



POEMS OF

COLERIDGE

EDWARD  
DOWDEN

ILLUSTRATED BY  
CHARLES PEARS



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# The Golden Poets

EDITED BY OLIPHANT SMEATON

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## COLERIDGE

SELECTED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
EDWARD DOWDEN

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FRONTISPIECE AND VIGNETTE TITLE BY A. S. HARTRICK  
COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHARLES PEARS







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COLERIDGE

*Selected and with  
an Introduction by*

Professor Edward Dowden LL.D.



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## INTRODUCTION

IN one of the saddened retrospective poems **Two** of Coleridge's elder years he compares his **groups of** verse to 'a breeze 'mid blossoms straying.' **poems.** In the great ode 'Dejection,' written before he was thirty years of age, he laments that the power given by nature at his birth, the 'shaping spirit of Imagination,' had been suspended within him. These two words of his own—verse a breeze that strays, and verse the embodiment of the shaping spirit of imagination—express the characteristics of two groups of poems which together constitute the most valuable portion of his poetic work. 'The Ancient Mariner,' 'Christabel,' 'Love' are not, indeed, built up like pieces of architecture, nor are they, like certain poems of Landor, sculpturesque; but each is a living creature shaped by imagination, and into which imagination has breathed the breath of life. 'The Lime-tree Bower my Prison,' 'The Nightingale, a Conversation Poem,' 'The Picture,' 'The Eolian Harp' are poems of the straying breeze. Their unity

'Verse, a breeze.' is not fixed in form; or if it be, the form is so subtle that it escapes our handling. It is rather the unity of a stream—a stream of water or of air; unity not of a symphony or a sonata, but like that of the impromptu of some master extemporising on his instrument; unity of an impulse, a mood, or a sequence of varying moods; and such poetry is in truth

'Verse, a breeze 'mid blossoms straying,  
Where Hope clung feeding like a bee.'

It rises, it meanders, it sinks, it dies away like the Duke of Illyria's 'sweet south' (if that be Shakespeare's word and not Pope's), stealing and giving odour.

The shaping spirit of imagination has within it the poetic will, which conceives an end and object, and utters a kind of divine creative fiat: 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven,' or 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' But the will in Coleridge was not always active and operative, and he was not always in this sense a creator. His sensations were at once exceedingly delicate and exceedingly luxurious. He lay passive and open to the influences of eye and ear, or if not passive, often it was enough for him to contribute to what reached him from without, some vein of meditation, some response of

emotion which was evoked either instinctively or with a gentle surprise. In his earliest volume of verse (1796), a group of thirty-six poems, including several sonnets, is placed under the title 'Effusions.' It was an unhappy term, for which the 'New English Dictionary' gives no earlier example in this sense than one of 1779, and which it notes as now often used in a sense that is contemptuous. The use of the word for an outpouring of feeling in literary form belongs to the age of sensibility; it arose perhaps through a revolt from the word 'a performance,' or the word 'a composition'; it suggests that the poem so named is rather an outflow of nature than a construction of art. Unhappy or not, the word 'Effusion' suggests the mode of creation in the case of not a few of Coleridge's poems with sufficient aptness; influences flowed in upon his mind, and again flowed out with something added to them. And, indeed, there had been overmuch of mechanical construction in some of the lyrical poetry of the eighteenth century. Even in certain of the fine odes of Gray we can hear the rattle of the larger and the lesser wheels—wheel within wheel. And still more we can perceive the process of the mosaic-master of words and phrases, we can see where the tessellated stones of various colours join on, one to another.

Poet and  
preacher.

Neither in Coleridge's poems of the straying breeze, nor in his poems of the 'Esemplastic power,' as he named it, the power of the shaping imagination, are we aware of the toil and travail of machinery. The processes of his art are known only through their results. And in the development of his art in poems of the 'Effusion' kind the advance is seen not through any growth of mechanical arrangements, but through a more complete harmonising of the mood expressed, and a surer conduct of the breeze of song through avenues and alleys that of right belong to it.

Thus, in several of the early poems a turbid humanitarian sentiment and crude—yet not worthless—ideas of social and political reform intrude, and hurry away the breeze of song or of meditation to places where its flow is interrupted, scattered, and even lost. Coleridge the poet becomes for the nonce Coleridge the preacher, and, like a young man who has found an admiring audience, he is proud of occupying the pulpit and delivering an edifying or an inflammatory discourse.

'O ye numberless

Whom foul Oppression's ruffian gluttony  
Drives from life's plenteous feast ! O thou poor wretch  
Who nursed in darkness and made wild by want,  
Roamest for prey, yea thy unnatural hand  
Dost lift to deeds of blood !'

And there follow a train of miserable ones, each requiring the exclamatory 'O,' the victim of seduction, the aged woman supported by legalised charity, the loathly suppliants at the hospital gate, the redcoats forced or ensnared to Glory's field, the soldier's widow who cowers over her screaming infant. The sentiment, whether of an age of revolution or an age of melioration, is generous; but the voice is the voice of the pulpiteer, not of the poet, and, it must be admitted, the rhetoric is not of the highest kind. It is the rhetoric not of malice, but of benevolence, prepense, as though humanitarian eloquence were the preacher's rôle. At a later time, if Coleridge did not utter his thoughts and feelings from a Unitarian pulpit, as when Hazlitt heard him and supposed he was listening to 'the music of the spheres,' he could indite at pleasure a Lay Sermon in prose. And his poetry, whenever in those later days poetry was written, was all the more admirable because the sermon was not in verse.

That such should be the case points to what many persons may consider a defect in the poetry of Coleridge. Deep poetic thought does not tend towards rhetoric; the thought which is embodied in his inferior verse is somewhat superficial, caught up in haste from the *Zeitgeist*, which so often does his thinking for a

Imagination and thought.

young would-be prophet. And when Coleridge came to think for himself he found in prose the medium for his original and fertilising ideas; his verse—except in rare instances—is almost pure work of the imagination and of feelings connected with the imagination. No large body of thought is present, it is not there even in an invisible form, dissolved and held in solution by beauty. If he was not a philosophic thinker of the highest order, he certainly was a sower who went forth to sow, and he flung abroad his seed of ideas with a liberal hand. But his Muse was not broad-browed, with head bent downward, weighted with thought. She was more akin to the ‘damsel with a dulcimer,’ whom he saw in vision ‘singing of Mount Abora.’ With Wordsworth it may be that now and again a gaunt, prosaic idea protrudes through his poetry; but this is rarely the case, and it may be said that in the main the philosophic thinker is a poet, and the poet is a philosophic thinker.

‘On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,  
 Musing in solitude, I oft perceive  
 Fair trains of imagery before me rise,  
 Accompanied by feelings of delight  
 Pure or with no unpleasing sadness mixed.’

Such is the Wordsworthian process; idea, imagery, and emotion become one and insepar-

able. Such was not the process of Coleridge's mind. He planned, or dreamed that he planned great philosophical systems; but they did not enter into his verse. Some persons may offer up fervent thanks that they did not. But the visionary power often dwindles after early manhood, unless it has allied itself with the power of reflection and brooding thought. And that there was so imperfect an alliance between the poet and the thinker in Coleridge is one cause, among many, why his output of perfect verse was so scanty. He had much to say, but most of what he desired to say could be expressed in prose, and while he dealt with ideas the poet within him, except through some transitory flash and outbreak of the imagination, lay dormant.

How to  
approach  
the poet.

The modes of approach to Coleridge the poet are not through his intellect or what his intellect has bequeathed to us; what he has left us in verse at its best is too pure a product of the imagination to permit of its being translated into terms of the intellect. We approach him aright either by submitting to the spell which his imagination casts upon us, by yielding ourselves as the wedding-guest yielded to the imperious fascination of the Ancient Mariner's hand and eye; either thus, or by becoming the intimate of his affections and learning all the affluent, sweet,

External  
influences.

frail humanity of the man. Nor is it a thing without profit in the study of Coleridge—‘footless bird of Paradise’ though he has been named by one critic—to search out his poetic origins in the literature that immediately preceded his appearance as a poet, in the circumstances of the time, the influence of the Revolutionary movement, the influence of the Romantic movement, the influence of transcendental thought and feeling, the influence of Wordsworth, the influence of German poetry, and we must add, the influence of a mighty drug. Only, after all such investigations, it should be remembered that Coleridge’s peculiar quality is all his own, is underived, unique, and inimitable. This peculiar quality, the *cachet* of Coleridge, is not to be found in all that he wrote; it is absent from not a few of his earlier verses. These belong to the time rather than to the man; they are the work of an inferior versifier of the eighteenth century; their absence from this volume is little to be regretted.

The epithet of literary convention—the convention of the eighteenth century—in the poems which are the offspring of Coleridge’s time and not of Coleridge’s genius, is not yet replaced by the epithet of vision. The personification of literary convention is not yet replaced by those Presences of strange beauty and ideal light in

which Coleridge afterwards could incarnate the **Poetic progress.** abstractions of the mind.

‘ Heart-fretting Fear, with pallid look aghast,  
That courts the future woe to hide the past ;  
Remorse, the poison’d arrow in his side,  
And loud lewd Mirth to Anguish close allied :  
Till Frenzy, fierce-eyed child of moping Pain,  
Darts her hot lightning-flash athwart the brain ! ’

Six verses from the ‘ Lines on a Friend,’ dated November 1794 ; six lines, and six personified abstractions, which might have been brought together and dressed up in epithet by some forgotten rhymers trained in the schools of Gray and Collins. Place them beside the vision of that white devil, Life-in-Death in ‘ The Ancient Mariner,’ published only four years later, and the full change from convention to vision will be perceived. Or place them beside the group—only traced in outline in these lines—of Love, Hope, and Patience in a poem of 1829 :—

‘ Methinks I see them group’d in seemly show,  
The straiten’d arms upraised, the palms aslope,  
And robes that, touching as adown they flow,  
Distinctly blend, like snow emboss’d in snow.’

Here all is outline, but what grace and purity in the outline, reminding one of the attitudes of a group by Blake, or rather perhaps of the more tranquil handiwork of Stothard. ‘ Among all verses of boys who were to grow up great,’ writes Mr. Swinburne, ‘ I remember none so perfect, so

Poetic  
progress.

sweet and deep in sense and sound, as those which he is said to have written at school, headed "Time, Real and Imaginary." It would, indeed, give cause for marvelling if this subtle piece of allegory, with the strangeness in beauty of its personification—the two ostrich-plumed children, the sister far in advance, the blind brother following and knowing not whether he be first or last—were the invention of Coleridge's school-days. But the statement comes from the worst of all possible witnesses, from Coleridge himself; the poem was not printed before 1817; and we may prudently take to heart the warning of Coleridge's biographer and editor, Dykes Campbell, that 'the favourite epithet "schoolboy" attached by Coleridge to any poem of his is of no value as evidence.' In his earlier years Time Real would probably have been 'an aged sire,' and Time Imaginary a 'light-foot nymph,' or something else as acceptable to the eighteenth-century taste.

Writers of the dawn of modern Romance were certainly known to Coleridge, and wrought upon his imagination. He celebrated the genius of Chatterton in his monody. He wandered in the vale of Luma with Macpherson-Ossian; he strayed through the halls of Cathloma, a companion of the white-bosomed maid, whose name provides Cathloma with a rhyme. I am not

aware that he had any acquaintance in youth with the 'Poetical Sketches' or the 'Songs of Innocence,' which would have discovered for him in Blake a better inspirer and master than he found in Bowles. But in Coleridge's early days the progress of true imaginative romance had been checked, or at least had been masked, by the invasion of sentimentality and sensibility—a sentimentality no longer held in restraint and purified by humour, as it had been with Sterne, but limp, diffuse, and enervating, except when it took the active form of genuine philanthropy. As early as Macpherson's *Ossian*, which belonged to the eighteenth-century sixties, sentimentality had been the ally, on equal terms, of romance; after the publication of the complete 'Tristram Shandy' and the 'Sentimental Journey' it took the upper hand, and especially with writers who, unlike the master, lacked the saving grace of humour. There was, I believe, even a *Sentimental Magazine*, which I have never ventured to open, lest haply I should be dissolved in the pathos of tender distresses. It was, no doubt, a convenient arrangement if—in like manner as physicians practised the art of bleeding—the luxury of tears could be purchased for a small coin at the beginning of each month, and if the more wide the fountains of the great deep were opened, the

Romance  
and senti-  
ment.

The senti-  
mental  
move-  
ment.

more cheerfully smiled the proprietors of the magazine.

