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**ALFORD'S
SELECT POETICAL WORKS.**

SELECT
POETICAL WORKS

OF THE REV.

HENRY ALFORD:

COMPRISING

- I. POEMS ON NATURAL OBJECTS.
- II. POEMS OF THE AFFECTIONS.
- III. POEMS OF RECOLLECTION.
- IV. MEMORIES OF THE DEAD.

WITH SEVERAL PIECES NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

MANY years have past, since the majority of these poems were given to the world. They record for the most part the ardent and busy sympathies of the last years of youth, and the first of manhood: when the stores of nature are yet fresh, and we wander eagerly among them with our newly-ripened faculties, following as she leads us.

The more recent pieces at the end of the volume have been dictated by a sterner teacher, being exercises written in the school of sorrow.

Wymeswold, July 16th, 1851.

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POEMS
ON NATURAL OBJECTS.

Sonnet.

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.

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.

B

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.

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 barton * far below ;
Till thou seest the dawn streak
From the eastern night-clouds break ;
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 ;

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

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 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.

Sonnet.

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-voiced 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 !

On the aged Oak at Oakley, Somerset.

I WAS a young fair tree :
 Each spring with quivering green
 My boughs 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 sheathed 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 blessed 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.

Sonnet.

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 yeave 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 evening star 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.

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 ministering 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 hours
 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.
 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.

*These blocks are borne downwards by the slow motion of the whole of the vast glacier on which they are lying, and from year to year their change of place is just perceptible.

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 apportioned
 Shall have past by,
 Leap from the lofty brink, and fill the vale with dread.

Sonnet.

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.

Sonnet.

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.

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, [bright.
 And swam from out thy deeps the young day heavenly
 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.

Sonnet.

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, reckon 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.

THERE is a wood, not far from where I pass
My unrecorded hours in pleasant toil ;—
Each tangle of the spreading boughs I know,
And where each bird doth nestle ; every pool
That makes a mirror for the quivering leaves ;—
The days are past when I could wander on
And lose myself, expecting at each turn
New pillared avenues of stately trees,
And glimpses of far waters.

Even thus
Will all the joy and beauty of this Earth
Become familiar things ; wonder shall yield
To cold arrangement ; and the voices deep
Of the great Kings of Song shall cease to stir
Mine inner fount of tears. The power of God
Shall not be thereby shortened in my soul,
But in my weakness rather perfect made,
In the sure progress of untroubled Love
That heals the fevered heart ; as in the morn
Upon the fading of the partial stars
Wins the calm Daylight, over all diffused.

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.

A Wish.

WOULD it were mine, amidst the changes
Through which our varied life-time ranges,
To live on Providence's bounty
Down in some favoured Western county.

There let the daily sun be gleaming
Over rich vales, with plenty teeming:
Bold hills my sheltered home surrounding,
And Ocean in the distance sounding.

Thick trees and shrubs should rise about me,
That the rude passers might not flout me ;
Huge elms my lowly roof embowering,
And poplars from my shrubbery towering.

In the smooth turf choice beds of posies,
And lilies white, and crimson roses ;
Climbers my trellised doorway lining,
Vines, round the eaves their tendrils twining.

Some village tower upon me peeping,
And churchyard, where the dead lie sleeping :
The tombs, for a 'memento mori' :
The pinnacles, to point to glory.

There may I dwell with those who love me :
And when the earth shall close above me,
My memory leave a lasting savour
Of grace divine, and human favour.

POEMS
OF THE AFFECTIONS.

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 thro' 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 cathedralled 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

C

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.

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 they need shall be,
 That word, that look, so may He turn on thee!

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.

To Alice in England.

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.

On the Evening of a Village Festival.

WHILE our shrub-walks darken,
 And the stars get bright aloft,
 Still we sit and harken
 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 beloved,
 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.

Anticipation.

In the bright summer weather
 We twain will go together,
 By the river's silver swathes,
 Where the melilotus bathes
 Its blooms gold-bright ;
 And along the distant stream
 Broods the white silent steam,
 Thickening onward like a dream
 In the first sleep of night.

In the warm summer weather
 We twain will go together,
 On the west side of the hill,
 While the leaves are keeping still,

As the sun goes down ;
 And the long straight streams
 Of the mellow setting beams
 Light up with rosy gleams
 Mountain, moor, and town.

In the calm summer weather
 We twain will go together,
 When the western planet's light
 Is full, and warm, and bright,
 Above the western flood ;
 • Only the impatient rill
 To itself is talking still,
 By the hedge-row down the hill,
 On the border of the wood.

Conclusion of 'the School of the Heart.'

My task is done :
 The garlands that I wreathed around my brow
 Are fading on it, and the air of song
 Is passing from me. Thou art standing by,
 Bent o'er thy Poet with Love-lighted eyes,
 And raptured look of ardent hope, that tells
 Of holiest influences shed forth within.
 I have not talked with one who cannot feel
 Every minutest nourishment of thought ;
 For I have seen thee when the western gale
 Blew loud and rude upon our native hills,
 With bonnet doffed, courting the busy wind ;
 And I have looked on thee till my dim eyes
 Swam with delight, and thou didst seem to me,
 As I stood by thee on the aery steep,
 Like a young Seraph ready poised for flight ;

O sweet illusion—but in after time
The truth shall follow—for we two shall stand
Upon the everlasting hills of heaven,
With glorious beauty clothed that cannot die ;
And far beneath upon the myriad worlds
All unimaginable glory spread,
Brighter than brightest floods of rosy light
Poured by the sunset on our western sea.
It will not matter to the soul set free
Which hemisphere we tenanted on earth ;
Whether it sojourned where the northern wain
Dips not in Ocean, or beneath the heaven
Where overhead the austral cross is fixed
Glistening in glory, or amidst the snows
Under the playing of the Boreal lights ;
We shall be free to wander evermore
In thought, the spirit's motion, o'er the wide
And wondrous universe, with messages
To beautiful beings who have never fallen,
And worlds that never heard the cry of sin.
As one who in a new and beauteous land
Lately arrived, rests not till every way
His steps have wandered, searching out new paths
To far-off towers that rise along the vales ;
So to a thousand founts of light unknown
Our new-enfranchised souls shall travel forth,
Rich with strange beauties—some, it may be, clad
With woods, and interlaced with playful brooks
And ever-changing shades, like this our home ;
And some a wilderness of craggy thrones,
With skies of stranger hue ; and glorious
With train of orbs attendant on their state,
Mingling their rays in atmospheres of Love.

