carry was a gentle bud,
 Loved by the unsunned drops of silver dew ;
 Her voice was like the whisper of the wood
 In prime of even, when the stars are few.
 Lay her all gently in the sacred mould,
 Weep with her one brief hour ; then turn away,—
 Go to hope's prison,—and from out the cold
 And solitary gratings many a day
 Look forth : 'tis said the world is growing old,
 And streaks of orient light in Time's horizon play.

* This is not properly a sonnet ; but the expression of the thought seemed to be so sonnet-like, that it is here inserted.

XXVI.

The Funeral Sermon was on the text, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."—*St. John xi. 28.*

RISE, said the Master, come unto the feast:—
 She heard the call, and rose with willing feet;
 But thinking it not otherwise than meet
 For such a bidding to put on her best,
 She is gone from us for a few short hours
 Into her bridal-closet, there to wait
 For the unfolding of the palace-gate,
 That gives her entrance to the blissful bowers.
 We have not seen her yet, though we have been
 Full often to her chamber-door, and oft
 Have listened underneath the postern green,
 And laid fresh flowers, and whispered short and soft;
 But she hath made no answer, and the day
 From the clear west is fading fast away.

XXVII.

HEU QUANTO MINUS EST CUM RELIQUIS VERSARI,
 QUAM TUI MEMINISSE!

THE sweetest flower that ever saw the light,
 The smoothest stream that ever wandered by,
 The fairest star upon the brow of night,
 Joying and sparkling from his sphere on high,
 The softest glances of the stockdove's eye,
 The lily pure, the marybud gold-bright,
 The gush of song that floodeth all the sky
 From the dear flutterer mounted out of sight,—
 Are not so pleasure-stirring to the thought,
 Not to the wounded soul so full of balm,
 As one frail glimpse, by painful straining caught
 Along the past's deep mist-enfolded calm,
 Of that sweet face, not visibly defined,
 But rising clearly on the inner mind.

XXVIII.

OH! when shall this frail tenement of clay
Be emptied by Death's peremptory call,
And its celestial guest be fetched away
From mortal tenure and corporeal thrall —
A beam, to mingle with the flood of day,
A part to join unto the glorious All?
When shall the kingly Intellect have fled
From this his dull material servitude,
And Thought exalt her long-abased head,
With pomp of heavenly majesty endued?
And when shall the Affection, here below
Broken by parting in its stream of light,
Dash off the earthly vestiture of woe,
And shine, with everlasting radiance bright?

XXIX.

ALL things are dying round us; days and hours,
A multitudinous troop, are passing on;
Winter is fled, and spring hath shed her flowers,
And summer's sun was shining, and hath shone;
Autumn was with us, but his work is done;
They all have flitted by, as doth a dream;
And we are verging onward. 'Tis not so:
We name reality but as things seem,
And truth is hidden from our eyes below.
We live but in the dimness of a sleep:
Soon shall the veil be rent from certainty,
The spell of time be loosed from us, and we
Pass out from this incurved and fretful stream
Into the bosom of the tranquil deep.

XXX.

ON SEEING OUR FAMILY-VAULT.

THIS lodging is well chosen:—for 'tis near
 The fitful sighing of those chestnut-trees;
 And every Sabbath morning it can hear
 The swelling of the hymnèd melodies;
 And the low booming of the funeral-bell
 Shall murmur through the dark and vaulted room,
 Waking its solemn echoes but to tell
 That one more soul is gathered to its home.
 There we shall lie beneath the trodden stone:—
 Oh, none can tell how dreamless and how deep
 Our peace will be, when the last earth is thrown,
 The last notes of the music fallen asleep,
 The mourners past away, the tolling done,
 The last chink closed, and the long dark begun.

XXXI.

ON THE SAME OCCASION.

COULD I for once be so in love with gloom
 As to leave off with cold mortality—
 To finish with the deep peace of the tomb,
 And the sealed darkness of the withering eye?
 And could I look on thee, thou calm retreat,
 And never once think of the joyous morn,
 Which, bursting through the dark, our eyes shall greet
 With heavenly sunshine on the instant born?
 O glorious time! then may we wake at length,
 After life's tempest, under a clear sky,
 And count our band, and find, with keenest joy,
 None wanting—love preserved in all its strength;
 And, with fresh beauty, hand in hand arise,
 A link in the bright chain of ransomed families.

XXXII.

ON HEARING THAT IT IS SUPPOSED, FROM ASTRONOMICAL CONSIDERATIONS, THE WORLD IS YET IN ITS INFANCY.

So then the lessons of all-teaching Time
 Shall not be fruitless ; but the sons of men
 Will live to ripen into age, and ken
 The hidden laws of God—the doubts and fears
 That flit around us, when the light appears,
 Shall cease to haunt us ; and young Truth, by then
 Vigorous for good, shall take his power and reign,
 Nursed in the discipline of human tears.
 Oh, might I live when, from this stir of things
 That fills our days, some new and mighty birth
 Of purest mind hath risen upon the earth ;
 Or when my spirit folds her weary wing
 Where no storm comes, watching with calm delight,
 On human beauty feed my angel-sight !

XXXIII.

BEFORE the day the gleaming dawn doth flee :—
 All yesternight I had a dreary dream ;
 Methought I walked in desert Academe
 Among fallen pillars—and there came to me
 All in a dim half-twilight silently
 A very sad old man—his eyes were red
 With over-weeping—and he cried and said,
 “ The light hath risen, but shineth not on me.”
 Beautiful Athens, all thy loveliness
 Is like the scarce-remembered burst of spring
 When now the summer in her party-dress
 Hath clothed the woods, and filled each living thing
 With ripest joy—because upon our time
 Hath risen the noon, and thou wert in the prime.

XXXIV.

SUGGESTED BY THE OPENING OF THE *ŒDIPUS COLONEUS* OF
SOPHOCLES.

COLONOS ! can it be that thou hast still
Thy laurel and thine olive and thy vine ?
Do thy close-feathered nightingales yet trill
Their warbles of thick-sobbèd song divine ?
Does the gold sheen of the crocus o'er thee shine
And dew-fed clusters of the daffodil,
And round thy flowery knots Cephisus twine,
Aye oozing up with many a bubbling rill ?
Oh, might I stand beside thy leafy knoll,
In sight of the far-off city-towers, and see
The faithful-hearted pure Antigone
Toward the dread precinct leading sad and slow
That awful temple of a kingly soul
Lifted to heaven by unexampled woe !