Both Coleridge, and Southey, his partner in Pantisocratic dreams, were caught into the sentimental movement. The poetry of Wordsworth is only touched at its edges by that influence. The north-country grit in the great poetic dalesman, while it rather supported than hindered his interest in the simple, elementary passions of men, did not favour the indulgence of self-conscious and elaborated sensibility. In Southey, before he had trained himself—almost subdued himself—to dutiful toil, there was something hectic, something of strain and spasm; when afterwards he saw the youthful Shelley, he thought that he looked upon the ghost re-arisen of his earlier self. There was in Coleridge a sensuous quality, rich yet delicate, a wide receptivity of manifold influences, a loose, ungirt power of emotion, a heart warm and soft, with a constant craving for affection. His sensibility allied itself to the humanitarian fervours of the Revolutionary movement. The 'Young Ass' which he hailed as Brother is the meek Child of Misery, to be fondled and consoled, and would that it were possible to transport this victim of oppression to the dell of Peace and mild Equality on the banks of the Susquehannah, where no Scoundrel Monarch tyrannises over

the weak and the gentle! In the development **Romance.** of the genius of Coleridge, nothing was more important than the deliverance of imaginative Romance from the thralldom of this crude sensibility. Something might remain, could not but remain, from the loose, squandered sensibility of his earlier days. We find it even in 'The Ancient Mariner,' where imagination has asserted its full prerogative.

'He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.'

But the moral of 'The Ancient Mariner' is little more than a pious excuse for the dream. The sensibility of Coleridge's early poetry needed to be concentrated; it needed to be purified. The *katharsis*, the purification of sensibility was effected by Coleridge's imaginative power; the concentration was effected by the real joys and the real sufferings which the experience of life brought to him.

Throughout the whole course of his poetic career, few things are more characteristic of Coleridge than the way in which he lies open through his sensitiveness to the sudden accesses, the swift invasion, of joy or of pain. It lends to his verse the same charm which the instant flush of pure blood or the instant pallor confers

Play of  
moods.

upon a beautiful face; it reminds the reader of the chase of light and shadow over a plain or hillside on a day of spring or autumn, when wind and sunshine are together at play. Perhaps the infirmity of his will rendered him an apter subject for such swift and varying influences. Sometimes the radiance came to him from without, sometimes it was an involuntary illumination from within. All men know such moods; but it is not every cheek in which, as Donne has it, the 'pure and eloquent blood speaks,' and so it is not every man who gives, or cares to give, his moods a free, spontaneous, and exquisite expression. Wordsworth in 'Resolution and Independence' tells of his sudden transit on a morning of brightness from a careless rapture to the most forlorn melancholy.

'As high as we have mounted in delight  
In our dejection do we sink as low.'

But Wordsworth, with his well-girt will, goes on to tell how fortitude may be built upon the ruins of instinctive delight. With Coleridge the gleam or the shadow simply comes and is gone. His spirit is like the Eolian Harp of his Clevedon poem, sending forth

'Such a soft floating witchery of sound  
As twilight Elfin's make, when they at eve  
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land,

Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,  
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,  
Nor pause nor perch, hovering on untamed wing !'

Play of  
moods.

His gladness is as spiritual and as purely animal as that of the Virgin Mother in his Christmas carol, when she presses the divine infant, and the milk rushes faster to her breast—'Joy rose within her like a summer's morn.' The instigation of delight may with Coleridge be of the slenderest kind; the delight itself may be a formless suffusion of pleasure; the effect may be quite out of proportion to its apparent cause. He sees a blossom on the first of February 1796, and after a sentimental comparison of the flower to 'Bristowa's bard, the wondrous boy,' and a revolutionary comparison to 'poor Poland's hope,' comes the characteristic touch—

'The warm wooings of this sunny day  
Tremble along my frame, and harmonise  
The attempered organ, that even saddest thoughts  
Mix with some sweet sensations.'

Or he climbs some height, as in 'The Picture,' through weeds and thorns and matted underwood, and he is not alone, for Joy has suddenly become his companion—

'A new joy,  
Lovely as light, sudden as summer gust,  
And gladsome as the first-born of the spring,  
Beckons me on, or follows from behind,  
Playmate or guide !'

'Unim-  
passioned  
grief.'

Perhaps such moments as these, and the incalculable motions of his own spirit, and, on the other hand, its hours and days of stagnation and sterility, helped Coleridge to conceive the mysterious progression, the sudden bounds, and again the dead and weary enchainment of the ship which bore his Mariner from the ice-field to the still and rotting sea, and thence back again — 'Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze' — to the harbour-bar and the moonlit bay. The conduct of the vessel, without the mechanism of sail or oar, is not more a miracle than the conduct of the poet's spirit, led forward perhaps by the 'invisible inhabitants of this planet, concerning whom . . . the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted.' There is no clime or element, adds the gloss, without one or more.

It is the cessation of these sudden visitations of joy, and joy's companion, hope, which Coleridge so often laments in his later and sadder poems; the loss of these, and the presence of 'a stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,' the deadliest feature of which was its stagnation, the absence of all vicissitude, even the vicissitude of pains. And he felt that the failure was not in nature or in human society, but in himself. With Wordsworth also something had passed away; 'the glory and the freshness

of a dream' were his no longer; but he found strength in what remains behind; and the thought of his past years bred in him 'perpetual benediction.' Coleridge still hoped to gain from outward things the earlier passion and animation, and while doing so, he knew that the fountains of such life and passion are not without us, but within, or at least that the breeze can evoke no music from the eolian harp whose strings are shattered. 'In our life alone does Nature live;' to gaze hourlong at the western sky was idle if the eye itself were blank:

'Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—  
 We in ourselves rejoice!  
 And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,  
 All melodies the echo of that voice,  
 All colours a suffusion from that light.'

The nightmare Life-in-Death had diced for him and had won her victim.

The landscape of the Quantock country, where so many of Coleridge's most delightful poems were written, lent itself to those gentle surprises of pleasure, which were enough of stimulus for his feelings and his imagination, while as yet his genial spirits showed no signs of failure. There was the green and silent dell among the hills—

'Fresh and delicate  
 As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,  
 When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve,  
 The level sunshine glimmers with green light.'

**Crowe's  
influence.**

And there was the easily ascended hill, bright with furze and heather, in view of the Severn Sea, surprising and satisfying the eye with its sudden 'burst of prospect.' His poems are sometimes those of the nesting-place, the haunt of brooding meditation, with the stream of thought taking into itself all fine sensations, colour and scent and sound. Sometimes the poems are those of the ascent, with the emancipation of the summit, not far distant, after all, from the little hamlet and the church-tower, yet in comparison with the green dell, or the cottage garden with its scent of bean-flowers, or the lime-tree bower, rich in visual excitements. Coleridge made acknowledgments to the full of his obligations to the poetry of Bowles. I am not aware whether any one has pointed out in what respects he was indebted to another poet of whom he speaks with admiration—William Crowe, the eccentric public orator of Oxford, 'ultra-Whig and almost republican,' who simplified life after the fashion of a disciple of Rousseau, and whose political liberalism may have commended his poetry to Coleridge. Lewesdon Hill, which gave Crowe's blank-verse poem its title, is in Dorsetshire, but the landscape details have much in common with those described in Coleridge's Nether Stowey poems. Among other things 'Lewesdon Hill' may

have served Coleridge by helping him to observe and enjoy the special beauty of hill-country, not so lofty or precipitous as to sever the climbers from the interests of the vale or level ground. The following lines from the opening of Crowe's poem need little more than a spiritualising touch, refining perception and sensation, to pass for a fragment of the Quantock poetry of Coleridge :—

Lewesdon  
Hill.

' Up to thy summit, Lewesdon, to the brow  
Of yon proud rising, where the lonely thorn  
Bends from the rude South-east, with top cut sheer  
By his keen breath, along the narrow track  
By which the scanty-pastured sheep ascend  
Up to thy furze-clad summit, let me climb ;  
My morning exercise ; and thence look round  
Upon the variegated scene, of hills,  
And woods, and fruitful vales, and villages  
Half-hid in tufted orchards, and the sea  
Boundless, and studded thick with many a sail.  
Ye dew-fed vapours, nightly balm, exhaled  
From earth, young herbs and flowers, that in the morn  
Ascend as incense to the Lord of day,  
I come to breathe your odours ; while they float  
Yet near the surface, let me walk embathed  
In your invisible perfumes.'

The manner, too, in which Crowe's poetry passes from description to reflection or meditation is the manner of Coleridge.

The influence of Wordsworth upon Coleridge lay not merely or chiefly in the communication of ideas. The best service which friend can

**Influence  
of Words-  
worth.**

render to friend is to enable one who has not yet found his true self to make that great discovery. The differences between the genius of this young poet and of that were so deep and wide that collaboration was found to be impossible. 'The Ancient Mariner' was designed to be the achievement of the two; but in fact Wordsworth contributed only the suggestion of the albatross and the crime of the 'old Navigator,' as they called him, the suggestion of the seraph-band, who reanimate the corpses and bring the ship into harbour, and together with these suggestions, a few lines of verse. It was hoped that they might collaborate in 'The Wanderings of Cain.' 'Methinks I see,' wrote Coleridge, after many years had gone by, 'his [Wordsworth's] grand and noble countenance as at the moment when, having despatched my own portion of the task at full finger-speed, I hastened to him with my manuscript—that look of humorous despondency fixed on his almost blank sheet of paper, and then its silent mock-piteous admission of failure struggling with the sense of the exceeding ridiculousness of the whole situation.' The work of two minds, each rightly moving in an orbit of its own, and as wide apart, each from the other, as Hesperus is from this green earth of ours, could not coalesce. Nothing could be done but to place side by side

in a single volume poems of Coleridge and poems of Wordsworth, and this was effected in 'Lyrical Ballads.' But 'The Ancient Mariner,' 'The Idiot Boy,' and 'The Mad Mother' have scarcely anything in common except this—that whether the poem be one of an illuminated naturalism or one of marvel and romance, a certain psychological truth, truth in the conception and rendering of human passion, was desired and sought. Coleridge's susceptibility to literary impressions, his flexibility or fluidity of mind, made him more apt to be moved from his true centre than was Wordsworth, and we can recognise something of his friend's manner of speech in many stanzas of 'The Three Graves.' But in his finest creative work, in 'The Ancient Mariner,' in 'Christabel,' in 'Kubla Khan,' where is the influence of Wordsworth to be discovered? In this alone—that companionship with Wordsworth had enabled Coleridge to discover his truest self; his crude sentimentality was checked by the more masculine temper of Wordsworth, he was turned away from the unreal towards reality, and for Coleridge 'reality'—that which was most vital and characteristic in his gift as a poet—meant romance.

Romance itself, however, even when delivered from sentimentality, had, in the days when Coleridge wrote 'The Ancient Mariner,' its own

Influence  
of Words-  
worth.

Dangers  
for  
Romance.

peculiar dangers. Its special quality might be something far other than strangeness in beauty; it might aim at no more than to thrill the nerves with some gross terror, to heap up all that is ghastly or gruesome, to excite through the imagination an almost animal horror, to hold the intellect suspended by a barren wonder, or a series of coarsely manufactured surprises. Such often was romance as conceived by Matthew Gregory Lewis. Fine scene-painter though she was, wielding the brush with a sweeping arm, such sometimes was the romance of Anne Radcliffe. Southey, in certain of his ballads, when his sense of beauty slumbered and his humour was in abeyance, found an attraction in this mindless extravagance; nor, at a later time, did Shelley, in the callow days of his boyish novels, escape its infection. It still needed the scourge of good sense when Jane Austen wrote 'Northanger Abbey.' It was killed not by ridicule but by the higher romance, made sane through knowledge of life and an historical feeling, in the novels of Scott. Here was one danger for a poet who had dealings in art with what is remote from common experience, strange, fantastic, supernatural. Does the reader desire to see an example of the baser romance? A stanza from 'Osric the Lion' of the 'Tale of Wonder' may suffice, where the cheap

horror is suitably reinforced by the metrical vulgarity. **Dangers for Romance.**

‘ She said, and the dæmons their prey flock’d around,  
 They dash’d him, with horrible yell, on the ground,  
 And blood down his limbs trickled fast ;  
 His eyes from their sockets with fury they tore ;  
 They fed on his entrails, all reeking with gore,  
 And his *heart* was Ulrilda’s repast.’

This was as easy as lying, and indeed lying it was, for Lewis—worthy man—had no imaginative belief in his own griffins and wiverns in cast iron.

There was a second danger. The romantic, in one of its significations, was synonymous with the mediæval. But, at a time when the knowledge of the Middle Ages was far from profound or penetrating, it was difficult to interpret the true spirit of the past, while it was not difficult to accumulate the stage properties, as Horace Walpole had done at Strawberry Hill and in his ‘Castle of Otranto.’ Or, if any item in the stage properties could not be obtained, it might be imitated in cast iron or even in papier-mâché. Only a chivalric imagination could discover what was noble and beautiful in chivalric ideals ; but any one with a little of the collector’s zeal could secure booty in the Wardour Street of an old library.