POEMS
OF RECOLLECTION.

Sonnet.

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.

Peace.

I HAVE found Peace in the bright earth
And in the sunny sky :
By the low voice of summer seas,
And where streams murmur by ;

I find it in the quiet tone
 Of voices that I love :
 By the flickering of a twilight fire,
 And in a leafless grove ;

I find it in the silent flow
 Of solitary thought :
 In calm half-meditated dreams,
 And reasonings self-taught ;

But seldom have I found such peace,
 As in the soul's deep joy
 Of passing onward free from harm
 Through every day's employ.

If gems we seek, we only tire,
 And lift our hopes too high ;
 The constant flowers that line our way
 Alone can satisfy.

Midnight Thoughts.

'Tis just the moment when Time hangs in doubt
 Between the parting and the coming day :
 The deep clock tolleth twelve—and its full tide
 Of swelling sound pours out upon the wind :
 The bright cold stars are glittering from the sky,
 And one of large light, fairer than the rest,
 Looks through yon screen of leaf-deserted limes.

Not undelightful are the trains of thought
 That usher in my midnights. Thou art there
 Whom my soul loveth ; in that calm still hour
 Thy image floats before mine inward eye,
 Placid as is the season, wrapt in sleep,
 And heaving gently with unconscious breath ;

While thy bright guardian watches at thy head,
Unseen of mortal, through the nightly hours,
Active against intrusion on thy mind
Of aught unholy: careful to preserve
The sanctuary of thy spirit swept and pure
For early worship when thine eyelids wake.
Sleep softly, and wake softly!—may thy dreams
Be all of Heaven, as mine are all of Thee!

A Night Scene.

JULY, 1830.

WE looked into the silent sky,
We gazed upon thee, lovely Moon;
And thou wert shining clear and bright
In night's unclouded noon.

And it was sweet to stand and think,
Amidst the deep tranquillity,
How many eyes at that still hour
Were looking upon thee.

The exile on the foreign shore
Hath stood and turned his eye on thee;
And he hath thought upon his days
Of hope and infancy;

And he hath said, there may be those
Gazing upon thy beauty now,
Who stamped the last, the burning kiss
Upon his parting brow.

The captive in his grated cell
Hath cast him in thy peering light;
And looked on thee, and almost blest
The solitary night.

The infant slumbereth in his cot,
 And on him is thy liquid beam ;
 And shapes of soft and faery light
 Have mingled in his dream.

The sick upon the sleepless bed
 Scared by the dream of wild unrest,
 The fond and mute companionship
 Of thy sweet ray hath blest.

The mourner in thy silver beam
 Hath laid his sad and wasted form,
 And felt that there is quiet there
 To calm his inward storm.

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.

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.

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 stoncrop gay ;
 And not far thence the small encampment lay
 Curling its wreathed 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.

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.

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.

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, grotts 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.
 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.

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

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.

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:
 That 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.

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.

Sonnet.

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.

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
wanteth 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 throug 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 band 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.

From 'the School of the Heart.'

I.

When first I issued forth into the world,
 Well I remember—that unwelcome morn,
 When we rose long before the accustomed hour
 By the faint taper-light ; and by that gate
 We just now swung behind us carelessly,
 I gave thee the last kiss :—I travelled on,
 Giving my mind up to the world without,
 Which poured in strange ideas of strange things,
 New towns, new churches, new inhabitants :—
 And ever and anon some happy child
 Beneath a rose-trailed porch played as I past :
 And then the thought of thee swept through my soul,
 And made the hot drops stand in either eye :—
 And so I travelled—till between two hills,
 Two turf-enamelled mounds of brightest green,

Stretched the blue limit of the distant sea,
Unknown to me before :—then with strange joy,
Forgetting all, I gazed upon that sea,
Till I could see the white waves leaping up,
And all my heart leapt with them :—so I past
Southward, and neared that wilderness of waves,
And stopt upon its brink ; and when the even
Spread out upon the sky unusual clouds,
I sat me down upon a wooded cliff,
Watching the earth's last daylight fade away,
Till that the dim wave far beneath my feet
Did make low moanings to the infant moon,
And the lights twinkled out along the shore ;
Then I looked upwards, and I saw the stars,
Sirius, Orion, and the Northern wain,
And the Seven Sisters, and the beacon-flame
Of bright Arcturus,—every one the same
As when I shewed them thee.—“But yesternight,”
I said, “she gazed with me upon those stars :
Why did we not agree to look on them
Both at one moment every starlight night,
And think that the same star beheld us both?”

II.

Sometimes I wandered down the wooded dells
That sloped into the sea, and sat me down
On piles of rocks, in a most private place,
Not without melody of ancient stream
Down-dripping from steep sides of brightest moss,
And tumbling onwards through the dark ravine ;
While the lithe branches of the wizard elm
Dangled athwart the deep blue crystalline.—
Often the memory comes o'er me now,
Like life upon a long-entranced corpse.

I knew not then aught of that inner soul
That giveth life to beauty—knew not then,
How moments of most painful vacancy
In beauty's presence, print their footmarks deep
On the soul's pathways, and how glory and light
Shine from them at a distance ;—how we gather
Our treasures in the shade, and know them not
Till they steal lustre from the living sun,
Flattering the new-born vision of our souls
With richest stores of unprovided joy.

III.

Is it for nothing that the mighty sun
Rises each morning from the Eastern plain
Over the meadows fresh with hoary dew ?
Is it for nothing that the shadowy trees
On yonder hill-top, in the summer night
Stand darkly out before the golden moon ?
Is it for nothing that the autumn boughs
Hang thick with mellow fruit, what time the swain
Presses the luscious juice, and joyful shouts
Rise in the purple twilight, gladdening him
Who laboured late, and homeward wends his way
Over the ridgy grounds, and through the mead,
Where the mist broods along the fringed stream ?
Far in the Western sea dim islands float,
And lines of mountain-coast receive the sun
As he sinks downward to his resting place,
Ministered to by bright and crimson clouds :
Is it for nothing that some artist-hand
Hath wrought together things so beautiful ?
Noon follows morn—the quiet breezeless noon ;
And pleasant even, season of sweet sounds
And peaceful sights ; and then the wondrous bird

That warbles like an angel, full of love,
From copse and hedgerow side, pouring abroad
Her tide of song into the listening night.
Beautiful is the last gleam of the sun
Slanted through twining branches; beautiful
The birth of the faint stars—first, clear and pale,
The steady-lustred Hesper, like a gem
On the flushed bosom of the West; and then
Some princely fountain of unborrowed light,
Arcturus, or the Dogstar, or the seven
That circle without setting round the pole.
Is it for nothing at the midnight hour,
That solemn silence sways the hemisphere,
And ye must listen long before ye hear
The cry of beasts, or fall of distant stream,
Or breeze among the tree-tops—while the stars,
Like guardian spirits, watch the slumbering earth?