XXXV.

'TWERE better far from noon to eventide
To sit and feed sad care, and fence the while
The patient spirit for unwonted toil,
Than in the calm for ever to abide ;
'Twere better far to climb the mountain-side
Through perilous buffeting of wind and steep,
Than in the valley-nook, charmed into sleep,
All the fair blossoms of young life to hide.
So let me labour— for 'tis labour-worth
To feel the fruits of my seedtime of tears
Shedding their fragrance over half this earth ;
No mother rues the sharpest pangs of birth,
So she may see the offspring of her fears
Standing in high estate and manly years.

XXXVI.

THE GIPSY GIRL.

PASSING I saw her as she stood beside
A lonely stream between two barren wolds ;
Her loose vest hung in rudely-gathered folds
On her swart bosom, which in maiden pride
Pillowed a string of pearls ; among her hair
Twined the light bluebell and the stonecrop gay ;
And not far thence the small encampment lay
Curling its wreathèd smoke into the air.
She seemed a child of some sun-favoured clime ;
So still, so habited to warmth and rest ;
And in my wayward musings on past time,
When my thought fills with treasured memories,
That image nearest borders on the blest
Creations of pure art that never dies.

XXXVII.

TO WINTER. WRITTEN AT AMPTON, SUFFOLK.

WELCOME, stern Winter, though thy brows are bound
With no fresh flowers, and ditties none thou hast
But the wild music of the sweeping blast ;
Welcome this chilly wind that snatches round
The brown leaves in quaint eddies ; we have long
Panted in wearying heat ; skies always bright,
And dull return of never-clouded light,
Sort not with hearts that gather food for song.
Rather, dear Winter, I would forth with thee,
Watching thee disattire the earth ; and roam
On the bleak heaths that stretch about my home,
Till round the flat horizon I can see
The purple frost-belt ; then to fireside-chair,
And sweetest labour of poetic care.

XXXVIII.

EPIPHANY.*

As some great actor, when the rhythmic strain
 Of music, and the step of even dance,
 Hath ceased, in conscious pride is seen advance,
 Fixing the wandering looks of all again ;
 On whom the choric band, in comely train,
 Wait ever, duly with responsive parts
 Timing his measured passion, but all hearts
 He hath in hand, to mould to pity or pain ;—
 So in the scenic skies that wondrous Star
 Came forth—the myriads that spectators are
 Of heavenly acts, baffled their lights in gloom
 To give the great Protagonist his way ;
 And the drama opened, that nor night nor day
 Shall see consummate till the final doom.

XXXIX.

TO THE WOOD-PIGEON. WRITTEN IN PASSION-WEEK.

TELL me, thou mild and melancholy bird,
 Whence learnedst thou that meditative voice ?
 For all the forest-passages rejoice,
 And not a note of sorrow now is heard :
 I would know more—how is it I preferred
 To leave the station of my morning choice,
 Where, with her sudden startle of shrill noise,
 The budding thorn-bush brake the blackbird stirred ?

Sweet mourner, who, in time of fullest glee,
 Risest to uttering but so sad a strain,
 And in the bleak winds, when they ruffle thee,
 Keepest thee still, and never dost complain ;
 I love thee—for thy note to memory brings
 This sorrowing in the midst of happiest things.

* "How was Christ manifested to the world? A star shone in heaven above all other stars; and its novelty struck terror. All the rest of the stars, with the sun and moon, were chorus to this star; and it sent forth its light above all."—S. IGNATIUS, *Epistle to Ephesians*, § 19.

XL.

EASTER-EVE.

I SAW two women weeping by the tomb
 Of one new-buried, in a fair green place
 Bowered with shrubs ; the eve retained no trace
 Of aught that day performed, but the faint gloom
 Of dying day was spread upon the sky ;
 The moon was broad and bright above the wood ;
 The breeze brought tokens of a multitude,
 Music, and shout, and mingled revelry.
 At length came gleaming through the thicket-shade
 Helmet and casque, and a steel-armed band
 Watched round the sepulchre in solemn stand ;
 The night-word past, from man to man conveyed ;
 And I could see those women rise and go
 Under the dark trees, moving sad and slow.

XLI.

IN LAUDEM S. EULALIÆ V. ET M.

YOUNG budding virgin, who in bashful pride,
 All dedicate to Christ, didst stand apart
 From crowds of pitying faithless, and with heart
 Unmoved didst count the iron talons gride
 Their purple furrows in thy tender side ;
 Beautiful is thy story—full of food
 For youthful souls that need be gently wooed :
 Few have confessed so young, so sweetly died.
 Forth with thine ebbing breath was seen to fly
 A milk-white dove to heaven, an emblem meet
 Of undefiled baptismal purity ;
 And dead upon the inhospitable street,
 With gently floating flakes the piteous sky
 Snow-clad thy girlish limbs, as with a funeral sheet.

XLII.

SAVIOUR and Lord beloved, what homage new
 Shall thy Church give thee in these latter days,
 When there is nothing new—no song of praise
 That ages have not sung, nor worship due
 That hath not long been paid? Faithful and true
 Our hearts are beating to thee: can we raise
 No monument for victories of grace?
 Must all our efforts be so poor and few?
 O vain and earthly wish, that would be great
 In over-serving! rather may we lie
 In meekest self-devotion at thy feet,
 And watch the quiet hours as they pass by,
 Content and thankful for occasion shewn
 To make old service and old faith our own.

XLIII.

THE MALVERN HILLS, MARCH 12, 1835.

EREWILE I saw ye faintly through far haze,
 Spread many miles above the fields of sea;
 Now ye rise glorious, and my steps are free
 To wander through your valleys' beaten ways,
 And climb above, threading the rocky maze;
 And trace this stream, alive with shifting light,
 With whose successive eddies, silver-bright,
 Not without pleasant sound, the moonbeam plays.
 My dear, dear bride, two days had made thee mine,
 Two days of waxing hope and waning fear,
 When, under the night-planet's lavish shine,
 We stood in joy, and blessed that rillet clear;
 Such joy unwarning comes and quickly parts,
 But lives deep-rooted in our "heart of hearts."

XLIV.

WRITTEN IN AN INTERVAL OF MELANCHOLY FOREBODING
RESPECTING THE CHURCH.