From both dangers Coleridge escaped, partly through the peculiar refinement of his imagina-

Beauty in  
horror.

tion, which naturally allied itself to beauty, partly through his interest in truth psychological, an interest no doubt fostered by his intercourse with Wordsworth. It is true that in the earlier form of 'The Ancient Mariner' there was a stanza, describing the skeleton dicer on the skeleton ship, which had about it the reek of the charnel, but this stanza disappeared from the later version. In a manuscript copy of 'Christabel,' given by Coleridge to Mrs. Wordsworth's sister Sara, the withered breast of the enchantress Geraldine was presented to the reader's gaze:—

'Behold her bosom and half her side  
Are lean and old and foul of hue.'

But before the poem was printed Coleridge decided to leave this mystery of evil to the imagination. His genius had fed too often on honey-dew, had drunk too freely of the milk of Paradise, to permit him to value, as others of the time valued, the British beef and beer of strong material horrors. His 'Kubla Khan,' with its cedarn cover, its savage chasm, its measureless caverns, its lifeless ocean, its 'ancestral voices prophesying war,' is yet an enchantment of mere beauty—beauty of vision, beauty of melody, which breaks off in a giddy Oriental ecstasy, like that of some whirling dervish. Throughout 'The Ancient Mariner' the horror is either

itself a form of beauty, or is constantly relieved by the presence of strangeness in beauty. From the freshness and fairness of the bride, red as a rose, and the mirth of the bridal minstrelsy, we pass by swift and yet gentle gradations to the tyranny of the storm-blast (but this is a lordly, winged thing), to the gleam of the iceberg mast-high and 'as green as emerald,' to the moonshine glimmering white through the midnight haze, to the stagnant ocean with its glare by day, and at night the reeling death-fires, green, white, and blue. Even the nightmare Life-in-Death has a voluptuous beauty in horror, like some triumphant and fatal courtesan of hell. Even the water-snakes, seen under the moving moon, rearing and coiling in shining tracks and throwing off the hoary light in elvish flakes, are so beautiful and so joyous that they enforce an instant and a redeeming blessing. And then there comes the gentleness of sleep, and the refreshment of rain, and the quickening of wind. The shipmen may be a ghastly crew, but it is happy spirits that lift up the bodies, and with what melodious sounds they fill the air as they depart at dawn :

' Sometimes a-dropping from the sky  
 I heard the Sky-lark sing;  
 Sometimes all little birds that are,  
 How they seemed to fill the sea and air  
 With their sweet jargoning !'

'The  
 Ancient  
 Mariner.'

'The  
Ancient  
Mariner.'

At last, after all the stress and strain, with what a soft subsidence of pain and what a sweet surprise of joy, lighthouse and harbour-bar, the familiar hill, the little kirk are once more seen, while a new wonder of beauty is added to all that is familiar by the luminous seraphs who stand and signal to the land! Perhaps an Easter or midsummer holiday party, personally conducted, would hardly care to engage berths in the ancient mariner's ship, if the advertisements faithfully set forth all the details of the voyage; but a courageous explorer might be well pleased to have endured it, for the sake of the sheer beauty of the adventure. And if the spell of the mariner's eye has been upon us, suspending our incredulity, and compelling us to listen like a three-years' child, we have, each of us, passed the line, have driven towards the frozen Pole, and made our course to the tropical latitude of the great Pacific Ocean—and for no other reason than because Coleridge could write not only his poems of the 'effusion' type, but also his poems of the 'shaping spirit of Imagination,' and when such poems are written, we 'cannot choose but hear.'

Thus Coleridge was secure from one chief danger which beset the romantic movement of his own day. As to the second danger—the stifling of the spirit of romantic poetry under a

pile of antiquarian lumber—we have only to read ‘Christabel’ to gain the assurance that in this matter also, thanks to the purity and fine selectiveness of his imagination, he ran no real risk. The spirit of the past lives in the poem, but the stage properties are used with a judicious parsimony. It is enough that we are transported into the age of knight and minstrel, of harp and spear and shield; there is therefore no need to belabour us into the belief with all the contents of the curiosity-shop. The poem is as free from the oppression of lumber as is Christabel’s chamber, where we perceive only the carven imagery ‘strange and sweet, all made out of the carver’s brain,’ and the swinging silver lamp that is fastened to an angel’s feet. And as in ‘The Ancient Mariner,’ so here horror is at once enhanced and subdued by beauty. There is, indeed, in ‘Christabel’ nothing of material horror, except that untold spectacle of the stately lady’s bosom—‘A sight to dream of, not to tell.’ The events are spiritual. All of faith, hope, charity is seen in Christabel as she kneels by moonlight beneath the jagged shadows of the oak-boughs. All of motiveless malignancy and dread is concentrated in the lady’s sidelong look and shrunken eye as she gazes at her innocent victim. It is the story of the serpent and the dove, and each creature has a beauty of its own,

Expiation  
through  
joy.

As in 'The Ancient Mariner,' so here there is one culminating moment, and in each of these moments a truth of spiritual experience is embodied. In the one poem emancipation from arid, egoistic misery is attained not through deeper and more remorseful expiation, but through joy—the joy of sympathy with the life and vital gladness of God's creatures at play upon the surface of the great deep. Such sudden conversion has often been a historical fact, the deliverance of a soul from life-in-death into the freedom of the blessed life. Something of that same joy was known to Coleridge himself on the night when Wordsworth recited to his less happy friend his poem—'The Prelude'—on the growth of an individual mind. However it might be with himself, his former comrade and companion—Coleridge felt—was strong and sane and glad; he, at least, was true to the divine commission which he had received, he was working out his appointed destiny, possessing and creating happiness:—

' Ah ! as I listen'd with a heart forlorn,  
The pulses of my being beat anew ;  
And even as life returns upon the drown'd,  
Life's joy rekindling roused a throng of pains—  
Keen pangs of Love, awakening as a babe  
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart.'

Coleridge's poem, so mournful yet so gracious in its disinterested joy, closes with an impulse of

gratitude and blessing like that which freed his mariner from the worst part of the curse.

**The  
serpent  
and the  
dove.**

The culminating moment in 'Christabel' is that in which the lady, with folded arms and head couched upon her breast, gazes askance at her whom she has so isolated from human succour, and for a moment the fascination of the serpent's eye draws the dove into what seems a dreadful community with evil. The shudder in Christabel's voice becomes a hiss, and something of Geraldine's look of dull and treacherous hate is reflected in the glance of Christabel. This is not stage-trick, but true magic, *magia naturalis*; for as one who stands upon the edge of a precipice, loving life well, is yet tempted to precipitate himself downwards, so there is a moment when innocence seems paralysed by the predominance of guilt, and is tempted to make an end of it by a horrible acquiescence in what appears like fate. Yet by what is more a kind of reflex spiritual action than calculation, the innocence of Christabel asserts itself, though blindly and confusedly:—

'By my mother's soul I do entreat  
That thou this woman send away!'

In the entire passage the psychological truth is as strictly maintained and as finely rendered, though supernatural powers are here at play, as

Pathos of  
later  
poems.

it is in any of the wholly naturalistic records of passion by Wordsworth.

The 'shaping spirit of Imagination' in its larger and nobler activities may be said to have passed away from Coleridge before he had attained to mid manhood. But to the last there were occasional transient visitations of joy, and there were occasional transformations of the sadness of his life into beauty. In the great ode named 'Dejection,' originally addressed to Wordsworth, in the great lines 'To a Gentleman,' also and in a peculiar degree belonging to Wordsworth, there is still some hope of restoration, some struggle of life, some wrestling with despair. The pathos of the later poems is of a different kind; the doors are closed; the captive makes no tumultuous outcry; he acquiesces in his lot. But when some stray sunbeam enters through the prison bars, he is glad; his nerves tremble with a sense of unaccustomed gladness; and this gladness mingles with sad thoughts of earlier days when 'life went a-maying,' and joys came down showerlike. To the last we may find something of Coleridge's romance—strangeness in beauty—in some simile, such as he alone could have imaged forth. Perhaps what seem the trappings of old age may only be the quaint disguising of youth, the masker;

‘The vesper-bell hath not yet toll’d ;—  
 And thou wert aye a masker bold !  
 What strange disguise hast now put on,  
 To *make believe* that thou art gone?’

**Romance  
 in simile.**

Or sitting in the sun, in vacant mood, and with  
 an idle brain, he is like a lone Arab, old and  
 blind, left behind by the caravan, patient

‘beside a ruin’d well  
 Where the shy sand-asps bask and swell.’

Or in his own ‘Tombless Epitaph’ he is seen  
 torch in hand, piercing ‘the long-neglected holy  
 cave,’ the obscure haunt of old Philosophy—

‘He bade with lifted torch its starry walls  
 Sparkle, as erst they sparkled to the flame  
 Of odorous lamps tended by Saint and Sage.’

The most majestic of Coleridge’s romantic  
 similes is that which brings the dramatic frag-  
 ment ‘The Night-Scene’ to a close. The frag-  
 ment was not published until 1817, but it may  
 be of earlier date. The simile embodies in an  
 image a piece of true criticism of life and char-  
 acter; perhaps we may also discover in it a  
 fragment of condensed autobiography :

‘O Henry ! always striv’st thou to be great  
 By thine own act—yet art thou never great  
 But by the inspiration of great passion.  
 The whirl-blast comes, the desert sands rise up  
 And shape themselves; from Earth to Heaven they stand  
 As though they were the pillars of a temple,

Poet and  
philo-  
sopher.

Built by Omnipotence in its own honour !  
But the blast pauses, and their shaping spirit  
Is fled : the mighty columns were but sand,  
And lazy snakes trail o'er the level ruins !'

This has the grandeur of one of De Quincey's opium-dreams. But we must not part from Coleridge with such a conception as this. We must rather think of him as of one who has left us a goodly heritage ; as of one whose best poetry is the quintessences—to use Ben Jonson's word—of the true Phœbean liquor, and also as of one who was a liberal sower of seed in the field of thought.

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EDWARD DOWDEN.

# EARLY POEMS

(1803)

## DEDICATION

TO THE REVEREND GEORGE COLERIDGE, OF OTTERY  
ST. MARY, DEVON

Notus in fratres animi paterni.

*Hor. Carm. lib. ii. 2.*

**A** BLESSED lot hath he, who having past  
His youth and early manhood in the stir  
And turmoil of the world, retreats at length,  
With cares that move, not agitate the heart,  
To the same dwelling where his father dwelt ;  
And haply views his tottering little ones  
Embrace those aged knees, and climb that lap,  
On which first kneeling his own infancy  
Lisp'd its brief prayer. Such, O my earliest friend !  
Thine and thy brothers' favourable lot.  
At distance did ye climb life's upland road,  
Yet cheered and cheering : now fraternal love  
Hath drawn you to one centre. Be your days  
Holy, and blest and blessing may ye live !

To me th' Eternal Wisdom hath dispensed  
A different fortune and more different mind.—  
Me from the spot where first I sprang to light,  
Too soon transplanted, ere my soul had fixed





## SONGS OF THE PIXIES

The Pixies, in the superstition of Devonshire, are a race of beings invisibly small, and harmless or friendly to man. At a small distance from a village in that county, half-way up a wood-covered hill, is an excavation, called "the Pixies' parlour." The roots of old trees form its ceiling; and on its sides are innumerable ciphers, among which the author discovered his own cipher and those of his brothers, cut by the hand of their childhood. At the foot of the hill flows the river Otter.

To this place the author conducted a party of young ladies, during the summer months of the year 1793; one of whom, of stature elegantly small, and of complexion colourless yet clear, was proclaimed the Fairy Queen: on which occasion, and at which time, the following irregular ode was written.

WHOM the untaught shepherds call  
 PIXIES in their madrigal,  
 Fancy's children, here we dwell:  
 Welcome, ladies! to our cell.  
 Here the wren of softest note  
 Builds its nest and warbles well;  
 Here the blackbird strains his throat:  
 Welcome, ladies! to our cell.

When fades the moon all shadowy-pale,  
 And scuds the cloud before the gale,  
 Ere morn with living gems bedight  
 Streaks the east with purple light,  
 We sip the furze-flower's fragrant dews,  
 Clad in robes of rainbow hues  
 Richer than the deepened bloom  
 That glows on summer's scented plume:

Or sport amid the rosy gleam  
Soothed by the distant-tinkling team,  
While lusty labour scouting sorrow  
Bids the dame a glad good-morrow,  
Who jogs th' accustomed road along,  
And paces cheery to her cheering song.

But not our filmy pinion  
We scorch amid the blaze of day,  
When noontide's fiery-tressed minion  
Flashes the fervid ray.  
Aye from the sultry heat  
We to the cave retreat,  
O'ercanopied by huge roots intertwined  
With wildest texture, blackened o'er with age :  
Round them their mantle green the ivies bind,  
Beneath whose foliage pale  
Fanned by the unfrequent gale  
We shield us from the tyrant's mid-day rage.