IV.

Evening and morning—those two ancient names
So linked with childish wonder, when with arm
Fast wound about the neck of one we loved,
Oft questioning we heard Creation's tale—
Evening and morning ever brought to me
Strange joy; the birth and funeral of light,—
Whether in clear unclouded majesty
The large Sun poured his effluence abroad,
Or the grey clouds rolled silently along,
Dropping their doubtful tokens as they passed;
Whether above the hills intensely glowed
Bright lines of parting glory in the west,
Or from the veil of faintly-reddened mist
The darkness slow descended on the earth;
The passing to a state of things all new—

New fears and new enjoyments—this was all
Food for my seeking spirit: I would stand
Upon the jutting hills that overlook
Our level moor, and watch the daylight fade
Along the prospect: now behind the leaves
The golden twinkles of the westering sun
Deepened to richest crimson: now from out
The solemn beech-grove, through the natural aisles
Of pillared trunks, the glory in the west
Shewed like Jehovah's presence-fire, beheld
In olden times above the Mercy-seat
Between the folded wings of Cherubim;—
I loved to wander with the evening star
Heading my way, till from the palest speck
Of virgin silver, evermore lit up
With radiance as by spirits ministered,
She seemed a living pool of golden light:
I loved to learn the strange array of shapes
That pass along the circle of the year;
Some, for the love of ancient lore, I kept;
And they would call into my fancy's eye
Chaldæan beacons, over the drear sand
Seen faintly from thick-towered Babylon
Against the sunset—shepherds in the field,
Watching their flocks by night—or shapes of men
And high-necked camels, passing leisurely
Along the starred horizon, where the spice
Swims in the air, in Araby the Blest;
And some, as Fancy led, I figured forth,
Misliking their old names; one circlet bright
Gladdens me often, near the northern wain,
Which, with a childish playfulness of choice
That hath not passed away, I loved to call
The crown of glory, by the righteous Judge

Against the day of his appearing, laid
In store for him who fought the fight of faith.

I ever loved the Ocean, as 't had been
My childhood's playfellow : in sooth it was ;
For I had built me forts upon its sands,
And launched my little navies in the creeks,
Careless of certain loss ; so it would play
Even as it listed with them, I were pleased.
I loved to follow with the backward tide
Over rough rocks and quaintly delving pools,
Till that the land-cliffs lessened, and I trod
With cautious step on slippery crags and moist,
With sea-weed clothed, like the green hair of Nymphs,
The Nereids' votive hair, that on the rocks
They hang when storms are past, to the kind power
That saved their sparry grottoes.

And at night

I wandered often, when the winds were up,
Over the pathless hills, till I could hear,
Borne fitly upon the hurrying blast,
The curfew-bell, with lingering strokes and deep,
From underlying town ; then all was still
But the low murmuring of the distant sea ;
And then again the new-awakened wind
Howled in the dells, and through the bended heath
Swept whistling by my firmly-planted feet.

Eternal rocks—that lift your heads on high,
Grey with the tracks of ages that have past
Over your serried brows, with many a scar
Of thunderstroke deep-riven, from out whose clefts
The gnarled oak, and yew, and tender ash,

Poured forth like waters, trail adown the steep—
Ye stand to figure to our human view
The calm and never-altering character
Of great Eternity—like some vast pier
Fixed, while the fleeting tide of mortal things
Flows onward from its sight. The mighty men
Of ages gone have passed beneath your crest
And cast an upward look, and ye have grown
Into their being, and been created part
Of the great Mind; and of your influence some
Hath past into the thoughts that live and burn
Through all the ages of the peopled world.
Your presence hath been fruitful to my soul
Of mighty lessons; whether inland far
Ye lift your jutting brows from grassy hills,
Or on the but of some great promontory
Keep guard against the sleepless siege of waves.
Once I remember when most visible light
Shone from you on my spirit—'twas an eve
In fall of summer, when the weaker births
Of the great forest change their robes of green;
On such an eve, I climbed into a nook
Bowered with leaves and canopied with crags
On the loved border of the western shore.
Over the topmost cliff the horned moon,
Not eight days old, shone mildly; under foot
The mighty ocean rolled its multitude
Of onward crowding ridges, that with crash
Of thunder broke upon the jutting rocks;
And in the northern sky, where not an hour
The day had sunk, a pomp of tempest-clouds
Passed wildly onward over the calm lines
Of the hue of faded sunset. Wearily
Sighed the thick oaks upon the seaward steep,

And the melancholy sea-bird wailed aloft,
Now poised in the mid-air, now with swift sweep
Descending; and again on balanced wings
Hovering, or wheeling dismally about,
With short importunate cry.

But ye the chief,
Trees, that along our pleasant native slope
Pendant with clustering foliage, in the light
Of parting evening sleep most peacefully,
Gathering to the eye your separate heads
Into a dark and misty mass of green;
Ye can bear witness how with constant care
I mourned your tribute to the autumn winds,
And hailed with you the sweet return of spring,
And watched with fondest care the tender green;—
Ye sleep the winter through, and burst abroad
In the morning of the year, and sweetest songs
Sound through your arbours all the happy May,
Till callow broods take wing, and summer's sun
Darkens the tender green upon the leaf;
And then ye stand majestic, glorying
In strength of knotted trunk and branches vast,
Daring the noonday heat, that withers up
The orchis-flower and foxglove at your feet,
Save where your mighty shadows gloomily
Recline upon the underlying sward.

looked upon you when the April moon
Sprinkled your forms with light, and the dewball lay
All night upon the branch—listening each year
When the first breeze might stir your boughs new-clothed,
Or when the rain all through the summer-day
Fell steadily upon the leaves, mine ear
Soothing with the faint music's even chime.

V.