HERBERT and Crashaw, and that other name
Now dear as those, of him beneath whose eye
Arose* "the second Temple's" honoured frame,
After a carnal dark captivity,—
These are remembrances of promise high,
That set our smouldering energies on flame
To dare for our mother, and, if need, to die,
Sooner than blot her reverend cheek with shame.
O England, England! there hath twined among
The woof of all thy gloomiest destinies
A golden thread: a sound of sweetest song
Hath cheered thee under sad and threatening skies;
But thou hast revelled in the calm too long,
And waxest all unmindful where thy safety lies.

XLV.

WHEN I behold thee, only living one
In whom God's image pure and clear I see,
Far beyond all in humble sanctity,
Close at my side, attending me alone;
Strange questioning it raises, wherefore thine
Should be the subject life, and not the free;
Heavenly, but bound in earthly chains to me;
Superior, yet dependent; God's, yet mine.
I therefore have been taught to feel at length
That not most precious in the Eternal's sight
Self-guiding freedom is, knowledge, or strength,
Or power of song, or wit's deceiving light;
But yielding meekness, careless to be free,
And the clear flame of love in chastity.

* See the conclusion of "The Rectory of Valehead;" also, that of the Sermon "On the Fortunes of the Church" in "The Church of God, a series of Sermons," by the Rev. R. W. Evans.

XLVI.

EACH morn the same sun rises on our day,
 Measuring with every year his usual round ;
 The merry bells that for our birthdays sound,
 And those that knoll us to our homes of clay,
 Speak ever with one voice ; the skies obey
 Spring whispering soft, and summer blossom-crowned,
 And autumn flush, and winter icy-bound :
 Down Life's smooth channel Ages sleep their way.
 The babe that, smiling in her slumber, lies
 Lapt in thy breast, hath been there oft before ;
 This day, this room, hath all been acted o'er ;
 And even the thought not first in me doth rise ;—
 Time measures but the course of human will ;
 'Tis we that move, while Providence is still.

XLVII.*

THERE is a bright space in yon rolling cloud
 Betokening the presence of the moon ;—
 Into the pure sky she will travel soon,
 In clearest beauty, free from envious shroud.
 Even so to thee, my soul's sweet partner, bowed
 With pain severe, the light of hope was shewn ;
 And thou art now in æther of thine own,
 A clear blue space, with perfect calm endowed ;
 And this young babe, a treasure newly found,
 Like some fair star attendant at thy side,
 Shall journey on, through ease and peril tried :
 To him, whose being in your own is bound,
 For blest example and high solace given,—
 Heaven at life's end, and life itself a heaven.

* This and the following sonnet were written about the time of the birth of my first child.

XLVIII.

SLEEP, gentle love! and let the soothing dew
 Of deepest quiet cover every sense ;
 Calm visions rise before thine inward view,
 And restless fears and doubts be banished thence ;
 And may the ministering hand of Providence
 At every breathing give thee vigour new,
 Thy gathering health from chill and danger fence,
 And mantle fresh thy cheeks with beautiful hue.
 And I, from whom the pangs of sudden pain
 Lately my dearest treasure well-nigh reft,
 Now safely sped, and, breathing free again,
 Have not enough of thankful offerings left
 To pay my vows to God ; rather with prayer
 I weary Him afresh, to make thy life His care.

XLIX.*

LONG have we toiled, and passed from day to day
 Our stated round of duties, till the mind
 Reaches for change, and longs fresh paths to find
 From her accustomed dwelling far away :
 Come, then, dear wife, while yet the summer ray
 Fills all the air with gladness, and unbind
 Awhile the chains of duty ; then reclined
 Where Derwent or where Dove in varied play
 Leaps through his mossy rocks, let us entice
 The weary trout, or ply the pencil's art ;
 Or in some wooded dell that lies apart,
 Woo the maid Poesy : no unworthy price
 Of year-long labour without ceasing wrought,
 And intermission of poetic thought.

* This and the four following sonnets were written in anticipation of, or during a summer month spent in the Peak of Derbyshire, 1836.

L.

TO THE RIVER WYE.

IF, gentle stream, by promised sacrifice
 Of kid or yearling, or by scattered flowers
 Of votive roses culled from thy thick bowers,
 Or golden cistus, we could thee entice
 To be propitious to our love, no price
 Should save these errant flocks; each nook but ours
 Should shed its eglantine in twinkling showers,
 For tribute from thy wooded paradise.
 But not thy flocks, nor brier-roses hung
 In natural garlands down thy rocky hills,
 Shall win thee to be ours; more precious far
 Than summer blossoms or rich offerings are,
 We bring thee sweet poetic descants, sung
 To the wild music of thy tinkling rills.

LI.

CLOSE is the nook; the valley-pathway steep
 Above the river climbs; and down the bank,
 With sweet wild roses and thick hazels rank,
 By an unheeded track your feet may creep
 Into a shady covert still and deep,
 Harbour of flowery fragrance; with full tide
 The river slumbers by; on either side
 Over their rocks the merry runnels leap.
 Here, in the freshness of each sunny morn,
 Sit we in raptured converse; every flower
 Opens to greet us in our trellised bower,
 With warm dew sparkling; moss with hair unshorn
 Is our soft pavement; and the social throng
 Unscared, around us pour their airy song.

LII.

TO THE YELLOW CISTUS.

FLOWER, that with thy silken tapestry
Of flexile petals interwove with green,
Clothest the mountain-walls of this calm scene ;
We, a love-led poetic company,
Pronounce thee happy ; if happiness it be
In every cleft the bright grey rocks between
To plant thy seemly gems, and reign the queen
Of pathside-blossoms over wood and lea.
Live, and of those poor fools who idly moan
Thy fragile lifetime's shortness, reck not aught ;
Thou diest not, when thy ripe blooms are strown
On the damp earth, or by the tempest caught ;
Thou hast a future life to them unknown—
In the eternity of human thought.

LIII.

HADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE, JULY 1836.

NOT fond displays of cost, nor pampered train
Of idle menials, me so much delight,
Nor mirrored halls, nor roofs with gilding bright,
Nor all the foolery of the rich and vain,
As these time-honoured walls, crowning the plain
With their grey battlements ; within bedight
With ancient trophies of baronial might,
And figures dim, inwoven in the grain
Of dusky tapestry. I love to muse
In present peace, on days of pomp and strife ;
The daily struggles of our human life,
Seen through Time's veil, their selfish colouring lose :
As here the glaring beams of outer day
Through ivy-shadowed oriels softened play.