Thither, while the murm'ring throng  
Of wild-bees hum their drowsy song,  
By indolence and fancy brought,  
A youthful bard, 'unknown to fame,'  
Woos the queen of solemn thought,  
And heaves the gentle mis'ry of a sigh,  
Gazing with tearful eye,  
As round our sandy grot appear  
Many a rudely sculptured name  
To pensive mem'ry dear !  
Weaving gay dreams of sunny-tinctured hue  
We glance before his view :

O'er his hushed soul our soothing witch'ries  
 shed,  
 And twine our faery garlands round his head.

When evening's dusky car  
 Crowned with her dewy star  
 Steals o'er the fading sky in shadowy flight ;  
 On leaves of aspen trees  
 We tremble to the breeze,  
 Veiled from the grosser ken of mortal sight.

Or, haply, at the visionary hour,  
 Along our wild sequestered walk,  
 We listen to th' enamoured rustic's talk ;  
 Heave with the heavings of the maiden's breast,  
 Where young-eyed loves have built their turtle  
 nest ;

Or guide of soul-subduing power  
 The electric flash, that from the melting eye  
 Darts the fond question and the soft reply.

Or thro' the mystic ringlets of the vale  
 We flash our faery feet in gamesome prank,  
 Or, silent-sandalled, pay our defter court  
 Circling the spirit of the western gale,  
 Where, wearied with his flower-caressing sport,  
 Supine he slumbers on a violet bank ;  
 Then with quaint music hymn the parting gleam,  
 By lonely Otter's sleep-persuading stream ;  
 Or where his wave with loud unquiet song  
 Dashed o'er the rocky channel froths along ;  
 Or where, his silver waters smoothed to rest,  
 The tall tree's shadow sleeps upon his breast.

Hence ! thou lingerer, light !

Eve saddens into night.

Mother of wildly-working dreams ! we view  
The sombre hours, that round thee stand  
With downcast eyes (a duteous band !)  
Their dark robes dripping with the heavy dew.

Sorceress of the ebon throne !

Thy power the Pixies own,

When round thy raven brow

Heaven's lucent roses glow,

And clouds, in wat'ry colours drest,

Float in light drapery o'er thy sable vest ;

What time the pale moon sheds a softer day,

Mellowing the woods beneath its pensive beam :

For 'mid the quiv'ring light 'tis ours to play,

Aye dancing to the cadence of the stream.

Welcome, ladies ! to the cell,

Where the blameless Pixies dwell,

But thou, sweet nymph ! proclaimed our faery  
queen,

With what obeisance meet

Thy presence shall we greet ?

For lo ! attendant on thy steps are seen

Graceful ease in artless stole,

And white-robed purity of soul,

With honour's softer mien :

Mirth of the loosely-flowing hair,

And meek-eyed pity eloquently fair,

Whose tearful cheeks are lovely to the view,

As snowdrop wet with dew.

Unboastful Maid ! tho' now the lily pale  
 Transparent grace thy beauties meek ;  
 Yet ere again along th' impurpling vale,  
 The purpling vale and elfin-haunted grove,  
 Young Zephyr his fresh flowers profusely throws,  
 We'll tinge with livelier hues thy cheek !  
 And haply from the nectar-breathing rose  
 Extract a blush for love !

### GENEVIEVE

(This little poem was written when the author was a boy.)

**M**AID of my love ! sweet Genevieve !  
 In beauty's light you glide along :  
 Your eye is like the star of eve,  
 And sweet your voice, as seraph's song.  
 Yet not your heavenly beauty gives  
 This heart with passion soft to glow :  
 Within your soul a voice there lives !  
 It bids you hear the tale of woe.  
 When sinking low the sufferer wan  
 Beholds no hand outstretched to save,  
 Fair, as the bosom of the swan  
 That rises graceful o'er the wave,  
 I've seen your breast with pity heave,  
 And *therefore* love I you, sweet Genevieve.

LINES TO A BEAUTIFUL SPRING  
IN A VILLAGE

ONCE more, sweet stream ! with slow foot  
wand'ring near,  
I bless thy milky waters cold and clear.  
Escaped the flashing of the noontide hours,  
With one fresh garland of Pierian flowers  
(Ere from thy zephyr-haunted brink I turn)  
My languid hand shall wreath thy mossy urn.  
For not thro' pathless grove with murmur rude  
Thou soothest the sad wood-nymph, solitude :  
Nor thine unseen in cavern depths to well,  
The hermit-fountain of some dripping cell !  
Pride of the vale ! thy useful streams supply  
The scattered cots and peaceful hamlet nigh.  
The elfin tribe around thy friendly banks  
With infant uproar and soul-soothing pranks,  
Released from school, their little hearts at rest,  
Launch paper navies on thy waveless breast.  
The rustic here at eve with pensive look  
Whistling lorn ditties leans upon his crook,  
Or starting pauses with hope-mingled dread  
To list the much-loved maid's accustom'd tread :  
She, vainly mindful of her dame's command,  
Loiters, the long-filled pitcher in her hand.  
Unboastful stream ! thy fount with pebbled falls  
The faded form of past delight recalls,  
What time the morning sun of hope arose,  
And all was joy ; save when another's woes  
A transient gloom upon my soul imprest,  
Like passing clouds impictured on thy breast.

Life's current then ran sparkling to the noon,  
 Or silvery stole beneath the pensive moon :  
 Ah ! now it works rude brakes and thorns among,  
 Or o'er the rough rock bursts and foams along !

LINES ON AN AUTUMNAL EVENING

O THOU wild fancy, check thy wing ! No more  
 Those thin white flakes, those purple clouds  
 explore !

Nor there with happy spirits speed thy flight  
 Bathed in rich amber-glowing floods of light ;  
 Nor in yon gleam, where slow descends the day,  
 With western peasants hail the morning ray !  
 Ah ! rather bid the perished pleasures move,  
 A shadowy train, across the soul of love !  
 O'er disappointment's wintry desert fling  
 Each flower that wreathed the dewy locks of Spring,  
 When blushing, like a bride, from hope's trim bower  
 She leapt, awakened by the pattering shower.

Now sheds the sinking sun a deeper gleam,  
 Aid, lovely sorceress ! aid thy poet's dream !  
 With faery wand, O bid the maid arise,  
 Chaste joyance dancing in her bright blue eyes ;  
 As erst when from the Muses' calm abode  
 I came, with learning's meed not unbestowed :  
 When, as she twined a laurel round my brow,  
 And met my kiss, and half returned my vow,  
 O'er all my frame shot rapid my thrilled heart,  
 And every nerve confessed the electric dart.

O dear deceit ! I see the maiden rise,  
Chaste joyance dancing in her bright blue eyes,  
When first the lark high-soaring swells his throat,  
Mocks the tired eye, and scatters the loud note,  
I trace her footsteps on the accustomed lawn,  
I mark her glancing 'mid the gleams of dawn.  
When the bent flower beneath the night-dew weeps  
And on the lake the silver lustre sleeps,  
Amid the paly radiance soft and sad  
She meets my lonely path in moon-beams clad.  
With her along the streamlet's brink I rove ;  
With her I list the warblings of the grove ;  
And seems in each low wind her voice to float,  
Lone-whispering pity in each soothing note !

Spirits of love ! ye heard her name ! Obey  
The powerful spell, and to my haunt repair,  
Whether on clust'ring pinions ye are there,  
Where rich snows blossom on the myrtle trees,  
Or with fond languishment around my fair  
Sigh in the loose luxuriance of her hair ;  
O heed the spell, and hither wing your way,  
Like far-off music, voyaging the breeze !  
Spirits ! to you the infant maid was given,  
Formed by the wondrous alchemy of Heaven !  
No fairer maid does love's wide empire know,  
No fairer maid e'er heaved the bosom's snow.  
A thousand loves around her forehead fly ;  
A thousand loves sit melting in her eye ;  
Love lights her smile—in joy's bright nectar dips  
The flamy rose, and plants it on her lips !  
Tender, serene, and all devoid of guile,  
Soft is her soul, as sleeping infant's smile :

She speaks ! and hark that passion-warbled song—  
 Still, fancy ! still those mazy notes prolong.  
 Sweet as th' angelic harps, whose rapturous falls  
 Awake the softened echoes of heaven's halls !  
 O (have I sighed) were mine the wizard's rod,  
 Or mine the power of Proteus, changeful god !  
 A flower-entangled arbour I would seem  
 To shield my love from noontide's sultry beam :  
 Or bloom a myrtle, from whose od'rous boughs  
 My love might weave gay garlands for her brows.  
 When twilight stole across the fading vale,  
 To fan my love I'd be the evening gale ;  
 Mourn in the soft folds of her swelling vest,  
 And flutter my faint pinions on her breast !  
 On seraph wing I'd float a dream, by night,  
 To soothe my love with shadows of delight :—  
 Or soar aloft to be the spangled skies,  
 And gaze upon her with a thousand eyes !

As when the savage, who his drowsy frame  
 Had basked beneath the sun's unclouded flame,  
 Awakes amid the troubles of the air,  
 The skyey deluge, and white lightning's glare—  
 Aghast he scours before the tempest's sweep,  
 And sad recalls the sunny hour of sleep :—  
 So tost by storms along life's wild'ring way  
 Mine eye reverted views that cloudless day,  
 When by my native brook I wont to rove  
 While hope with kisses nursed the infant love.

Dear native brook ! like peace, so placidly  
 Smoothing thro' fertile fields thy current meek !  
 Dear native brook ! where first young poesy

Stared wildly-eager in her noontide dream,  
Where blameless pleasures dimple quiet's cheek,  
As water-lilies ripple a slow stream !  
Dear native haunts ! where virtue still is gay :  
Where friendship's fixed star sheds a mellowed ray ;  
Where love a crown of thornless roses wears :  
Where softened sorrow smiles within her tears ;  
And mem'ry, with a vestal's chaste employ,  
Unceasing feeds the lambent flame of joy !  
No more your skylarks melting from the sight  
Shall thrill th' attunèd heart-string with delight :—  
No more shall deck your pensive pleasures sweet  
With wreaths of sober hue my evening seat.  
Yet dear to fancy's eye your varied scene  
Of wood, hill, dale, and sparkling brook between !  
Yet sweet to fancy's ear the warbled song,  
That soars on morning's wing your vales among.

Scenes of my hope ! the aching eye ye leave  
Like yon bright hues that paint the clouds of eve !  
Tearful and sadd'ning with the saddened blaze  
Mine eye the gleam pursues with wistful gaze :  
Sees shades on shades with deeper tint impend,  
Till chill and damp the moonless night descend.

## DOMESTIC PEACE

**T**ELL me, on what holy ground  
May domestic peace be found ?  
Halcyon daughter of the skies,  
Far on fearful wings she flies  
From the pomp of sceptred state,  
From the rebel's noisy hate.

In a cottaged vale she dwells,  
 List'ning to the Sabbath bells!  
 Still around her steps are seen  
 Spotless honour's meeker mien.  
 Love, the sire of pleasing fears,  
 Sorrow smiling through her tears,  
 And, conscious of the past employ,  
 Memory, bosom-spring of joy.

MONODY ON THE DEATH OF  
 CHATTERTON

WHEN faint and sad o'er sorrow's desert wild  
 Slow journeys onward poor misfortune's child;  
 When fades each lovely form by fancy drest,  
 And inly pines the self-consuming breast  
 (No scourge of scorpions in thy right arm dread,  
 No helmed terrors nodding o'er thy head);  
 Assumes, O death! the cherub wings of peace,  
 And bid the heart-sick wanderer's anguish cease!

Thee, Chatterton! these unblest stones protect  
 From want, and the bleak freezings of neglect!  
 Escaped the sore wounds of affliction's rod,  
 Meek at the throne of mercy, and of God,  
 Perchance, thou raisest high th' enraptured hymn  
 Amid the blaze of seraphim!

Yet oft perforce ('tis suffering nature's call)  
 I weep, that heaven-born Genius *so* should fall;  
 And oft, in fancy's saddest hour, my soul  
 Averted shudders at the poisoned bowl.

Now groans my sickening heart, as still I view  
Thy corse of livid hue ;  
Now indignation checks the feeble sigh,  
Or flashes thro' the tear, that glistens in mine eye.

Is this the land of song-ennobled line ?  
Is this the land, where genius ne'er in vain  
Pour'd forth his lofty strain ?  
Ah me ! yet Spenser, gentlest bard divine,  
Beneath chill disappointment's shade,  
His weary limbs in lonely anguish laid,  
And o'er her darling dead  
Pity hopeless hung her head,  
While 'mid the pelting of that merciless storm,  
Sunk to the cold earth Otway's famished form !

Sublime of thought, and confident of fame,  
From vales where Avon winds the minstrel <sup>1</sup> came.  
Light-hearted youth ! aye, as he hastes along,  
He meditates the future song,  
How dauntless Ælla fray'd the Dacian foes ;  
See, as floating high in air  
Glitter the sunny visions fair,  
His eyes dance rapture, and his bosom glows !