Hear thou a vision—fitly told thee now
When we are parted from the nether world,
A dream of import strange, and prophecy
Which after-time shall prove. 'Twas on a night
Such as my spirit loves—moonlit and calm,
But veiled with amber mist, wherein there dwelt
Light, clothing equally the arch of heaven.
I had flown upwards on the stripping wings
Of meditation through the ample sky ;
By the Queen-crescent, and past many a star
Thronged with unsinning shapes, whose atmosphere
Made clearer shining round me as I fled,
Reluctantly bound onward through the vast
And peopled universe : and now a light
Fell on me as from some self-shining tract,
Broad and uncentred, and I felt my thoughts
Grew pure and wonderful, and even this flesh
Into a glorious temple purified,
For such a saintly soul as now it shrined
Not all unfitting. And methought in sight
Full opposite, a beautiful green land,
In light not clear nor dark ; a mellow day
Shed its soft influence over hill and dale,
And tenderest foliage down a hundred dells
Spread over paths that wound beside the bed
Of tinkling streamlets. Thickly scattered stood
Elm-shaded cottages, and wreathed smoke
In bright blue curls went up, and o'er the vales
That lay toward the waves, slept peacefully.
'Twas such a land as summer travellers see
On Britain's western shores, who from the hills
Painfully climbed, beyond the Severn sea
Look over into Cambria, facing south,

To Aberavon, by the stream of Taff,
And old Glamorgan.—Then my fancy changed;
'Twas the third morning since my angel-guide
Landed me from strange voyage; scarcely yet
The search of this new home had given repose
To my way-wearied eyes. Thou canst not tell
How bright a morn it was; never such sun
Looked on the nether earth, as now above
Heaven's everlasting hills with perfect orb
Rose joyous, and from every brake the birds
Under the thick leaves, starred with prisms of dew,
Crowded their mellow warbles. Shapes in white
Over the lawns and by the hedge-row sides
Moved glorious; all the breathings of the air
Were full of joy, and every passing sound
Thrilled through me like the touch of her I love.
And on a sudden from an upland copse
Tangled with woodbine and lithe virgin-bower,
Broke forth a river of full melody,
Gushing like some long reach of pouring linn
In underlying valley, when the stars
Are out upon the mountain. Mute I turned
And listened, till the music of that voice
So took my senses captive, that I stood
Emptied of thought and human consciousness;
Like her who from the sulphur-steaming vale
Hurrying away in olden time, looked back
On Admah and Zeboim, and the plain
Of fruitful Sodom lately loved, and there
As in her fondness she had looked, stood fixed.
"Hither," it said, "come hither, child of earth,
Curb thy wild leapings of unquiet thought,
And glide into the calm of hope fulfilled.
Here is no sport of words, nor lying smile

Of rash undowried promise ; hither come,
And I will shew thee blest realities
More bright than earthly dreams." As by a charm
Led on, I followed through the scented air
Moving with speed of thought, till in a shade
Most like to that, where in the morn of life
I opened forth to thee mine inner heart
When thou hadst picked thine apron full of flowers,—
I saw an angel form, serene and tall,
Far lifted into blessedness of look
Above our mortal state ; and yet methought
I knew her eyes, I knew her cast of shape,
As when we see a new-acquainted face
Fixed on us strangely with accustomed looks.
"Draw near," she said, in that same wondrous voice
That filled the air of heaven, heard nigher now,
Like some clear organ, when the swell of song
Tempers the long-drawn music ; " let me look
Into thy face, and read thine open soul ;—
For blessed angels see not as ye see
Down on the nether earth ; each fleeting spark
Of high desire, and each conception bold
Of worthy daring, to the insight keen
Of heavenly spirits hath its proper form
And presence, as to thee its earthy veil :"—
And as she spoke, a flush of sudden love,
Like shade athwart a sunny upland thrown,
Passed on her cheek—" dear child, the child of tears,
Thou didst not know me ; scarcely had thy face
Learned to acknowledge with uncertain calm
(Which mother-love would fain hear called a smile)
My careful ministrations, when a voice
Mysterious called, first softly and scarce heard,
Then loud and louder waxing—' Come away'—

Till the dread sound struck on my throbbing brain,
And I was carried from thee. Ever since
In the pure summer air of this sweet land,
God hath been ripening for enjoyment high
My patient spirit; but thine earthly speech
Hath not the signs that might disclose to thee
By what enlightening what blessed sight
These eyes have gained; or how the faithful sense,
Close-leaguings with the soul, searches unchecked
Things that lie hid beyond the visible blue
And past the flickering stars.

“But thou mayest know
Thus far, that there are many globes, as this
Hung in the middle firmament, where dwell
Pure spirits, ruling or obeying each
The gentle course of those their shining homes,
Or resting after lives of over-toil,
Or from the sources, at whose distant streams
They loved to drink on earth, feeding at will
Their ever-new desire; some by the flood
That girds the city of God, hold communing
With those that pass, or muse along the brink,
Or cull the lavish flowers; some that love best
To dwell in conflict, on the verge extreme
Sit of this tract of heaven, where night and day
The various plunging of the chafèd sea
Doth homage to their restless thirst of change.

‘This isle of ours (to which I marvel how
Thy steps have come,) its own inhabitants
Hath portioned, a blest tribe, who love the calm,
And tend these mystic plants, and night and morn
(For night and morn we mark as on the earth,

E

Though not with setting or returning light,
But with alternate song, and visits new
Of blessed ones from God) for worship meet,
Drawing the lengthened chant, and marrying
The raptures of Earth's sweetest melodies
To pure assurance of untroubled souls.
Thou sawest, if thy way I right divine
To have lain upward, for thou art not yet
As one of us, and shalt return to earth,
Where many valleys meet, a gulph of air,
Quiet, and full of this our ether-light ;
Call this ' the Haven of Lost Hope'—for here
Speed all the holy souls who left the world
While Hope was young, and Promise in her bud ;—
Hither they speed, and wait, till there shall sound
A call to higher meed of blessedness,
The second in Heaven's roll, (if we may trust
The songs of the bright quires that hover round,) .
Next to the sainted ones, that fought the fight
Against the sword, or fire, or piercing scorn,
Enduring unto death. If truly rise
Thoughts on my spirit (and responses false
Have seldom place in temples purified),
Thou to this island after certain days
Shalt send a blest inhabitant, thyself,
Or other, from the chambers of thine heart
Unwilling parted, friend of hopes and fears.
Weep not,—for one large tear, born first of joy,
And fully ripened by a throe of grief,
Rolled on my cheek,—' Weep not, for ill thou knowest
That earthly hope is like the precious ore
Rough and unseemly, till unwelcome force
Crush it in sunder, and the glittering wreck
Refine with fire, till its calm shining face

Give back the unbroken sky. Thou canst not tell
How rich a dowry Sorrow gives the soul,
How firm a faith, and eagle-sight of God.
So mayst thou see upon the Earth at night,
After a day of storms, whose sun hath set
In sorrow, when the horizontal round
Is hemmed by sullen clouds, there opens forth
High in the zenith a clear space, in which,
As in a gulf embayed, broods quietly
The glory of the Moon, from underneath
Her misty veil sent upwards; and the stars
Far up the avenues of light disclose.'