LIV.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON, JANUARY 1837.

WE stood upon the tomb of him whose praise
 Time, nor oblivious thrift, nor envy chill,
 Nor war, nor ocean with her severing space,
 Shall hinder from the peopled world to fill ;
 And thus, in fulness of our heart, we cried :
 God's works are wonderful—the circling sky,
 The rivers that with noiseless footing glide,
 Man's firm-built strength, and woman's liquid eye ;
 But the high spirit that sleepeth here below,
 More than all beautiful and stately things,
 Glory to God the mighty Maker brings ;
 To whom alone 'twas given the bounds to know
 Of human action, and the secret springs
 Whence the deep streams of joy and sorrow flow.

LV.

ST. ROBERT'S CAVE, KNARESBOROUGH.*

WE gazed intent upon the murderous cave ;
 Too fair a place, methinks, for deeds of blood.
 Above, the rocks, dappled with pendent wood,
 Rose sheltering : and below with rippling wave
 The crystal Nidd flowed by. The wondrous tale
 That from of old had turned our young cheeks pale,
 Came crowding on the present ; yonder stood
 The guilt-worn student, skilled without avail
 In ancient lore ; and yonder seemed to lie
 The melancholy corse, year after year
 Sending to Heaven its silent vengeance-cry,
 Till Aram's hour was come, and He, whose ear
 Was open, tracked the murderer where he fled,
 And wrath's right-aiming stroke descended on his head.

* The scene of the murder of Daniel Clarke by Eugene Aram.

LVI.

WRITTEN AT YORK ON THE DAY OF THE CORONATION OF QUEEN
VICTORIA, JUNE 28, 1838.

SHINE out, thou Sun, and let the minster-towers
Pour forth their solemn music, and the crowd
Utter their oft-repeated shouts and loud ;
Let little children bless the gladsome hours
Of this auspicious day ; for there are powers
Undreamt of by the selfish and the proud,
That work when Avarice in the dust is bowed,
And mean Utility. The summer flowers
That toil not neither spin, the deep-blue sky,
The ever-twinkling waves that gird our land,
Have taught ye to rejoice : therefore pass by,
Ye coloured pageants ;—shout, each girl and boy :—
Ill fare the heart that doth not feel your joy !

LVII.

SUMMIT OF SKIDDAW, JULY 7, 1838.

At length here stand we, wrapt as in the cloud
In which light dwelt before the sun was born,
When the great fiat issued, in the morn
Of this fair world ; alone and in a shroud
Of dazzling mist, while the wind, whistling loud,
Buffets thy streaming locks :—result forlorn
For us who up yon steep our way have worn,
Elate with hope, and of our daring proud.
Yet though no stretch of glorious prospect range
Beneath our vision,—neither Scottish coast
Nor ocean-island, nor the future boast
Of far-off hills descried,—I would not change
For aught on earth this solitary hour
Of Nature's grandest and most sacred power.

LVIII.

DESCENT OF THE SAME.

GLORY on glory greets our wondering sight
 As we wind down these slopes ; mountain and plain
 Robed in rich sunshine, and the distant main
 Lacing the sky with silver ; and yon height,
 So lately left in clouds, distinct and bright.
 Anon the mist enwraps us ; then again
 Burst into view lakes, pastures, fields of grain,
 And rocky passes, with their torrents white.
 So on the head, perchance, and highest bent
 Of thine endeavour, Heaven may stint the dower
 Of rich reward long hoped ; but thine ascent
 Was full of pleasures,— and the teaching hour
 Of disappointment hath a kindly voice,
 That moves the spirit inly to rejoice.

LIX.

WRITTEN AT AMPTON, SUFFOLK, JANUARY 1838.

ONCE more I stray among this wilderness
 Of ancient trees, and through the rustling fern,
 Golden and sere, brush forward ; at each turn
 Meeting fresh avenues in winter dress
 Of long grey moss, or yellow lichen bright ;
 While the long lines of intercepted shade
 Spread into distance through the turfy glade,
 Chequered with rosy paths of evening light.
 Here first I learned to tune my youthful thoughts
 To themes of blessed import : woods and sky,
 And waters, as they rushed or slumbered by,
 For my poetic soul refreshment brought ;
 And now within me rise, unbidden long,
 Fresh springs of life— fresh themes of earnest song.

LX.

WYMESWOLD, APRIL 1837.

DEAR streamlet, tripping down thy devious course,
Or lulled in smoothest pools of sombre hue,
Or breaking over stones with murmurs hoarse,
To thee one grateful strain is surely due
From me, the poet of thy native wolds,
Now that the sky is golden in the west,
And distant flocks are bleating from their folds,
And the pale eve-star lifts her sparkling crest.
Would it were thus with thee, when summer suns
Shed their strong heats, and over field and hill
Swims the faint air, and all the cattle shuns
The brighter slopes ; but then thy scanty rill
Has dwindled to a thread, and, creeping through
The tangled herbage, shelters from the view.

LXI.

THE SAME.

NOR is a thankful strain from me not due
To you, ye company of cherished flowers,
That look upon, throughout the weary hours,
My study and my prison ; for from you
I learn that Nature to her charge is true ;
That she, who clothes with bloom your lavish bowers
In kindlier climates, can, in skies like ours,
Paint your soft petals with their native hue.
And thence I learn that this poetic soul,
That fain would revel in the warmth and light
Of heavenly beauty, yet in strict control
Dwelling, and chilly realms of damp and blight,
Must not the more its proper task forego ;
But in the dreariest clime its blossoms shew.

LXII.

OFF OSTENDE,* JUNE 11, 1837.

BUT now the level sea-horizon spanned
 With its unbroken line the azure round :
 I look again, and see the waters crowned
 With a pale coronet of distant land ;
 A shore by us untrodden and unknown,
 Thronged with strange men, and voices' stranger sound ;
 Where we shall wander long, and none be found
 To greet with kind salutes and call our own.
 Yet even thus, with thee, wife of my love,
 Enough the world is peopled ; one fond heart
 Resting on mine, with others I can part,
 Prizing thy gentle excellence above
 All native comfort ; and, on land or sea,
 Then best befriended if alone with thee.

LXIII.

BRUGES.