Ah ! where are fled the charms of vernal grace,  
And joy's wild gleams, light-flashing o'er thy face ?  
Youth of tumultuous soul, and haggard eye !  
Thy wasted form, thy hurried steps I view,  
On thy cold forehead starts the anguish dew :  
And dreadful was that bosom-rending sigh !

*Avon*, a river near Bristol ; the birthplace of Chatterton.

Such were the struggles of that gloomy hour,  
 When care, of withered brow,  
 Prepared the poison's power :  
 Already to thy lips was raised the bowl,  
 When near thee stood affection meek  
 (Her bosom bare, and wildly pale her cheek) ;  
 Thy sullen gaze she bade thee roll  
 On scenes that well might melt thy soul ;  
 Thy native cot she flashed upon thy view,  
 Thy native cot, where still, at close of day,  
 Peace smiling sate, and listened to thy lay ;  
 Thy sister's shrieks she bade thee hear,  
 And mark thy mother's tear ;  
     See, see her breast's convulsive throe,  
     Her silent agony of woe !  
 Ah ! dash the poisoned chalice from thy hand !

And thou hadst dashed it, at her soft command,  
 But that despair and indignation rose,  
 And told again the story of thy woes ;  
 Told the keen insult of th' unfeeling heart ;  
 The dread dependence on the low-born mind :  
 Told ev'ry pang, with which thy soul must smart,  
 Neglect, and grinning scorn, and want combined !  
 Recoiling quick, thou bad'st the friend of pain  
 Roll the black tide of death thro' every freezing vein !

Ye woods ! that wave o'er Avon's rocky steep,  
 To fancy's ear sweet is your murm'ring deep !  
 For *here* she loves the cypress wreath to weave ;  
 Watching, with wistful eye, the sadd'ning tints of eve.  
 Here, far from men, amid this pathless grove,  
 In solemn thought the minstrel wont to rove,

Like star-beam on the slow sequestered tide  
Lone-glittering, thro' the high tree branching wide.  
And here, in inspiration's eager hour,  
When most the big soul feels the madd'ning power,  
    These wilds, these caverns roaming o'er,  
    Round which the screaming sea-gulls soar,  
With wild unequal steps he passed along,  
Oft pouring on the winds a broken song :  
Anon, upon some rough rock's fearful brow  
Would pause abrupt—and gaze upon the waves below.

Poor Chatterton ! *he* sorrows for thy fate  
Who would have praised and loved thee, ere too late.  
Poor Chatterton ! farewell ! of darkest hues  
This chaplet cast I on thy shapeless tomb ;  
But dare no longer on the sad theme muse,  
Lest kindred woes persuade a kindred doom !  
Hence, gloomy thoughts ! no more my soul shall dwell  
On joys that were ! no more endure to weigh  
The shame and anguish of the evil day,  
Wisely forgetful ! O'er the ocean swell  
Sublime of hope I seek the cottaged dell  
Where virtue calm with careless step may stray ;  
And, dancing to the moonlight roundelay,  
The wizard passions weave an holy spell !

O Chatterton ! that thou wert yet alive !  
Sure thou would'st spread the canvas to the gale,  
And love, with us, the tinkling team to drive  
O'er peaceful freedom's undivided dale ;  
And we, at sober eve, would round thee throng,  
Hanging, enraptured, on thy stately song !  
And greet with smiles the young-eyed poesy  
All deftly mask'd, as hoar antiquity.

Alas, vain phantasies! the fleeting brood  
 Of woe self-solaced in her dreamy mood!  
 Yet will I love to follow the sweet dream,  
 Where Susquehannah pours his untamed stream;<sup>1</sup>  
 And on some hill, whose forest-frowning side  
 Waves o'er the murmurs of his calmer tide,  
 Will raise a solemn cenotaph to thee,  
 Sweet harper of time-shrouded minstrelsy!  
 And there, soothed sadly by the dirgeful wind,  
 Muse on the sore ills I had left behind.

### TO THE NIGHTINGALE

SISTER of love-lorn poets, Philomel!  
 How many bards in city garret pent,  
 While at their window they with downward eye  
 Mark the faint lamp-beam on the kennelled mud,  
 And listen to the drowsy cry of watchmen  
 (Those hoarse unfeathered nightingales of time!),  
 How many wretched bards addressed *thy* name,  
 And hers, the full-orbed queen that shines above.  
 But I *do* hear thee, and the high bough mark,  
 Within whose mild moon-mellowed foliage hid,  
 Thou warblest sad thy pity-pleading strains.  
 Oh! I have listened, till my working soul,  
 Wakened by those strains to thousand phantasies,  
 Absorbed hath ceased to listen! Therefore oft,  
 I hymn thy name: and with a proud delight  
 Oft will I tell thee, minstrel of the moon!  
 'Most musical, most melancholy' bird!

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, with Southey, Wordsworth, and Lovell, contemplated the establishment of a Pantisocracy on the banks of the Susquehannah at the date when this poem was written.



Like some coy maid half-yielding to her lover  
(The Eolian Harp.)



That all thy soft diversities of tone,  
Tho' sweeter far than the delicious airs  
That vibrate from a white-arm'd lady's harp,  
What time the languishment of lonely love  
Melts in her eye, and heaves her breast of snow,  
Are not so sweet as is the voice of her,  
My Sara—best beloved of human kind!  
When breathing the pure soul of tenderness  
She thrills me with the husband's promised name!

## THE EOLIAN HARP

**M**Y pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclined  
Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is  
To sit beside our cot, our cot o'ergrown  
With white-flowered jasmin, and the broad-leaved  
myrtle,  
And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,  
Slow-sadd'ning round, and mark the star of eve  
Shine opposite! How exquisite the scents  
Snatched from yon bean-field! and the world so hushed!  
Hark! the still murmur of the distant sea  
Tells us of silence! And th' Eolian lute,  
How by the desultory breeze caressed,  
Like some coy maid half-yielding to her lover,  
It pours such sweet upbraidings, as must needs  
Tempt to repeat the wrong! And now its strings  
Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes  
Over delicious surges sink and rise,  
Such a soft floating witchery of sound.—  
Methinks, it should have been impossible  
Not to love all things in a world like this,

Where e'en the breezes of the simple air  
Possess the power and spirit of melody!  
And thus, my love! as on the midway slope  
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,  
Whilst thro' my half-closed eyelids I behold  
The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,  
And tranquil muse upon tranquillity;  
Full many a thought uncalled and undetained,  
And many idle flitting phantasies,  
Traverse my indolent and passive brain,  
As wild and various as the random gales  
That swell or flutter on this subject lute!  
And what if all of animated nature  
Be but organic harps diversely framed  
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps,  
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,  
At once the soul of each, and God of all?  
But thy more serious eye a mild reproof  
Darts, O belovèd woman! nor such thoughts  
Dim and unhallowed dost thou not reject,  
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.  
Meek daughter in the family of Christ,  
Well hast thou said, and holily dispraised  
These shapings of the unregenerate mind,  
Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break  
On vain philosophy's aye-babbling spring.  
For never guiltless may I speak of Him,  
Th' Incomprehensible! save when with awe  
I praise him, and with faith that inly *feels*;  
Who with His saving mercies healèd me,  
A sinful and most miserable man,  
Wildered and dark, and gave me to possess  
Peace, and this cot, and thee, heart-honoured maid!

## REFLECTIONS

ON HAVING LEFT A PLACE OF RETIREMENT

Sermoni propria.—*Hor.*

LOW was our pretty cot ! our tallest rose  
Peeped at the chamber-window. We could  
hear

At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,  
The sea's faint murmur. In the open air  
Our myrtles blossomed ; and across the porch  
Thick jasmins twined : the little landscape round  
Was green and woody and refreshed the eye.  
It was a spot, which you might aptly call  
The Valley of Seclusion ! Once I saw  
(Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quietness)  
A wealthy son of commerce saunter by,  
Bristowa's citizen : methought, it calmed  
His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse  
With wiser feelings : for he paused, and looked  
With a pleased sadness, and gazed all around,  
Then eyed our cottage, and gazed round again,  
And sighed, and said, *it was a blessed place.*  
And we *were* blessèd. Oft with patient ear  
Long-listening to the viewless sky-lark's note  
(Viewless, or haply for a moment seen  
Gleaming on sunny wing)—‘ And such,’ I said,  
‘ The inobtrusive song of happiness—  
Unearthly minstrelsy ! then only heard  
When the soul seeks to hear ; when all is hushed  
And the heart listens !’

But the time, when first

From that low dell steep up the stony mount  
 I climbed with perilous toil and reached the top,  
 O what a goodly scene! *Here* the bleak mount,  
 The bare bleak mountain speckled thin with sheep;  
 Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields  
 And river, now with bushy rocks o'erbrowed,  
 Now winding bright and full, with naked banks;  
 And seats, and lawns, the abbey, and the wood,  
 And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire:  
 The Channel *there*, the islands and white sails,  
 Dim coasts, and cloud-like hills, and shoreless ocean—  
 It seemed like omnipresence! God, methought,  
 Had built him there a temple: the whole world  
 Seemed imaged in its vast circumference.  
 No wish profaned my overwhelmed heart.  
 Blest hour! it was a luxury—to be!

Ah quiet dell! dear cot! and mount sublime!  
 I was constrained to quit you. Was it right,  
 While my unnumbered brethren toiled and bled,  
 That I should dream away the entrusted hours  
 On rose-leaf beds, pamp'ring the coward heart  
 With feelings all too delicate for use?  
 Sweet is the tear that from some Howard's eye  
 Drops on the cheek of one he lifts from earth:  
 And he, that works me good with unmoved face  
 Does it but half: he chills me while he aids,  
 My benefactor, not my brother man!  
 Yet even this, this cold beneficence  
 Seizes my praise, when I reflect on those,  
 The sluggard Pity's vision-weaving tribe!  
 Who sigh for wretchedness, yet shun the wretched,

Nursing in some delicious solitude  
 Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies !  
 I therefore go, and join head, heart, and hand,  
 Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight  
 Of science, freedom, and the truth in Christ.  
 Yet oft when after honourable toil  
 Rests the tired mind, and waking loves to dream,  
 My spirit shall revisit thee, dear cot !  
 Thy jasmin and thy window-peeping rose,  
 And myrtles fearless of the mild sea-air.  
 And I shall sigh fond wishes—sweet abode !  
 Ah—had none greater ! and that all had such !

## LINES

ON OBSERVING A BLOSSOM ON THE FIRST OF  
 FEBRUARY 1796

**S**WEET flower ! that peeping from thy russet stem,  
 Unfoldest timidly (for in strange sort  
 This dark, frieze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering month  
 Hath borrowed Zephyr's voice, and gazed upon thee  
 With 'blue voluptuous eye'); alas, poor flower !  
 These are but flatteries of the faithless year.  
 Perchance escaped its unknown polar cave  
 Ev'n now the keen north-east is on its way.  
 Flower, that must perish ! shall I liken thee  
 To some sweet girl of too, too rapid growth  
 Nipped by consumption 'mid untimely charms ?  
 Or to Bristowa's bard,<sup>1</sup> the wondrous boy !  
 An amaranth, which earth scarce seemed to own,

<sup>1</sup> Chatterton.

Blooming 'mid poverty's drear wintry waste,  
 Till disappointment came, and pelting wrong  
 Beat it to earth? Or with indignant grief  
 Shall I compare thee to poor Poland's hope,  
 Bright flower of hope killed in the opening bud?  
 Farewell, sweet blossom! better fate be thine  
 And mock my boding! dim similitudes  
 Weaving in moral strains, I've stolen one hour  
 From black anxiety that gnaws my heart  
 For her who droops far-off on a sick bed:  
 And the warm woings of this sunny day  
 Tremble along my frame and harmonise  
 Th' attempered brain, that even the saddest thoughts  
 Mix with some sweet sensations, like harsh tunes  
 Played deftly on a soft-toned instrument.

### TO C. LLOYD

ON HIS PROPOSING TO DOMESTICATE WITH  
 THE AUTHOR

**A** MOUNT, not wearisome and bare and steep,  
 But a green mountain variously up-piled  
 Where o'er the jutting rocks soft mosses creep  
 Or coloured lichens with slow oozing weep;  
 Where cypress and the darker yew start wild;  
 And 'mid the summer torrent's gentle dash  
 Dance brightened the red clusters of the ash;  
 Beneath whose boughs, by stillest sounds beguiled,  
 Calm pensiveness might muse herself to sleep;  
 Till haply startled by some fleecy dam,  
 That rustling on the bushy cliff above  
 With melancholy bleat of anxious love

Made meek inquiry for her wand'ring lamb :  
Such a green mountain 'twere most sweet to climb  
E'en while the bosom ached with loneliness—  
How heavenly sweet, if some dear friend should  
    bless

Th' advent'rous toil, and up the path sublime  
Now lead, now follow ; the glad landscape round,  
Wide and more wide, increasing without bound !