She ceased to speak—and aught of joy or fear
That might be left me from that voice divine
Not long was present; for along the shade
A troop of blessed children sporting past—
Oft have I mused ere now on ancient gems,
And sculptured forms of godlike symmetry,
And grace of pictured limbs; but never yet
Saw I such beauty, nor in song attained
So fair conceit, as now in light of Love
Shone in my sight these little ones of Heaven.
Naked they were, if that were nakedness
Which clothed the spirit pure with glorious veil,
The richest dress of God's own fashioning;
With perfect liberty and sport of limb
They gambolled by us on the summer turf,
Each chasing other, and in meetings fond
Twining their innocent arms, and snatching oft
Kisses of playful love; and then they stood
As children might have stood if children were
In the first Paradise, arm over arm,
Clad with a crimson glow, listening our talk,

Their little breasts panting with joy and play.
 For there had flowed afresh from that sweet fount
 Words of high import, and oft questioning
 I dwelt upon her lips; and thus had stayed
 Contented ever, but the light began
 Slowly to wane around me, and her form
 Dimmer and dimmer grew, her voice more faint,
 Her answers rare and short;—the sporting band
 Of holy children last remained in sight,
 And parted last; and all around me then
 Was darkness, till our grange and humble Church,
 And row of limes that eastward fence our home,
 Now visible against the waking dawn,
 Came slowly into presence, and this Earth
 Flowed in, and loosed the avenues of sense.

VI.

We have been dwellers in a lovely land,
 A land of lavish lights and floating shades,
 And broad green flats, bordered by woody capes
 That lessened ever as they stretch away
 Into the distance blue; a land of hills,
 Cloud-gathering ranges, on whose ancient breast
 The morning mists repose; each autumn tide
 Deep purple with the heath-bloom; from whose brow
 We might behold the crimson sun go down
 Behind the barrier of the western sea:
 A land of beautiful and stately fanes,
 Aërial temples most magnificent,
 Rising with clusters of rich pinnacles
 And fretted battlements; a land of towers
 Where sleeps the music of deep-voiced bells,
 Save when in holyday time the joyous air
 Ebbs to the welling sound; and Sabbath morn,

When from a choir of hill-side villages
The peaceful invitation churchward chimes.
So were our souls brought up to love this earth
And feed on natural beauty : and the light
Of our own sunsets, and the mountains blue
That girt around our home, were very parts
Of our young being ; linked with all we knew,
Centres of interest for undying thoughts
And themes of mindful converse. Happy they
Who in the fresh and dawning time of youth
Have dwelt in such a land, tuning their souls
To the deep melodies of Nature's laws
Heard in the after-time of riper thought
Reflective on past seasons of delight.

VII.

From his fire-beacon for a thousand years
The searching spirit of the lorn Chaldee
Held converse with the starry multitude ;
He knew the lamping potentates that bring
Summer and winter, when they wax and wane :
Soothing his solitary soul with song
Low-hummed, of mighty hunters, or the queen
That blazed in battle-front ; or if perchance
Of gentler mood, of Nineveh's soft king
Sardanapalus, that on roses slept,
Lulled by the lingering tremble of soft lutes ;—
Deep melodies, whose echoes left the world
Before the empires rose, whose wrecks are we ;—
How proudly in his Paradise of Art
The old Egyptian must have worn his pomp,
Nature's first moulded form of perfectness
Wrought in her sport, and playfully destroyed
That she might try her artist hand again ;

How beautiful was Greece—how marvellous
 In polity, and chastened grace severe—
 In nicely-balanced strains, and harmonies
 Tuned to the varying passion; flute or lyre
 Not unaccompanied by solemn dance
 In arms, or movement of well-ordered youths
 And maids in Dorian tunic simply clad;—
 How rich in song, and artful dialogue,
 Long-sighted irony, and half-earnest guess
 At deeply-pondered truth.

But spirits pure
 Deep drinking at the fount of natural joy,
 Grew sad and hopeless as the foot of Death
 Crept onwards; and beyond the deep-blue hills
 And plains o'erflowed with light, and woody paths,
 No safe abode of everduring joy
 Lifted its promise to the sight of Man.

“Farewell, farewell for ever—never more
 Thy beautiful young form shall pass athwart
 Our fond desiring vision;—the great world
 Moves on, and human accidents; and Spring
 New-clothes the forests, and the warm west-wind
 Awakes the nightingales;—but thou the while
 A handful of dull earth, art not, and we
 Insatiable* in woe weep evermore
 Around the marble where thine ashes lie.”
 Such sounds by pillared temple, or hill-side
 Sweet with wild roses, or by sacred stream
 Errant through mossy rocks, saddened the air,

* At nos horrifco cinefactum te prope busto
 Insatiabiliter deflebitus, eternumque
 Nulla dies nobis mœrœrem e pectore demet.

Lycæ. iii. 919.

Whether ripe virgin on the bier were borne,
 Or youth untimely cropped ; or in still night
 The moon shone full, and choir of maidens moved
 Through glades distinct with shadow, bearing vows
 Of choicest flowers and hair,—fearful the while
 Of thwarting influence or uncautious word,
 Till round the tomb they poured their votive wine
 And moved in dance, or chanted liquid hymns
 Soothing the rigid silence. “Fare thee well :
 A journey without end, a wakeless sleep,
 Or some half-joyful place, where feeble ghosts
 Wander in dreamy twilight, holds thee now ;
 Thy joy is done : and thine espousals kept
 Down in the dark house of forgetfulness.”

A Winter Morning Scene.