WOULDST thou behold, not the ensnaring blaze
 Of earthly grandeur in its envious noon,
 But the calm majesty of other days
 Reposing, as beneath the summer moon
 Rests the laid Ocean—hie thee to the streets
 Of ancient Bruges :—temple, dome, and tower,
 Or pathside dwelling,—whatsoever meets
 Thy roving sight, bears record of a power
 Long since departed : surely not so fair
 When pomp and pride were tenants here, as now,
 When solitary forms, with pious care,
 Or thankful haply for some granted vow,
 Stately and dark these vistas churchward tread,
 Fit habitants for her whose fame is with the dead.

* The following sonnets are reminiscences of a tour on the Continent in July 1837.

LXIV.

WRITTEN AT GHENT.

ALAS for England, if her native hearts
 Were only to be won by stately towers,
 Or oft-recurring chime of many parts,
 With lively music cheating the dull hours ;
 If only beauteous fields or lavish flowers
 Would win and keep the children whom she bears !
 Not that we lack of these, but there are ours
 More healing medicines for our daily cares : —
 Nations have fought against the fanes they raised ;
 For gold have bartered pomp : but where the law
 Builds on men's hearts, — no longer vainly praised,
 But with a settled and deep-rooted awe
 It takes possession of its children's love,
 And reigns, fit emblem of its source above.

LXV.

ANTWERP CATHEDRAL.

BE it not mine in these high aisles to tread
 Lightly, with scornful or with pitying gaze
 Viewing these worshippers, who on the days
 When English fanes are silent as the dead,
 Throng kneeling, where yon feeble candles shed
 Their flickering light : far rather would I raise
 My hands in prayer with them, or join in praise,
 Or sit beneath their shrines in humble dread.
 Because our being's end is furthered best
 Not by the pride of reason, most unjust
 When it condemneth, — but by self-distrust,
 By mildness, and submission, and arrest
 Of sudden judgment : thus we learn to feel
 That all are one, and have one wound to heal.

LXVI.

BRUSSELS.

THE peaceful moon sheds downward from the sky
 Upon the sleeping city her soft light ;
 Lines of storm-laden vapour heavily
 From the low north advance upon the night ;
 The minster-towers are seen in vision bright
 In front, distinct with fretted tracery ;
 And long glades stretch beneath this giddy height,
 Dappled with shadows dark of tower and tree.
 Such wert thou, Brussels, when I gazed on thee ;
 Thou, at whose name the circumstance of war
 Rose to my youthful fancy ; now no more
 A sound to move to tears ; to memory
 Henceforth, as ever unto freedom, dear,
 In virtue of this night so soft and clear.

LXVII.

WATERLOO.

THEY stood upon these plains, and side by side
 Did battle for the world, too long enthralled
 To the universal tyrant ; one was called,
 And one was left to cross the homeward tide ;
 Both in their glory, as in arms, allied :
 But the loud voice of fame is hushed asleep,
 Their sires are gone, no more their widows weep,
 Their orphan sons forget them in their pride.
 Yet deem not that they sold their lives for nought :
 Who, that hath springing in his breast the fount
 Of self-devoting love, the cost would count,
 So might he in those favoured ranks have fought,
 Increasing by his single strength's amount
 That blessed victory for freedom wrought ?

LXVIII.

WRITTEN AT FRANKFORT.

No voice is heard along the city-street
 Of men, nor tramp of horse ; but the night long
 Yon nightingale fills all the air with song.
 I am a stranger here, but no less sweet
 Those heavenly notes my raptured hearing greet,
 Than when I stood my native dales among,
 And the sweet blossom of the hawthorn flung
 Its incense on my path, and at my feet
 The glow-worm glistened. Bird of restless joy !
 When first I learned to love this peopled earth,
 I past beside thy haunts, a roving boy,
 And thou wert mingled in my spirit's mirth ;
 But now I am spell-fastened by thy strain,
 And oft return to listen once again.

LXIX.

TO ALICE IN ENGLAND. ALSO WRITTEN AT FRANKFORT.

CHILD of our love, thou sleepest softly now
 In our dear home perchance, with thine own smile
 Resting upon thy rosy lips, the while
 Thy little arm is folded on thy brow,
 And thou art dreaming of the summer flowers
 Shewn thee this sunny morn. Blest be thy sleep !
 Good angels round thy bed their watches keep
 In holy station through the silent hours.
 Thus we commit thee to the wakeful care
 Of Him whose mercy gave thee ; thus secure
 We leave thee in the confidence of prayer,
 Of thy best welfare and his blessing sure ;
 Near, though to these our earthly eyes unseen ;
 With us, though half the ocean rolls between.

LXX.

MILAN CATHEDRAL.

HERE stand, beloved, where the outer light
 Falls, glorified by entrance to the shrine
 Of the Eternal; where the tracery fine
 Of marble shafts springs upward beyond sight;
 And hear the soaring chant in unison
 Of manly voices, as by angel-bands
 Sent up to God—or see with spreading hands
 The fathers shout their ancient benison.
 Shun not the full outpouring of thy soul;
 Claim not exemption for thy judgment's sake:
 He, who will not divided service take,
 Loves more the heart of man when offered whole,
 Though by unlearned simplicity of fools,
 Than all the wrangling of polemic schools.

Pictorial Emblems for the Seasons.

LXXI.

WINTER, DREAR AND CHILL, BUT WITHAL MERRY AND FREE.

HAD I the wondrous magic to invest
 Ideal forms in colour, I would paint
 Thee, Winter, first, by an age-withered saint
 Deep in his beads: on his bare ribs should rest
 A cross of lichen'd boughs; and duly prest
 Each morn by horny knees, one for each bone,
 There should be two round hollows in the stone,
 Whither his bent limbs should be half adrest.
 And in the entry of the holy cave
 Where the same saint should sit, a laughing boy,
 Naked, and all aglow with play and joy,
 Should peer full slily on that father grave,
 In the full blessedness of childhood's morn,
 And laugh his crusty solitude to scorn.

LXXII.

SPRING, WHEN YOUNG FLOWERS PEEP, BUT THE FROST NIPPETH
KEEN.