O then 'twere loveliest sympathy, to mark  
The berries of the half up-rooted ash  
Dripping and bright ; and list the torrent's dash—  
Beneath the cypress, or the yew more dark,  
Seated at ease, on some smooth mossy rock ;  
In social silence now, and now t' unlock  
The treasured heart ; arm linked in friendly arm,  
Save if the one, his muse's witching charm  
Mutt'ring brow-bent, at unwatched distance lag ;  
Till high o'er-head his beck'ning friend appears,  
And from the forehead of the topmost crag  
Shouts eagerly : for haply *there* uprears  
That shadowing pine its old romantic limbs  
Which latest shall detain the enamoured sight  
Seen from below, when eve the valley dims,  
Tinged yellow with the rich departing light ;  
And haply, basoned in some unsunned cleft,  
A beauteous spring, the rock's collected tears,  
Sleeps sheltered there, scarce wrinkled by the gale !  
Together thus, the world's vain turmoil left,  
Stretched on the crag, and shadowed by the pine,  
And bending o'er the clear delicious fount,  
Ah, dearest Charles ! it were a lot divine  
To cheat our noons in moralising mood,

While west winds fanned our temples, toil bedewed :  
Then downwards slope, oft-pausing, from the mount,  
To some low mansion in some woody dale,  
Where, smiling with blue eye, domestic bliss  
Gives *this* the husband's, *that* the brother's kiss !

Thus rudely versed in allegoric lore,  
The hill of knowledge I essayed to trace ;  
That verd'rous hill with many a resting-place  
And many a stream, whose warbling waters pour  
To glad and fertilise the subject plains ;  
That hill with secret springs, and nooks untrod,  
And many a fancy-blest and holy sod  
Where inspiration, his diviner strains  
Low-murm'ring, lay ; and starting from the rocks  
Stiff evergreens, whose spreading foliage mocks  
Want's barren soil, and the bleak frosts of age,  
And mad oppression's thunder-clasping rage !  
O meek retiring spirit ! we will climb,  
Cheering and cheered, this lovely hill sublime ;  
And from the stirring world uplifted high  
(Whose noises faintly wafted on the wind  
To quiet musings shall attune the mind,  
And oft the melancholy theme supply),  
There while the prospect thro' the gazing eye  
Pours all its healthful greenness on the soul,  
We'll laugh at wealth, and learn to laugh at fame,  
Our hopes, our knowledge, and our joys the same,  
As neighb'ring fountains image each the whole.

## THE RAVEN

A CHRISTMAS TALE, TOLD BY A SCHOOLBOY TO HIS  
LITTLE BROTHERS AND SISTERS

UNDERNEATH an old oak tree  
There was of swine a huge company  
That grunted as they crunched the mast :  
For that was ripe, and fell full fast.  
Then they trotted away, for the wind grew high :  
One acorn they left, and no more might you spy.  
Next came a raven, that liked not such folly :  
He belonged, they did say, to the witch Melancholy !  
Blacker was he than blackest jet,  
Flew low in the rain, and his feathers not wet.  
He picked up the acorn and buried it straight  
By the side of a river both deep and great.  
Where then did the Raven go ?  
He went high and low,  
Over hill, over dale, did the black Raven go.  
Many Autumns, many Springs,  
Travelled he with wandering wings :  
Many Summers, many Winters—  
I can't tell half his adventures.

At length he came back, and with him a She,  
And the acorn was grown to a tall oak tree.  
They built them a nest in the topmost bough,  
And young ones they had, and were happy enow.  
But soon came a woodman in leathern guise,  
His brow, like a pent-house, hung over his eyes.  
He'd an axe in his hand, not a word he spoke,

But with many a hem ! and a sturdy stroke,  
 At length he brought down the poor Raven's own oak.  
 His young ones were killed, for they could not depart,  
 And their mother did die of a broken heart.  
 The boughs from the trunk the woodman did sever ;  
 And they floated it down on the course of the river.  
 They sawed it in planks, and its bark they did strip,  
 And with this tree and others they made a good ship.  
 The ship, it was launched ; but in sight of the land  
 Such a storm there did rise as no ship could with-  
 stand.

It bulged on a rock, and the waves rushed in fast :  
 Round and round flew the Raven, and cawed to the  
 blast.

He heard the last shriek of the perishing souls—  
 See ! see ! o'er the topmast the mad water rolls !

Right glad was the Raven, and off he went fleet,  
 And Death riding home on a cloud he did meet,  
 And he thanked him again and again for this treat :  
 They had taken his all, and Revenge it was sweet !

## TIME, REAL AND IMAGINARY

### AN ALLEGORY

ON the wide level of a mountain's head,  
 (I knew not where, but 'twas some faery  
 place)

Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,  
 Two lovely children run an endless race,  
 A sister and a brother !  
 That far outstripp'd the other ;

Yet ever runs she with reverted face,  
And looks and listens for the boy behind :  
For he, alas ! is blind !  
O'er rough and smooth with even step he passed,  
And knows not whether he be first or last.

## THE FOSTER-MOTHER'S TALE

## A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT

*Ter.* But that entrance, Selma ?

*Sel.* Can no one hear ? It is a perilous tale !

*Ter.* No one.

*Sel.* My husband's father told it me,  
Poor old Sesina—angels rest his soul ;  
He was a woodman, and could fell and saw  
With lusty arm. You know that huge round beam  
Which props the hanging wall of the old chapel ?  
Beneath that tree, while yet it was a tree,  
He found a baby wrapt in mosses, lined  
With thistle-beards, and such small locks of wool  
As hang on brambles. Well, he brought him home,  
And reared him at the then Lord Valdez' cost,  
And so the babe grew up a pretty boy,  
A pretty boy, but most unteachable—  
And never learn'd a prayer, nor told a bead,  
But knew the names of birds, and mocked their  
notes,  
And whistled, as he were a bird himself.  
And all the autumn 'twas his only play  
To gather seeds of wild flowers, and to plant them  
With earth and water on the stumps of trees.

A Friar, who gathered simples in the wood,  
A grey-haired man, he loved this little boy :  
The boy loved him, and, when the Friar taught  
him,

He soon could write with the pen ; and from that  
time

Lived chiefly at the convent or the castle.

So he became a rare and learned youth :

But O ! poor wretch ! he read, and read, and read,

Till his brain turned ; and ere his twentieth year

He had unlawful thoughts of many things :

And though he prayed, he never loved to pray

With holy men, nor in a holy place.

But yet his speech, it was so soft and sweet,

The late Lord Valdez ne'er was wearied with him.

And once, as by the north side of the chapel

They stood together chained in deep discourse,

The earth heaved under them with such a groan,

That the wall tottered, and had well nigh fallen

Right on their heads. My lord was sorely frightened !

A fever seized him, and he made confession

Of all the heretical and lawless talk

Which brought this judgment : so the youth was  
seized,

And cast into that hole. My husband's father

Sobbed like a child—it almost broke his heart :

And once as he was working near this dungeon,

He heard a voice distinctly ; 'twas the youth's,

Who sung a doleful song about green fields,

How sweet it were on lake or wide savanna

To hunt for food, and be a naked man,

And wander up and down at liberty.

He always doted on the youth, and now

His love grew desperate ; and defying death,  
 He made that cunning entrance I described,  
 And the young man escaped.

*Ter.*

'Tis a sweet tale :

Such as would lull a listening child to sleep,  
 His rosy face besoiled with unwiped tears.  
 And what became of him ?

*Sel.*

He went on shipboard

With those bold voyagers who made discovery  
 Of golden lands. Sesina's younger brother  
 Went likewise, and when he returned to Spain,  
 He told Sesina, that the poor mad youth,  
 Soon after they arrived in that new world,  
 In spite of his dissuasion, seized a boat,  
 And all alone set sail by silent moonlight  
 Up a great river, great as any sea,  
 And ne'er was heard of more : but 'tis supposed  
 He lived and died among the savage men.

### TO THE RIVER OTTER

**D**EAR native Brook ! wild Streamlet of the  
 West !

How many various-fated years have passed,  
 What blissful and what anguished hours, since  
 last

I skimmed the smooth thin stone along thy breast,  
 Numbering its light leaps ! Yet so deep imprest  
 Sink the sweet scenes of Childhood, that mine eyes

I never shut amid the sunny blaze,  
 But straight with all their tints thy waters rise,  
 Thy crossing plank, thy margin's willowy maze,

And bedded sand that veined with various dyes  
 Gleamed thro' thy bright transparence to the gaze!  
 Visions of Childhood! oft have ye beguiled  
 Lone Manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs,  
 Ah! that once more I were a careless Child!

COMPOSED WHILE CLIMBING THE LEFT  
 ASCENT OF BROCKLEY COOMB

THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, MAY 1795

WITH many a pause and oft-reverted eye  
 I climb the Coomb's ascent; sweet songsters  
 near

Warble in shade their wild-wood melody:  
 Far off th' unvarying cuckoo soothes my ear.  
 Up scour the startling stragglers of the flock  
 That on green plots o'er precipices browse:  
 From the forced fissures of the naked rock  
 The Yew-tree bursts! Beneath its dark green boughs  
 ('Mid which the May-thorn blends its blossoms  
 white),

Where broad smooth stones jut out in mossy seats,  
 I rest—And now have gained the topmost site.  
 Ah! what a luxury of landscape meets  
 My gaze! proud towers, and cots more dear to me;  
 Elm-shadowed fields, and prospect-bounding sea.  
 Deep sighs my lonely heart: I drop the tear:  
 Enchanting spot! O were my Sara here!

## TO THE AUTUMNAL MOON

MILD Splendour of the various-vested Night !  
Mother of wildly-working visions ! hail !  
I watch thy gliding, while with wat'ry light  
Thy weak eye glimmers thro' a fleecy veil ;  
And when thou lovest thy pale orb to shroud  
Behind the gathered blackness lost on high ;  
And when thou dartest from the wind-rent cloud  
Thy placid lightning o'er th' awakened sky.  
Ah, such is Hope ! as changeful and as fair !  
Now dimly peering on the wistful sight ;  
Now hid behind the dragon-winged Despair,  
But soon emerging in her radiant might,  
She o'er the sorrow-clouded breast of Care  
Sails, like a meteor kindling in its flight.

## TO A FRIEND

WHO ASKED HOW I FELT WHEN THE NURSE FIRST  
PRESENTED MY INFANT TO ME

CHARLES! my slow heart was only sad, when first  
I scanned that face of feeble infancy ;  
For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst  
All I had been, and all my babe might be !  
But when I saw it on its Mother's arm,  
And hanging at her bosom (she the while  
Bent o'er its features with a tearful smile),  
Then I was thrilled and melted, and most warm

Impressed a Father's kiss : and all beguiled  
 Of dark remembrance, and presageful fear,  
 I seemed to see an Angel's form appear—  
 'Twas even thine, beloved Woman mild !  
 So for the Mother's sake the Child was dear,  
 And dearer was the Mother for the Child.

## SONG

BY GLYCINE

A SUNNY shaft did I behold,  
 From sky to earth it slanted :  
 And poised therein a bird so bold—  
 Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted !  
 He sunk, he rose, he twinkled, he trolled  
 Within that shaft of sunny mist ;  
 His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,  
 All else of amethyst !

And thus he sang : ' Adieu ! adieu !  
 Love's dreams prove seldom true.  
 Sweet month of May,  
 We must away :  
 Far, far away !  
 To-day ! to-day !'

*(From ' Zapolya.')*

## HUNTING SONG

UP, up ! ye dames, ye lasses gay !  
 To the meadows trip away.  
 'Tis you must tend the flocks this morn,  
 And scare the small birds from the corn.

Not a soul at home may stay ;  
 For the shepherds must go  
 With lance and bow  
 To hunt the wolf in the woods to-day.

Leave the hearth and leave the house  
 To the cricket and the mouse :  
 Find grannam out a sunny seat,  
 With babe and lambkin at her feet.  
 Not a soul at home may stay :

For the shepherds must go  
 With lance and bow  
 To hunt the wolf in the woods to-day.

*(From 'Zapolya.')*

#### WATER BALLAD

'COME hither, gently rowing,  
 Come, bear me quickly o'er  
 This stream so brightly flowing  
 To yonder woodland shore.  
 But vain were my endeavour  
 To pay thee, courteous guide ;  
 Row on, row on, for ever  
 I'd have thee by my side.

'Good boatman, prithee haste thee,  
 I seek my fatherland.'—

'Say, when I there have placed thee,  
 Dare I demand thy hand ?'

'A maiden's head can never  
 So hard a point decide ;  
 Row on, row on, for ever  
 I'd have thee by my side.'