FAR on the sloping casement from the East
 Looks through the frosted haze the purple sun,
 As with a heavenly presence filling all
 The lowly chamber. First, the wakened girl
 With fullest heart bends o'er the slumbering boy,—
 ‘Awake, arise ; the golden morning comes !’
 Not his the sleep that needs be summoned twice ;
 At once his bright eye opens,—and at once
 His merry voice gives welcome jubilant
 To the first rays of day. There yet is one
 Calm in warm slumber :—‘Sister, come and see !
 The glory of the Lord is on the hills,
 An angel is come down to wake the sun !’
 Together rising, see the gladdened group
 Fresh from the dews of sleep, and glorified
 By the now streaming sunshine, full of joy
 Gazing entranced.

A Truant Hour.

BONN, JULY 8, 1847.*

THE golden stars keep watch aloft ;
Unmarked the moments glide along,
Save that around me scatters oft
Yon nightingale his pearls of song :—

The hum of men, the roar of wheels,
That filled the streets erewhile, are gone ;
The inner consciousness but feels
The lowly river rolling on.

The course of thoughts and being, pent
As waters ere they plunge below,
Reflects a downward firmament
Of life and things, in gleamy show.

Thus rest, so hushed with airs of balm
That reach them from their promise land,
The righteous souls, in stillest calm
Laid up in their Redeemer's hand.

All that has been, and all that is,
Back from their thoughts in light is given,
Deep firmaments of inward bliss
Far glittering into distant heaven.

* On the Alte Zoll, over the Rhine. The sweet odour of the grape bloom filled the air ; the heaven was tremulously reflected in the eddies of the river, as the realities of life in the dreams of the sleepers ; and the clocks of the town were telling the hour of the night. Hence the imagery.

The while, side-heard as in a dream ,
The ages strike their solemn chime ;
And from the ancient hills, the stream
Rolls onward of predestined Time.

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.

MEMORIES OF THE DEAD.

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 stories 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.

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.

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.

A Parent's Tale.

'Twas her own
 And only child ; and never from her side
 Long years, she said, had parted her ; in joy
 And beauty she grew up, ever her sire
 Gladdening with smiles, and laying on his heart
 Ointment of purest comfort. On a day
 Heaven sent a worm into this summer flower.
 She told me how they watched her fade away,
 As we have watched the clouds of evening fade
 After the sun hath set. Slow were her words,
 And solemn, as she reached the parting tale :
 "'Twas thus we sat and saw our only hope
 Go down into the grave : for many months
 It was a weary weary life to lead :

She weakened by degrees ; and every day
Less light was in her eye, and on her cheek
Less colour ; and the faint quick pulse that beat
In the blue veins that laced her marble wrist
Stole without notice on the wary touch.
Sometimes by day she asked if it were fair,
By night if it were starlight ; that was all.
Ye should have seen her but a night and day
Before she died, how she sat up and spoke,
How of a sudden light most wonderful
Looked forward from her eyes, and on her cheek
Flushed colour, like a bloom from other lands,
The bloom that shews in flowers beyond the skies.
And then the words came forth most musical,
Low-toned and solemn, like the final notes
Of that grand anthem whose last strain is '*Peace*.'*
She spoke of angels, seen in a half light ;
She spoke of friends, long-severed friends, that died
In early youth, some fair and tall, and some
Most innocent children, that with earnest gaze
Looked ever in upon her all the night,
And faded slow into the light of morn.
And so she passed away ; and now her grave
Ten summers and ten winters hath been green ;
We dug it in a still and shady place ;
There is no headstone ; for we deemed it vain
To carve her record in a mouldering slab,
Whose name is written in the Book of Life.'

* The '*Gloria in Excelsis*' of Pergolesi.

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.

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.

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.

The Sermon.

"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.

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 hymned 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.

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.

A Tale of the Coast Guard.

I AM not one whose pleasure is to weave
 Tales highly wrought of sudden accident,
 Unlooked-for recognition, or desire
 Strangely fulfilled; but yet I have a tale
 Which will bring tears of pity to thine eyes,
 And summon all thy sadness to attend
 A willing mourner in a funeral train.
 Within our hilly bay,* hard by the beach,
 Dwelt one whose nightly service was to watch
 All deeds of outlaws on the Channel trade.
 Him on the cliff-side pathways we might see
 Early and late, and meet in the dusk eve
 Up the steep tracks, threading the oaken copse
 That delves into the sea. One summer morn,
 When the bright sun looked down upon the earth
 Without a cloud, and all along the shore
 Twinkled the restless sparkles, he rode by,
 And passing offered salutation gay,
 As one who in the beauty and the warmth
 Of that most blessed morning bore a part.
 That day we wandered, my dear friend and I,

* The Bay of Porlock. The incident here recorded happened in the summer of 1833.

Far off along the hills, up perilous paths,
Gathering the rock-plants, or with hollowed hand
Scooping the streams that trickled down the dells :
Till from a peak we saw the fiery sun
Sink down into the sea, and twilight fell ;
And ere we reached our cot, the distant lights
Shone from the Cambrian coast, and from the isle
Unseen in the mid-channel. From his cot
There looked into the bosom of the bay
A steady light—and when we reached our home
We slept and thought not of him. In the morn
Rumour was busy—and her minister,
Our bustling hostess, told how all the night
His anxious bride (for one short month ago
They gave their troths) had watched for his return ;
How there came by a stranger with his horse,
Who answered not, when breathless she inquired
Where he was left, and why. Many with search
Hopeless and wearisome toiled all the day ;
And when the evening came, upon the beach
Below that awful steep where winds the road
Cut in the mountain-side above the sea,
They found a cold and melancholy corpse
With outstretched arms and strangely-gathered limbs,
Like one who died in sudden and sharp pain ;
And deeply gashed on either side the brow
The gaping death-marks of a cruel fall.
Thou wouldst have wept to see her as she past
To snatch her scanty comfort of a look,
And then to see him, warm but now and gay,
And full of soft endearments, hidden deep
In the cold ground :—it was a blank still face,
But bearing trace of tears, and ashy pale,
Stiffened to stone by strong and sudden grief.

Her little stock of hopes, just anchored safe
 In a calm port, were sent adrift again
 Upon the howling wintry sea of life :
 And she is fain to gather up afresh
 The cast-off weeds of past prosperity,
 And deck her as she may. But a sad rent
 Hath sorrow made in her : nor can she now
 Knit up her ravelled hopes, nor summon heart
 To enter on Life's journey all alone,
 A new and weary way. But time will come
 When memory of her woe shall be to her
 A sweet companion—Sorrow shall have past
 Into her being, and have chastened well
 The lawless risings of unquiet thought.