SPRING should be drest in emblem quaint and shy ;
A troop of rosy girls escaped from bed
For very wantonness of play, should tread
The garden-paths ; one tucks her night-robe high,
The dewy freshness of the lawn to try ;
Some have been bolder, and unclothed and bright
The groop is seen in the moon's mellow light ;
Some, scattered, gaze upon the trees and sky.
But there should be that turn with hurried glance
Beckoning their playmates, where by a side-path
Between the shrubs is seen to half-advance
The moody widow lodger ; who in wrath
Is sure to scatter all their stealthy play,
And they will rue it ere the break of day.

LXXIII.

SUMMER, WHEN THE PRIME IS REACHED, BUT THERE ARE
TOKENS OF DECAY.

FOR Summer, I would paint a married pair
Sitting in close embraces, while a band
Of children kneel before them hand in hand ;
Healthful their cheeks, and from their mantling hair,
Well-knit and clear, their downward limbs are bare ;
His hand is past over her neck, and prest
In pride of love upon her full ripe breast ;
And yet his brow is delved with lines of care,
And in her shining eye one truant tear
Stands, ready to be shed : — a quiet scene,
But not without perchance intruding fear
That never comes again what once hath been ;
And recollection that our fondest toil
But weaves a texture for the world to soil.

LXXIV.

AUTUMN, WHOSE FRUITS ENDURE, THOUGH DEATH IS ON IT.

AUTUMN should be a youth wasted and wan,
 A flush upon his cheek, and in his eye
 Unhealthful fire ; and there should sit hard by
 She that best loves him, ever and anon
 Wistfully looking, and for pleasures gone
 (So would I paint her) she should seem to sigh ;
 The while some slender task her fingers ply,
 Veiling the dread that trusts him not alone.
 But he, high-rapt in divine poesy,
 Unrolls the treasures of creative art,
 Spells framing for the world's unheeding heart ;
 His very eye should speak, and you should see
 That love will brighten as his frame decays,
 And song not fail but with his failing days.

LXXV.

EPIMENIDES.

HE went into the woods a laughing boy ;
 Each flower was in his heart ; the happy bird
 Flitting across the morning sun, or heard
 From way-side thicket, was to him a joy :
 The water-springs, that in their moist employ
 Leapt from their banks, with many an inward word
 Spoke to his soul, and every leaf that stirred
 Found notice from his quickly-glancing eye.
 There wondrous sleep fell on him : many a year
 His lids were closed : youth left him, and he woke
 A careful noter of men's ways ; of clear
 And lofty spirit : sages, when he spoke,
 Forgot their systems ; and the worldly-wise
 Shrunk from the gaze of truth with baffled eyes.

LXXVI.

ARION.

NOT song, nor beauty, nor the wondrous power
 Of the clear sky, nor stream, nor mountain glen,
 Nor the wide Ocean, turn the hearts of men
 To love, nor give the world-embracing dower
 Of inward gentleness :—up from the bed
 Blest by chaste beauty, men have risen to blood,
 And life hath perished in the flowery wood,
 And the poor traveller beneath starlight bled.
 Thus that musician, in his wealth of song
 Pouring his numbers, even with the sound
 Swimming around them, would the heartless throng
 Have thrust unto his death ; but with a bound
 Spurning the cursed ship, he sought the wave,
 And Nature's children did her poet save.

LXXVII.

ILION, along whose streets in olden days
 Shone that divinest form, for whose sweet face
 A monarch sire with all his kingly race
 Were too content to let their temples blaze—
 Where art thou now ? no massive columns raise
 Their serried shafts to heaven—we may not trace
 Xanthus and Simois, nor each storied place
 Round which poetic memory fondly plays.
 But in the verse of the old man divine
 Thy windy towers are built eternally ;
 Nor shall the ages, as they ruin by,
 Print on thy bulwarks one decaying sign.
 So true is beauty, clothed in endless rime ;
 So false the sensual monuments of time.

LXXVIII.

FRIEND of my heart, here in my close green bower
 I wait thy coming: slender clematis
 And the rank wild-vine, with late primroses,
 And classic tea-tree with small purple flower,
 Are here, and foxglove with its bearded bell,
 Haunt of the passing bee: and thy delight,
 The lily of the valley, purest white,
 Rising like fabled nymph from ocean-shell.
 Nor wanting is Canova's art divine:
 On the rude trunk, native in earth below,
 The god of gladness, garlanded with vine,
 And Ariadne re-assured from woe;
 And the full noon, by leafy screen delayed,
 Has spread the pebbled floor with fickle shade.

LXXIX.

TO CHARLES MERIVALE.

THOU friend whom chilling years have altered not,
 When shall we once again by winter fire
 Or in the summer sun, quench our desire
 Of pleasant converse, mingling thought with thought?
 For we have wandered far abroad, and brought
 Treasures from many lands,—joys that require
 The sympathy of friends that will not tire,
 But find an interest though the tale be nought.
 Come then, for Summer sheds her sickly flowers,
 And the new buds, unable to expand,
 Hang dripping on the stalk: notice that hours
 Are near, in mercy portioned to our land,
 When rest is granted to the outward eye,
 And thought is busy with the things gone by.

LXXX.

MY ANCESTORS.

UNKNOWN it is to me, who handed down
 From sire to son mine humble family ;
 Whether they dwelt in low obscurity,
 Or by achievements purchased high renown :
 Whether with princely or baronial crown
 Their brows were bound, or martyr-wreath of flame :
 No glories mark the track through which my name
 Hath come : I only know it as mine own.
 Yet am I one of no mean parentage :
 The poorest line of Christian ancestry
 Might serve upon the world's unbounded stage
 To act God's dealings : all mankind might see
 More truth than now they know, were this my line
 Of distant sires their evidence to join.

LXXXI.

THE TWO LOTS.

Two pilgrims on a pleasant road set forth :
 Green was the herbage by their journey-side ;
 Through deep and shrubby dells their way they plied,
 Fenced from the biting of the ruthless north ;
 At length said one, " I would that we were high
 On yonder hill, whence we might look out wide
 On towns and plains, even to the distant tide
 Of Ocean, bordered by the vaulting sky."

Thus parted they :—one by the alder'd brook
 Wandered in easeful calm ; the other wound
 Up the rock-path, with many a backward look
 Tracing his progress, till no envious bound
 Forbade his sight, and from the mountain-head
 Earth, sea, and sky, in mighty prospect spread.

LXXXII.