The happy bridal over,  
 The wanderer ceased to roam,  
 For, seated by her lover,  
 The boat became her home.  
 And still they sang together  
 As steering o'er the tide :  
 ' Row on through wind and weather  
 For ever by my side.'

? 1799.

### MORIENS SUPERSTITI

THE hour-bell sounds, and I must go ;  
 Death waits—again I hear him calling ;—  
 No cowardly desires have I,  
 Nor will I shun his face appalling.  
 I die in faith and honour rich—  
 But ah ! I leave behind my treasure  
 In widowhood and lonely pain ;—  
 To live were surely then a pleasure !  
 My lifeless eyes upon thy face  
 Shall never open more to-morrow ;  
 To-morrow shall thy beauteous eyes  
 Be closed to love, and drown'd in sorrow ;  
 To-morrow death shall freeze this hand,  
 And on thy breast, my wedded treasure,  
 I never, never more shall live ;—  
 Alas ! I quit a life of pleasure.

(*Morning Post*, May 10, 1798.)

## MORIENTI SUPERSTES

**Y**ET art thou happier far than she  
Who feels the widow's love for thee!  
For while her days are days of weeping,  
Thou, in peace, in silence sleeping,  
In some still world, unknown, remote,  
The mighty parent's care hast found,  
Without whose tender guardian thought  
No sparrow falleth to the ground.

## THE DUNGEON

**A**ND this place our forefathers made for men!  
This is the process of our love and wisdom  
To each poor brother who offends against us—  
Most innocent, perhaps—and what if guilty?  
Is this the only cure? Merciful God!  
Each pore and natural outlet shrivelled up  
By Ignorance and parching Poverty,  
His energies roll back upon his heart  
And stagnate and corrupt, till, changed to poison,  
They break out on him, like a loathsome plague spot.  
Then we call in our pampered mountebanks;  
And this is their best cure! uncomforted  
And friendless solitude, groaning and tears,  
And savage faces, at the clanking hour,  
Seen through the steams and vapours of his dungeon  
By the lamp's dismal twilight! So he lies  
Cirled with evil, till his very soul

Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deformed  
By sights of ever more deformity !  
With other ministrations thou, O nature !  
Healest thy wandering and distempered child :  
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,  
Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets ;  
Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters !  
Till he relent, and can no more endure  
To be a jarring and a dissonant thing  
Amid this general dance and minstrelsy ;  
But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,  
His angry spirit healed and harmonised  
By the benignant touch of love and beauty.

## THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

(1798)

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit? et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quæ loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in Tabulâ, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus.—T. BURNET, *Archæol. Phil.*, p. 68.

### PART THE FIRST

**I**T is an ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three.  
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,  
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

'The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,  
And I am next of kin;  
The guests are met, the feast is set:  
May'st hear the merry din.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,  
'There was a ship,' quoth he.  
'Hold off! unhand me, greybeard loon!'  
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

An ancient  
Mariner  
meeteth  
three Gal-  
lants bidden  
to a wed-  
ding-feast,  
and detain-  
eth one.

The Wedding-Guest  
is spell-bound by the  
eye of the  
old sea-faring man,  
and constrained to  
hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye—  
The Wedding-Guest stood still,  
And listens like a three-years child :  
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone ;  
He cannot choose but hear ;  
And thus spake on that ancient man,  
The bright-eyed Mariner.

The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,  
Merrily did we drop  
Below the kirk, below the hill,  
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner tells  
how the ship  
sailed southward with a  
good wind  
and fair  
weather, till  
it reached  
the Line.

The Sun came up upon the left,  
Out of the sea came he !  
And he shone bright, and on the right  
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,  
Till over the mast at noon—  
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,  
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-Guest  
heareth the  
bridal  
music ; but  
the Mariner  
continueth  
his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,  
Red as a rose is she ;  
Nodding their heads before her goes  
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,  
Yet he cannot choose but hear ;  
And thus spake on that ancient man,  
The bright-eyed Mariner.

And now the Storm-blast came, and he  
 Was tyrannous and strong :  
 He struck with his o'ertaking wings,  
 And chased us south along.

The ship  
 drawn by a  
 storm toward  
 the south  
 pole.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,  
 As who pursued with yell and blow  
 Still treads the shadow of his foe  
 And forward bends his head,  
 The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,  
 And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,  
 And it grew wondrous cold :  
 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,  
 As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts  
 Did send a dismal sheen :  
 Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—  
 The ice was all between.

The land of  
 ice and of  
 fearful  
 sounds,  
 where no  
 living thing  
 was to be  
 seen.

The ice was here, the ice was there,  
 The ice was all around :  
 It cracked and growled, and roared and howled  
 Like noises in a swound !

At length did cross an Albatross :  
 Thorough the fog it came ;  
 As if it had been a Christian soul,  
 We hailed it in God's name.

Till a great  
 sea-bird,  
 called the  
 Albatross,  
 came  
 through the  
 snow-fog,  
 and was re-  
 ceived with  
 great joy  
 and hospi-  
 tality.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,  
 And round and round it flew.  
 The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;  
 The helmsman steered us through !

And lo ! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward, through fog and floating ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind ;  
 The Albatross did follow,  
 And every day, for food or play,  
 Came to the mariners' hollo !

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,  
 It perched for vespers nine ;  
 Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,  
 Glimmered the white Moon-shine.

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

' God save thee, ancient Mariner !  
 From the fiends, that plague thee thus !—  
 Why look'st thou so ? '—With my cross-bow  
 I shot the Albatross.

## PART THE SECOND

THE Sun now rose upon the right :  
 Out of the sea came he,  
 Still hid in mist, and on the left  
 Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,  
 But no sweet bird did follow,  
 Nor any day, for food or play,  
 Come to the mariners' hollo !

His ship-mates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

And I had done an hellish thing,  
 And it would work 'em woe :  
 For all averred, I had killed the bird  
 That made the breeze to blow !  
 Ah, wretch ! said they, the bird to slay,  
 That made the breeze to blow.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,  
 The glorious Sun uprist :  
 Then all averred, I had killed the bird  
 That brought the fog and mist.  
 'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,  
 That bring the fog and mist.

But when  
 the fog  
 cleared off,  
 they justify  
 the same,  
 and thus  
 make them-  
 selves accom-  
 plices in the  
 crime.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,  
 The furrow followed free :  
 We were the first that ever burst  
 Into that silent sea.

The fair  
 breeze con-  
 tinues ; the  
 ship enters  
 the Pacific  
 Ocean and  
 sails north-  
 ward, even  
 till it reaches  
 the Line.  
 The ship  
 hath been  
 suddenly be-  
 calmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,  
 'Twas sad as sad could be ;  
 And we did speak only to break  
 The silence of the sea !

All in a hot and copper sky,  
 The bloody Sun, at noon,  
 Right up above the mast did stand,  
 No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,  
 We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;  
 As idle as a painted ship  
 Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, everywhere,  
 And all the boards did shrink ;  
 Water, water, everywhere,  
 Nor any drop to drink.

And the  
 Albatross  
 begins to be  
 avenged.

The very deep did rot : O Christ !  
 That ever this should be !  
 Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs  
 Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout  
 The death-fires danced at night ;  
 The water, like a witch's oils,  
 Burnt green, and blue, and white.

A spirit had followed them ; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither de-

And some in dreams assured were  
 Of the spirit that plagued us so :  
 Nine fathom deep he had followed us  
 From the land of mist and snow.

parted souls nor angels ; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

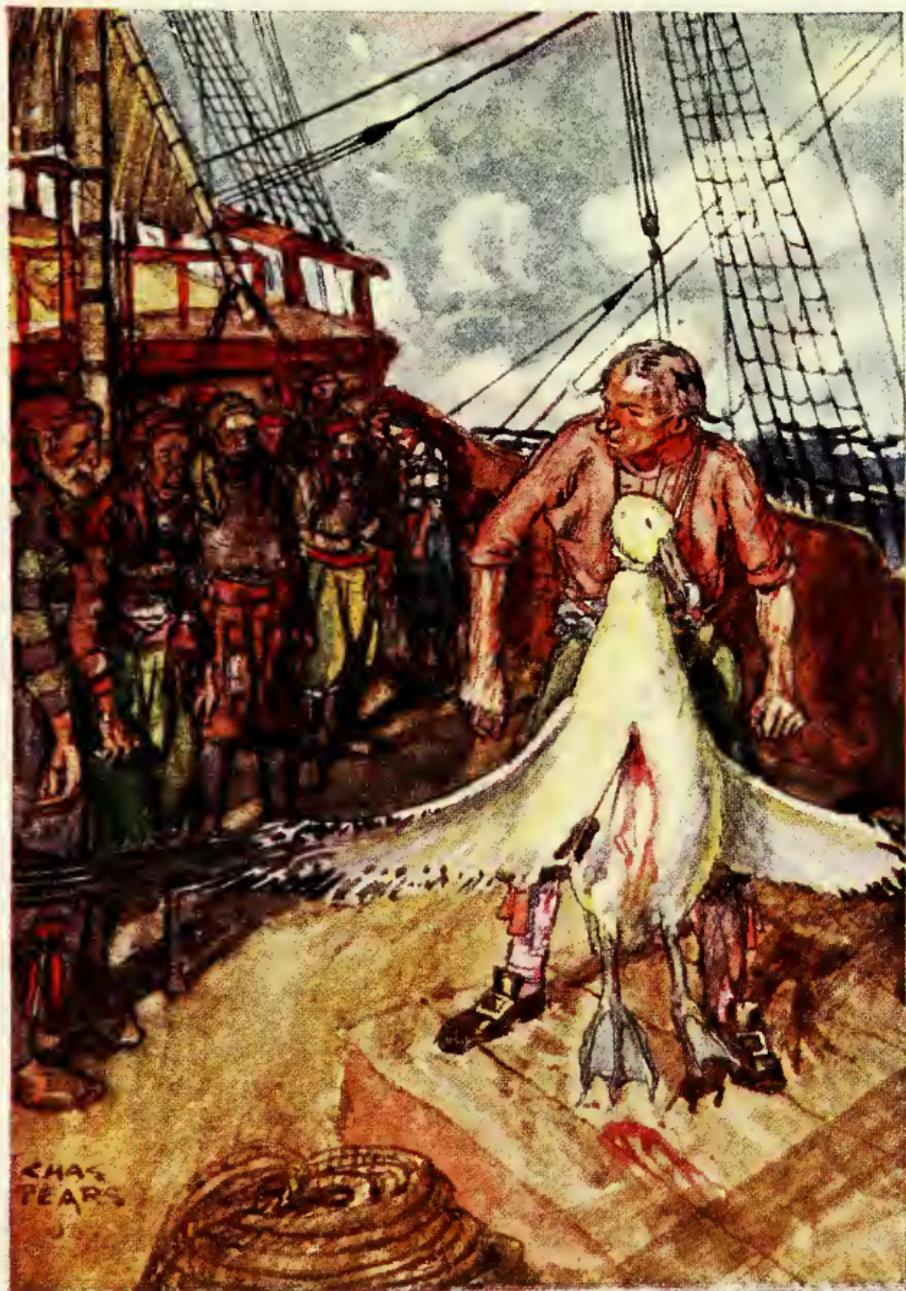
And every tongue, through utter drought,  
 Was withered at the root ;  
 We could not speak, no more than if  
 We had been choked with soot.

The ship-mates in their sore distress would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner : in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

Ah ! well-a-day ! what evil looks  
 Had I from old and young !  
 Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
 About my neck was hung.

#### PART THE THIRD

THERE passed a weary time. Each throat  
 Was parched, and glazed each eye.  
 A weary time ! a weary time !



Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
About my neck was hung.

(The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.)



How glazed each weary eye,  
When looking westward I beheld  
A something in the sky.

The ancient  
Mariner be-  
holdeth a  
sign in the  
element afar  
off.

At first it seemed a little speck,  
And then it seemed a mist :  
It moved and moved, and took at last  
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !  
And still it neared and neared :  
As if it dodged a water-sprite,  
It plunged and tacked and veered.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
We could not laugh nor wail ;  
Through utter drought all dumb we stood !  
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,  
And cried, A sail ! a sail !

At its nearer  
approach,  
it seemeth  
him to be a  
ship ; and at  
a dear ran-  
som he  
freeth his  
speech from  
the bonds  
of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
Agape they heard me call :  
Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,  
And all at once their breath drew in,  
As they were drinking all.

A flash of  
joy.

See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !  
Hither to work us weal ;  
Without a breeze, without a tide,  
She steadies with upright keel !

And horror  
follows.  
For can it be  
a ship that  
comes on-  
ward with-  
out wind  
or tide ?

The western wave was all a-flame,  
 The day was well-nigh done !  
 Almost upon the western wave  
 Rested the broad bright Sun ;  
 When that strange shape drove suddenly  
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth  
 him but the  
 skeleton of  
 a ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked with  
 bars,  
 (Heaven's Mother send us grace !)  
 As if through a dungeon-grate he peered,  
 With broad and burning face.