November, 1847.

O FOR one word of that Almighty voice,
 Whose tone, though gentle, pierced the ear of death—
 TALITHA, CUMI ! O that He might stand
 Above this faded flower, and breathe back life !
 Was there no way, my sister dear, but this—
 That in the fulness of thy life of love,
 Expanding duties, daily strengthening ties,—
 And with this new-born treasure lately found,
 Thou must drop off and die ? Mysterious God—
 In whose high hearing nothing Thou hast made
 But sounds in heavenly harmony entire—
 Teach us the master-note, that may reduce
 To concord this heart-breaking dissonance—
 Shine on us with that Sun, whose mighty rays
 Have shone upon our sister, so that all
 Left on this earth, though dear a thousand-fold
 To her, whose heart is filled with purest love,
 Moves not one sigh,—so blessed is she now.

April, 1844.

THERE was a child, bright as the summer prime,
Fair as a flower. Not long his speaking eyes
Had uttered meaning: nature's love not long
Had stolen into his heart. One sweet May morn
His young life dawned:—so that the Summer heats
Unconscious passed he through:—the Autumn fruits
Just gladdened him with bloom—the sparkling frost
Awoke his greeting smile: but when the Spring
Broke out upon the earth, lighting with stars
Of floral radiance all the level green,—
Then was his joy a living laughing thing ;
He held the coloured buds—their beauty fed
His eager longing—up to those he loved
He held them in the fulness of his joy,
And laughter, eloquent of inward bliss.

Dear child—for thou wert ours—this and the like,
A few sweet visions of thine infant smiles,
A few bright hours of purity and calm,
Are all of thee that we remember now :
For in the sunshine of that rising Spring,
When lavish bloom was poured on all around,
Thy cheek alone grew pale : day after day
Thou fadedst from our sight: yet even thus,
Long as thine eyes could gaze, thy fingers clasp,
Brought we our tribute due of gleaming buds,
Glad, if we might one moment wake anew
Thy dormant thought, and light thine eyes with joy.

THE cowslip standeth in the grass,
 The primrose in the budding grove
 Hath laid her pale fair breast
 On the green sward to rest:
 The vapours that cease not to rove
 Athwart the blue sky, fleet and pass,
 And ever o'er the golden sun
 Their shadows run.

He is not in the glittering mead,
 Stooping to fill his hands with flowers;
 He is not in the wood
 Plucking the primrose-bud;
 He doth not mark the blosmy hours,
 The joy and May he doth not heed:
 Under the church-wall in the shade
 His bed is made.

Lacrymæ Paternæ. 1851.

I.

THIS tranquil Sabbath morn hath hushed the earth
 Into unwonted calm. The clear pale hills
 Lie beneath level lines of sunny clouds
 Walling our prospect round. A hundred fields
 Rest from their six days' tillage—save where kine
 Peaceful their herbage crop, or ruminant
 Recumbent. Every vernal garden flower,
 Crocus goldbright, or varnished celandine,
 Or violet, sapphire-eyed or bridal white,
 Opens its bosom to the ascending sun.
 One only looks not up, but ever droops,

Droops, but with matchless grace, and not to earth,
 But, with firm stalk, its head alone depends,—
 The snowdrop, lovelier than them all. Ev'n thus
 Bow down, my spirit, with thy load of grief,
 Bow down,—but be not crushed : be yet thy stem
 Upright and firm, on God's good purpose stayed.
 But I no more can look into the heaven
 As do yon gayer blooms : touched by God's hand,
 'Mara my name, but Naomi no more :—'
 For one lithe form I miss this Sabbath morn,
 Which, full of life and joy, on days like this
 Tripped o'er these walks, feeding on sight and sound,
 Holding half-closed the holy book in hand,
 And mingling with the loved and half-learned lore
 Of parable, or sweet recital, gleams
 Of nature's various life. O memory sweet!
 O inexhausted fount of tearful joy!

II.

Once more among the rose-tree boughs, that trail
 Athwart the cloudless sky, from where I sit
 I see our little yearly visitant
 The blithesome wren, run eager : now with wings
 Outspread and fluttering, now with swiftest dart
 At latent insect—then with warbling trill
 Of soft and liquid song, singing his hymn
 Of purest vernal joy. But not alone
 Such sight and music stir me :—one short year,
 How short, how long ! since thou, thy hand in mine,
 Our breath in silence held, stoodst by my side,
 Summoned from busy task to watch that bird—
 I see thee now—thy clear blue eyes lit up
 With eager light of love—thy frame, attent
 And rapt to catch each note of that sweet song—

I hear thee whisper—‘O, how beautiful!’
 Dear child of memory! on my lonely path
 Bright are the rays shed from thee—brighter far
 Than aught I find in men or books, beside!

III.

I search the heavens and earth for news of thee,
 But find them not. That sunlit continent
 Hung in mid-air, that with transmitted light
 Gladdens this peaceful night, is that thy home?
 Abidest thou where bright and pale by turns
 Her hills and plains gleam evident? Art thou
 Among the thousand times ten thousand saints
 There stationed, till He come, and we arise
 To meet Him, when He brings ye in the air?

Nor shrink I from such questioning. His works
 Who framed the wondrous universe, by rule
 And due apportionment are fitted all,
 Each to its separate use. And that pure isle
 Of treasured light, journeying with this our earth,
 Wherefore thus waits it on the world of man?
 Say, to give light by night; but wherefore then
 So scant, and intermitted? Say, to swell
 The tides salubrious, and to air, sun-dried,
 Restore its genial moisture. But nor this
 Seems to suffice. Hath that fair-fashioned world
 No tributary use for this world’s lord?
 Doth it no purpose serve for *man*? If life,
 Life various and material, there were fed
 As here below, then would the varying clouds
 Dapple her argent surface, and pale belts
 Of fleecy mist athwart her orb extend,
 Which are not found. Material life and growth,
 Nourished as here, is none. If living tribes

Are there, then live they by some law unknown .
 To us, whom tillage of the moistened soil
 Feeds, on the succulent and annual growth
 Of still decaying matter still renewed.
 If there they live, they live without decay,
 Unnourished, and undying. Beauty there
 Spreads not the landscape with rich fields and woods,
 Brown glebes, and errant streams: but spiry rocks
 Burn in untempered sunlight, and wide shades
 Invite to cool, and deepen into night.
 Fit haunt for spirits,—for to local bound,
 Though hard to set, all spirits are confined
 Save that unbounded One, who lives through all,—
 Fit haunt for blessed spirits to abide,
 In holiest intercourse and love unsoiled,
 In sight of earth and heaven, their final bliss.
 Nor let us dream of aught that might degrade
 Our holiest Faith in this. He that was dead
 And lives again, the bright and morning Star
 Of all our yearning hopes,—shall any say
 They dwell not *there*, because they dwell *with Him*?
 He is, where sin is not. Among them there,
 He, in the Body of His glory, may
 As once in Eden, walk: high Visitant,
 Teacher sublime:—there may they humble sit
 Beside His feet, and learn.