THE heart of man is every where the same :
 In distant Savoy roamed we long ago
 With one to guide us o'er the mountain-snow ;
 Scarce had we power in foreign tongue to frame
 Unhindered converse ; often did he name
 Things strange to us, and dwell, in accents slow,
 On wayside views, or aught we asked to know,
 That we his skill in guidance might not blame.
 Yet is there written all that old man's life
 Deep on our memory ; his cottage-hearth
 Peopled with joy — his solitude and dearth
 When God called thence the mother and the wife ;
 And how he looked, and said, " I'll trust Him yet :"
 All these are things which we can ne'er forget.*

LXXXIII.

TO A FRIEND CONCERNED IN EDUCATION.

FORCE not to over-growth the subject mind :
 Heaven's is the power that spread the native soil ;
 The tillage only asks thy careful toil,
 On primal strength dependent : if confined
 In depth and barren, simple be thy seed,
 Of hardy grain : God's providence hath need
 Of some to marshal well the ranks behind,
 As of the lofty spirits born to lead.
 But if the tender plants of truth thou sow,
 Let there be depth of matter genial ;
 And if the frosts should nip, and strong winds blow,
 Their kindly opposites should countervail :
 Blest gifts, unfailing in their fostering might,
 Sunshine by day, the dews of heaven by night.

* Some readers, who are acquainted with Chamonix, may be interested to know that this guide was David Couttet, the elder.

LXXXIV.

DEAR Spirit, lo, thy poet, full at heart,
 Puts on his singing-garb and flowery gear,
 To make sweet music in thy listening ear :
 Too long hath he been mindless of his part ;
 But now before his sight come and depart
 The dreams of thought in vision quick and clear ;
 And new creations of the soul appear,
 Clothed in the glory of undying art.
 Crush not, beloved, though with touch most pure,
 The tender plants arising ; stand beside,
 And feed each springing leaf with daily showers :
 So mayst thou see, in life's declining hours,
 The goodly umbrage of the grove mature
 Over the weary world spread far and wide.

LXXXV.

ON MY STONE INKSTAND.

LOUD raged the tumult : Ocean far and near
 Seethed with wild anger, up the sloping sand
 Driving the shreds of foam ; while, half in fear,
 We battled with the tempest, on the strand
 Scarcely upheld ; or, clinging arm to arm,
 In wedge compact :—now would we venture brave
 Into the trench of the retreating wave ;
 Now shoreward flee, with not all-feigned alarm.
 A challenge did my gentle sister speak :
 “ Yon pebble fetch, ’mongst those that furthest roll,
 Pierced on one face with an unsightly hole !”
 Beneath a crested wave, that curled to break,
 I grasped the prize, not scathless ; and since then
 That stone hath held the stuff that feeds my truant pen.

LXXXVI.

January 19, 1839.

MY fairy girl, amidst her mirthful play,
Suddenly kneeling, clasps her hands in one,
And prays the words she has been taught to pray
Morning and evening; when her prayer is done,
In calm, as though some Mighty One was near,
Who soothed her, but not awed, away she springs,
And runs to me with laughter silver-clear,
Till all our home with her full joyance rings.
Nor am I one who, with displeasure cold,
Such sport would chide; our heavenly Father's face
Each night and day her angel doth behold:
Her soul is filled with his baptismal grace;
Happy, if through her years and cares untold,
Such pure communion could her spirit hold.

LXXXVII.

WE want but little: in the morning-tide,
Bread to renew our energies; at noon,
Cool shade, to quiet evening yielding soon;
And then a ramble by the hedgerow side,
Or what our cottage-embers can provide
Of social comfort; and at night, the boon
Of peaceful slumber, when the gleamy moon
Up the lone heavens in starry state doth ride.
All that is more than these, into our life
By accident of place or station brought,
Feeds not the silent growth of ripening thought,
Wisdom best learned apart from throngs and strife,
In the broad fields, the sky's unvalued wealth,
And seasons gliding past us in their stealth.

LXXXVIII.

THE inward pleasure of our human soul
 Oweth no homage to the tyrant Will :
 Whether the roving spirit take its fill
 Of strange delight, watching the far waves roll
 And break upon the shore,—or by the bowl
 Of some moss-lined fountain cool and still,
 Or by the music of a tinkling rill,
 Wander in maze of thought, without control :
 Nor can the chains of ill-assured belief
 Fetter the strivings of the deathless mind ;
 Nor dull prescription bound the throes of grief ;
 Spirits, in action nor degree confined,
 Range the vast system :—whither, then, should I
 But to sweet Nature for my wisdom fly ?

LXXXIX.

Dost thou complain that, in thy weary toil,
 Day after day takes from thee something dear ;
 So that less welcome through the circling year
 Come the new seasons ;—Spring, with waking smile ;
 And full, unincinctured Summer ; and the guile
 Of Autumn, lavishing, but stealing more ;
 And that close Winter brings thee not the store
 Of sweet poetic labour, as erewhile ?—
 Be it thy care unfailing talk to hold
 With Nature's children ; be thou up at morn
 Ere the first warbler sinks into the corn ;
 Stand and watch evening spread her tent with gold :
 Thence draw thy treasures, of their worth secure ;
 Lower deceives ; the source alone is pure.

XC.

ἄνευ ποταμῶν ἰερῶν
 καρῶσι παυμί—

EURIPID. *Medea*.

FRESH fount of feeling, which from earliest days
 Hast sprung within mine heart, let not thy streams
 Now fail me, when this world's unreal dreams
 Fever my spirit; cool me, now the blaze
 Of Mammon's temple burns my aching gaze;
 Nor, though the world thy clearness shallow deems,
 And all thy purity for nought esteems,
 Shrink back into thy source in dread amaze.
 And Thou, from whom is every perfect gift,
 Speak to my spirit by Thy Church and Word;
 Let Thy reminding voice be often heard
 About my path; so shall my soul uplift
 Her eyes, by growing cares cast down, and see,—
 Though earth turn barren,—her fresh springs in Thee.

XCI.

PASSION-WEEK, 1845.

AGAIN the solemn season—and again
 That bleeding Brow, those wounded Hands and Feet—
 Again that piercèd Side my vision meet;
 Afresh that holy Form is bowed with pain.
 O Thou, the all-sufficing Victim, slain
 For man's transgression; by Thy mercy sweet,
 From God's right hand of power, Thy glory-seat,
 To look upon Thy sorrowing people deign.

Unworthy, Lord, unworthy of Thy name,
 Behold Thy sinful Church; by hatred rent,
 In the vain world, and not in Thee, content:
 Cast us not off, O Lord! in deepest shame,
 On bended knees, we utter our lament,
 Up to Thy throne in daily sighing sent.

XCII.

THAT DAY WAS THE PREPARATION, AND THE SABBATH
DREW ON.

RISE and depart, thou highly-favoured one,
From the sad cross, by thine adopted led :
Enough of bitter tears hath now been shed :
“ Behold thy mother, and behold thy son.”
The meed of promised glory is not won,
The Prince of Life is numbered with the dead ;
Each lingering hope of blessedness hath fled ;
The treason hath been wrought—the dark deed done.

Thus down the steep of cruel Calvary
Passed those two holy mourners, hand in hand :
But as the brooding darkness from the land
Rose curtain-like, so comfort cheerily
Broke dawning on their hearts, and visions high
Of glory yet unshaped went dimly by.

XCIII.

“ ONE Lord, one faith, one baptism”—where are these ?
“ One body, and one bread :”—I see it not :
For in the impotence of human thought
Each sinner now himself alone doth please :
Farewell, sweet love and holy charities :—
Shall it be said that we of God are taught,
While Christian Christian tears, in fierce onslaught,
With weapons fetched from carnal armouries ?

Therefore again, Lord God of Love, we fall
Before Thy footstool, bold to intercede
For our weak brethren. Hear us, while we plead
For those who Thee forsake, and erring all,
Some of Apollos are and some of Paul,
In self-directed pride :—O Lord, how long ?

XCIV.

HAVE pity, Holy One, on those who stray !
 Thou kind and loving Shepherd, fetch Thou home
 The rebel-flocks who in the desert roam :
 Fair is the sky as yet, and smooth the way,—
 But soon shall darkness gather o'er the day :
 Then where shall be the voice that aim'd to teach,
 The guides self-chosen, who did smooth things preach,
 The men of many words, unused to pray ?

Didst Thou not give Thy life for them, O Lord ?
 Open their blinded eyes that they may see ;
 Turn them from self to look alone on Thee ;
 Shew them the living wonders of Thy word ;
 Let cries of triumph through Thy Church be heard—
 " HE THAT WAS LOST IS FOUND, THE SLAVE IS FREE ! "

XCV.

WHILE the vain world around us buys and sells,
 And falls before its pomp and vanity,
 Each day, O Lord, in humble wise to Thee
 We come, to draw from Thy salvation's wells
 Waters of life : each day the mourner tells
 To Thee his tale of woe : the healing tree
 Sheds every day its leaves, priceless and free,
 Whose balm the fever of the serpent quells.

Thou Blessed One, to cruel pangs for us
 Resigned, accept our contrite sacrifice :
 Feed us with grace each day in new supplies :
 Look we on Thee whom we have pierced, and thus,
 Though sorrow rend our heart, and flood our eyes,
 Shall faith above the gloom in steady radiance rise,

XCVI.

ASCENSION-DAY, 1845.

THEY stood and gazed into the summer-sky,
 That earnest band of holy men and true :
 It was no vision that might pass them by,
 As the bright clouds enwrap Him from their view ;
 No self-withdrawal of His form still nigh :
 As victory was strange, and hope was new,
 More gloom athwart their hearts this sorrow drew,
 While vainly upward searched each eager eye.

But on their ear those voices' unison
 Broke, as the choir of heaven on men below :
 And, as the portals of the morning, shone
 Their glistening raiment : and though still alone
 We dwell without our Lord, yet this we know,
 That He shall thus return as they beheld Him go.

XCVII.

THE CHURCH IN THE PARK.

DARK is the spot and damp. The great man's hall
 Keeps off the pleasant sun. The stones are green ;
 And here and there a gaping breach is seen,
 Or window-arch despoiled, or brick-patched wall.
 Within 'tis desolate and cheerless all :
 Moist boxes, shoulder-high, where seats have been ;
 Two rampant beasts on tottering chancel-screen ;
 A roof that waits but the first snow, to fall.

O sin and shame ! not fifty yards away,
 Corniced above and carpeted below,
 With pictures bright, and plate in gleaming show,
 Riseth the temple, whither day by day
 A family held Christian doth repair
 To glut their appetite with sumptuous fare !

XCVIII.

“**THERE IS ONE BAPTISM :**” thus wrote holy Paul—
Behold its only trace, yon ancient stone
Forth to dishonour and destruction thrown,
Catching the drippings from the chancel-wall.

“**WE, BEING MANY, ALL PARTAKE ONE BREAD :**”
Behold in yonder unfrequented quire,
For two old men, four women, and the squire,
Three times a year the scanty banquet spread.

Are we His people? is the Lord our King?
Up then for shame, and the old ways restore—
Give to the Lord the honour due, and bring
Glad presents to His courts; that so, before
His wrath arise upon our Church and land,
The incense of our prayer may stay His lifted hand.

XCIX.

DAY BY DAY WE MAGNIFY THEE.

O BARE and aimless mockery—“day by day?”
To-morrow, and the next day, and the next,
No praise will hence ascend; no sacred text
Be uttered to the people. Come who may,
For prayer or thought, these gates shall say them nay:
Be they in anguish, or with doubt perplexed,
Or with the world’s unceasing billows vexed,
We lock the Church, and order all away.

O low estate of holy hope and faith!
Are we to think that He who hallowed one,
Of all the other days requireth none?
Or that our working-days are safe from death?
Cease your Ambrosian hymn—or this at most,
Perform the promise, ye who make the boast.

C.

νῦν, ὃ κρηῆναι, λύπιόν τι ποτόν,
 λείπομαι ὑμᾶς, λείπομαι, οὐ δὴ
 δόξης ποτὶ τῆσδ' ἐπιβάνους.

SOPH. *Philoct.*

IN dreamy days of boyhood and of youth
 Sweet Poesy whispered often in mine ear ;
 And I could then with voice distinct and clear
 Repeat her ditties : but of late, in sooth,
 The sterner mandates of unflattering Truth
 Have filled my hearing, making not less dear
 High strains of verse—but hallowing with fear
 My thoughts, and keen remorse, and backward ruth.

Therefore farewell, ye pleasant melodies
 Of song, heroic, holy, or pastoral :
 Farewell ye shades and voiceful forests all ;
 No more along your sward-paths dark with trees
 Shall wander he, who, lightly skilled to please,
 Could yet from leaf and rock poetic numbers call.

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