Here let us pause:

Nor further license give to Fancy's wing:
 Ev'n thus, may some believe, too wide we roam.

IV.

Ev'n thus, may some believe, too wide we roam:
 But roam we wider still. Yon orb of light
 Daunting the heavenward eye with potent beam,

Serves it not, too, some glorious end for man?
Say, it were made to rule this nether day:
Almighty Power might with such sheen endow
Some point minute; nor spend a million worlds
To light one system of dependent orbs.
Say, it were built so vast, by central force
Those orbs to draw attractive, lest in space
Wheeling immense, the orbits far and cold
Of planets even now but known to man
Their common bond forget, and errant roam.
Yet, be this so:—shall each dependent world
Be portioned out for bird, and beast, and man,
And this, the noblest, dreary all and blank,
Home of no life,—alone of all the band
Though brightest, radiant with no love nor joy?
And grant that high Intelligences dwell
Within yon spanning belt of dazzling fire,
Whence, and what are they? Do they fall, as here,
By death, and feed decay? Do they, as here,
Sorrow, and sin, and toil, and hate, and pine?
Fades there the brightest? Has love there its frosts,
Its worms that gnaw the root,—its withering buds?
Our earth obeys its law, vicissitude:
One while, we bask beneath the genial ray,
One while in grateful night our strength renew:
Winter gives nature rest,—the voice of Spring
Calls forth the buds,—Summer the bloom unfolds,
And lavish Autumn sheds the mellowed fruit,
And so we live by change. But there no night
Drops on the vales, nor visits them the dawn:
That orb serene eternal brightness clothes;
Nor seasons' varied course is known, nor march
Of years recurrent: fit abode for those
Whose life has done with change, and rests in bliss.

What if each system have its sun, its heaven?
 What if the sentient dwellers in its orbs,
 Their course of conflict run, their goal attained,
 Meet on those glittering spheres in joy and love?
 And what if all, uncounted firmaments
 Of suns with angel habitants, around
 The Central Throne in mingling glory roll?

V.

Why day by day this painful questioning?
 I know, that it is well. I know that *there*
 (O *where?*) thou hast protectors, guardians, friends,
 If such be needed: angel companies
 Move round thee: mighty Spirits lead thy thoughts
 To founts of knowledge which we never saw.
 I know that thou art happy—fresh desire
 Springing each day, and each day satisfied:
 God's glorious works all open to thy view,
 His blessed creatures thine, where pain nor death
 Disturbs not nor divides. All this I know,—
 But O for one short sight of what I know!

VI.

SEPTEMBER 3, 1850.

Here take thy stand: within this chamber lone
 That looks upon the unfathomable blue
 Of the blest ocean, take thy stand awhile:
 Ah mournful task! and watch yon fading face,
 So lately lit with love and eager joy,
 Now blank, but beautiful! Trace thou those lines
 Which death hath spared—build up that noble brow,
 Part the fair hair, and mimic with thy brush
 That curl, whose very flexure tells of him.
 Precious thine art,—God's gift—how often said,—

How never felt till now! This Autumn day
 We leave thee here with him. Death, cease thy work!
 Forget thy course, decay! One favouring hour
 Befriend our wish—how earnest, but how vain!

VII.

O sweet refreshment to the wearied heart,
 This converse with th' unalterable dead!
 I know not where, nor rightly what thou art:
 I only know that thou art blest and bright,
 Unfading, and mine own: and thus I sit
 Long pensive hours alone, scarce stirred in thought,
 Scanning thy presence through a mist of tears.
 Others may change—but thou shalt never change:
 Forgetfulness, and distance, and neglect,
 The chills of earthly love,—the stealthy pace
 Of summer-stealing age,—these touch not thee:
 That heart of thine, fresh well of living love,
 Hadst thou been here, might in long years have failed,
 Or poured on thankless fields its errant streams,
 Or flowed away (such sad vicissitudes
 We learn to look for, who live long on earth)
 Else-whither in abundance, sparing here
 Few drops and scant. But now, beloved one,
 That everlasting fount is all our own.

VIII.

They tell me, that we soon shall meet again:
 That some have heard the mighty chariot wheels
 Roar in the distance: that the world's salt tears
 Are cleaving their last furrows in her cheeks.
 It may be so: I know not. Oft the ear
 Attent and eager for some coming friend,
 Construes each breeze among the vocal boughs

Into the tokens of his wish'd approach.
 But this I know : HE liveth, and shall stand
 Upon this earth : and round Him, thick as waves
 That laugh with light at noon, uncounted hosts
 Of His redeemed :—and this I further know :
 Then shall I see thee—amidst all that band
 Know thee unsought : and midst a thousand joys
 Ineffable,—our own shall we possess,
 Clasped heart to heart, and looking eye to eye.
 O dawn, millennial day ! Come, blessed morn !
 Appear, Desire of Nations ! rend thy heavens,
 And stand revealed upon thy chosen hill !

Our early Friends.

ONE, and another—pass they, and are gone,
 Our early friends. Like minute-bells of heaven,
 Across our path in fitful wallings driven
 Hear we death's tidings even and anon.
 A little longer, and we stand alone :
 A few more strokes of the Almighty rod,
 And the dread presence of the voice of God
 About our footsteps shall be heard and known.
 Toil on, toil on, thou weary weary arm :
 Hope ever onward, heavy-laden heart :
 Let the false charmer ne'er so wisely charm,
 Listen we not, but ply our task apart,
 Cheering each hour of work with thoughts of rest,
 And with their love, who laboured and are blest.