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat  
 loud),  
 How fast she nears and nears !  
 Are those *her* sails that glance in the  
 Sun,  
 Like restless gossameres !

And its ribs  
 are seen as  
 bars on the  
 face of the  
 setting Sun.  
 The spectre-  
 woman and  
 her death-  
 mate, and  
 no other on  
 board the  
 skeleton-  
 ship. Like  
 vessel, like  
 crew !

Are those *her* ribs through which the  
 Sun  
 Did peer, as through a grate ?  
 And is that Woman all her crew ?  
 Is that a Death ? and are there two ?  
 Is Death that Woman's mate ?

*Her* lips were red, *her* looks were free,  
 Her locks were yellow as gold :  
 Her skin was as white as leprosy,  
 The Night-Mare Life-in-Death was she,  
 Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came,  
 And the twain were casting dice ;  
 'The game is done ! I've won ! I've won !'  
 Quoth she, and whistles thrice.  
 The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out :  
 At one stride comes the dark ;  
 With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,  
 Off shot the spectre-bark.

DEATH and  
 Life-in-  
 Death have  
 diced for  
 the ship's  
 crew, and  
 she (the  
 latter) win-  
 neth the  
 ancient  
 Mariner.  
 No twilight  
 within the  
 courts of  
 the sun.

We listened and looked sideways up !  
 Fear at my heart, as at a cup,  
 My life-blood seemed to sip !  
 The stars were dim, and thick the night,  
 The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white ;  
 From the sails the dew did drip—  
 Till clombe above the eastern bar  
 The horned Moon, with one bright star  
 Within the nether tip.

At the  
 rising of  
 the Moon,

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,  
 Too quick for groan or sigh,  
 Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,  
 And cursed me with his eye.

One after  
 another,

Four times fifty living men  
 (And I heard nor sigh nor groan),  
 With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,  
 They dropped down one by one.

His ship-  
 mates drop  
 down dead.

The souls did from their bodies fly,—  
 They fled to bliss or woe !  
 And every soul, it passed me by,  
 Like the whizz of my cross-bow !

But Life-in-  
 Death be-  
 gins her  
 work on the  
 ancient  
 Mariner.

## PART THE FOURTH

The Wedding-Guest  
feareth that  
a spirit is  
talking to  
him;

'I FEAR thee, ancient Mariner!  
I fear thy skinny hand!  
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,  
As is the ribbed sea-sand.<sup>1</sup>

But the an-  
cient Mari-  
ner assureth  
him of his  
bodily life,  
and pro-  
ceedeth to  
relate his  
horrible  
penance.

'I fear thee, and thy glittering eye,  
And thy skinny hand, so brown.'—  
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!  
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
Alone on a wide wide sea!  
And never a saint took pity on  
My soul in agony.

He de-  
spiseth the  
creatures of  
the calm.

The many men, so beautiful!  
And they all dead did lie;  
And a thousand thousand slimy things  
Lived on; and so did I.

And en-  
vieth that  
they should  
live, and  
so many  
lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,  
And drew my eyes away;  
I looked upon the rotting deck,  
And there the dead men lay.

<sup>1</sup> For the two last lines of this stanza, I am indebted to Mr. Wordsworth. It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with him and his sister, in the autumn of 1797, that this poem was planned, and in part composed.—S. T. C.

I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray ;  
 But or ever a prayer had gusht,  
 A wicked whisper came, and made  
 My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,  
 And the balls like pulses beat ;  
 For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky,  
 Lay like a load on my weary eye,  
 And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,  
 Nor rot nor reek did they :  
 The look with which they looked on me  
 Had never passed away.

But the  
 curse liveth  
 for him in  
 the eye of  
 the dead  
 men.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell  
 A spirit from on high ;  
 But oh ! more horrible than that  
 Is a curse in a dead man's eye !  
 Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,  
 And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky,  
 And nowhere did abide :  
 Softly she was going up,  
 And a star or two beside—

In his lone-  
 liness and  
 fixedness he  
 yearneth to-  
 wards the  
 journeying  
 Moon, and

the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward ; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,  
 Like April hoar-frost spread ;  
 But where the ship's huge shadow lay,  
 The charmed water burnt away  
 A still and awful red.

By the  
light of the  
Moon he  
beholdeth  
God's crea-  
tures of the  
great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,  
I watched the water-snakes :  
They moved in tracks of shining white,  
And when they reared, the elfish light  
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship  
I watched their rich attire :  
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
They coiled and swam ; and every track  
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their  
beauty and  
their hap-  
piness.

He blesseth  
them in his  
heart.

O happy living things ! no tongue  
Their beauty might declare :  
A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware !  
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
And I blessed them unaware.

The spell  
begins to  
break.

The selfsame moment I could pray ;  
And from my neck so free  
The Albatross fell off, and sank  
Like lead into the sea.

#### PART THE FIFTH

OH sleep ! it is a gentle thing,  
Beloved from pole to pole !  
To Mary Queen the praise be given !  
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,  
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,  
That had so long remained,  
I dreamt that they were filled with dew ;  
And when I awoke, it rained.

By grace of  
the holy  
Mother, the  
ancient  
Mariner is  
refreshed  
with rain.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,  
My garments all were dank ;  
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,  
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs :  
I was so light—almost  
I thought that I had died in sleep,  
And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind :  
It did not come anear ;  
But with its sound it shook the sails,  
That were so thin and sere.

He heareth  
sounds and  
seeth  
strange  
sights and  
commotions  
in the sky  
and the ele-  
ment.

The upper air burst into life !  
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,  
To and fro they were hurried about !  
And to and fro, and in and out,  
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,  
And the sails did sigh like sedge ;  
And the rain poured down from one black cloud,  
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still  
 The Moon was at its side :  
 Like waters shot from some high crag,  
 The lightning fell with never a jag,  
 A river steep and wide.

The bodies  
 of the ship's  
 crew are in-  
 spired, and  
 the ship  
 moves on.

The loud wind never reached the ship,  
 Yet now the ship moved on !  
 Beneath the lightning and the Moon  
 The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,  
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;  
 It had been strange, even in a dream,  
 To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on ;  
 Yet never a breeze up blew ;  
 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,  
 Where they were wont to do :  
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—  
 We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son  
 Stood by me, knee to knee :  
 The body and I pulled at one rope,  
 But he said nought to me.

But not by  
 the souls of  
 the men, nor  
 by dæmons  
 of earth or  
 middle air,  
 but by a  
 blessed  
 troop of  
 angelic  
 spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner !'  
 Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest !  
 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,  
 Which to their corpses came again,  
 But a troop of spirits blest :

spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms  
And clustered round the mast ;  
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,  
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,  
Then darted to the sun ;  
Slowly the sounds came back again,  
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky  
I heard the skylark sing ;  
Sometimes all little birds that are,  
How they seemed to fill the sea and air  
With their sweet jargoning !

And now 'twas like all instruments,  
Now like a lonely flute ;  
And now it is an angel's song,  
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased ; yet still the sails made on  
A pleasant noise till noon,  
A noise like of a hidden brook  
In the leafy month of June,  
That to the sleeping woods all night  
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,  
Yet never a breeze did breathe :  
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,  
Moved onward from beneath.

The lone-  
some spirit  
from the  
south pole  
carries on  
the ship as  
far as the  
Line, in  
obedience to  
the angelic  
troop, but  
still re-  
quireth  
vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,  
From the land of mist and snow,  
The spirit slid · and it was he  
That made the ship to go.  
The sails at noon left off their tune,  
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,  
Had fixed her to the ocean :  
But in a minute she 'gan stir,  
With a short uneasy motion—  
Backwards and forwards half her length  
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,  
She made a sudden bound :  
It flung the blood into my head,  
And I fell down in a swoond.

How long in that same fit I lay,  
I have not to declare ;  
But ere my living life returned,  
I heard and in my soul discerned  
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?  
By him who died on cross,  
With his cruel bow he laid full low  
The harmless Albatross.

'The spirit who bideth by himself  
In the land of mist and snow,  
He loved the bird that loved the man  
Who shot him with his bow.'

The Polar  
Spirit's  
fellow-  
dæmons, the  
invisible in-  
habitants of  
the element,  
take part in  
his wrong ;  
and two of  
them relate,  
one to the  
other, that  
penance  
long and  
heavy for  
the ancient  
Mariner  
hath been  
accorded to  
the Polar  
Spirit, who  
returneth  
southward

The other was a softer voice,  
 As soft as honey-dew :  
 Quoth he, ' The man hath penance done,  
 And penance more will do.'

## PART THE SIXTH

## FIRST VOICE

BUT tell me, tell me ! speak again,  
 Thy soft response renewing—  
 What makes that ship drive on so fast ?  
 What is the Ocean doing ?

## SECOND VOICE

Still as a slave before his lord,  
 The Ocean hath no blast ;  
 His great bright eye most silently  
 Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go ;  
 For she guides him smooth or grim.  
 See, brother, see ! how graciously  
 She looketh down on him.

## FIRST VOICE

But why drives on that ship so fast,  
 Without or wave or wind ?

## SECOND VOICE

The air is cut away before,  
 And closes from behind.

The Mariner  
 hath been  
 cast into a  
 trance ; for  
 the angelic  
 power  
 causeth the  
 vessel to  
 drive north-  
 ward faster  
 than human  
 life could  
 endure.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!  
 Or we shall be belated :  
 For slow and slow that ship will go,  
 When the Mariner's trance is abated.

The super-  
 natural  
 motion is re-  
 tardet; the  
 Mariner  
 awakes, and  
 his penance  
 begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on  
 As in a gentle weather :  
 'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high ;  
 The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,  
 For a charnel-dungeon fitter :  
 All fixed on me their stony eyes,  
 That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,  
 Had never passed away :  
 I could not draw my eyes from theirs,  
 Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is  
 finally expi-  
 ated.

And now this spell was snapt : once more  
 I viewed the ocean green,  
 And looked far forth, yet little saw  
 Of what had else been seen—

Like one, that on a lonesome road  
 Doth walk in fear and dread,  
 And having once turned round walks on  
 And turns no more his head ;  
 Because he knows, a frightful fiend  
 Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,  
 Nor sound nor motion made :  
 Its path was not upon the sea,  
 In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek  
 Like a meadow-gale of spring—  
 It mingled strangely with my fears,  
 Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,  
 Yet she sailed softly too :  
 Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—  
 On me alone it blew.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed  
 The lighthouse top I see ?  
 Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?  
 Is this mine own countree ?

And the  
 ancient  
 Mariner  
 beholdeth  
 his native  
 country.

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,  
 And I with sobs did pray—  
 O let me be awake, my God !  
 Or let me sleep away.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,  
 So smoothly it was strewn !  
 And on the bay the moonlight lay,  
 And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,  
 That stands above the rock :  
 The moonlight steeped in silentness  
 The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light,  
 Till rising from the same,  
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,  
 In crimson colours came.

The angelic  
 spirits leave  
 the dead  
 bodies,

And appear  
 in their own  
 forms of  
 light.

A little distance from the prow  
 Those crimson shadows were :  
 I turned my eyes upon the deck—  
 Oh, Christ ! what saw I there !

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,  
 And, by the holy rood !  
 A man all light, a seraph-man,  
 On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,  
 It was a heavenly sight !  
 They stood as signals to the land,  
 Each one a lovely light :

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,  
 No voice did they impart—  
 No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank  
 Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,  
 I heard the Pilot's cheer ;  
 My head was turned perforce away,  
 And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot, and the Pilot's boy,  
 I heard them coming fast :  
 Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy  
 The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice :  
 It is the Hermit good !  
 He singeth loud his godly hymns  
 That he makes in the wood.  
 He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away  
 The Albatross's blood.

## PART THE SEVENTH

THIS Hermit good lives in that wood  
 Which slopes down to the sea.  
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears !  
 He loves to talk with marineres  
 That come from a far countree.

The Hermit  
 of the Wood.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—  
 He hath a cushion plump :  
 It is the moss that wholly hides  
 The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared : I heard them talk,  
 'Why this is strange, I trow !  
 Where are those lights so many and fair,  
 That signal made but now ?

'Strange, by my faith !' the Hermit said—  
 'And they answered not our cheer !  
 The planks looked warped ! and see those sails  
 How thin they are and sere !  
 I never saw aught like them,  
 Unless perchance it were

Approacheth  
 the ship with  
 wonder.

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag  
 My forest-brook along ;  
 When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,  
 And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,  
 That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look—  
 (The Pilot made reply)  
 I am a-feared'—'Push on, push on !'  
 Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,  
 But I nor spake nor stirred ;  
 The boat came close beneath the ship,  
 And straight a sound was heard.

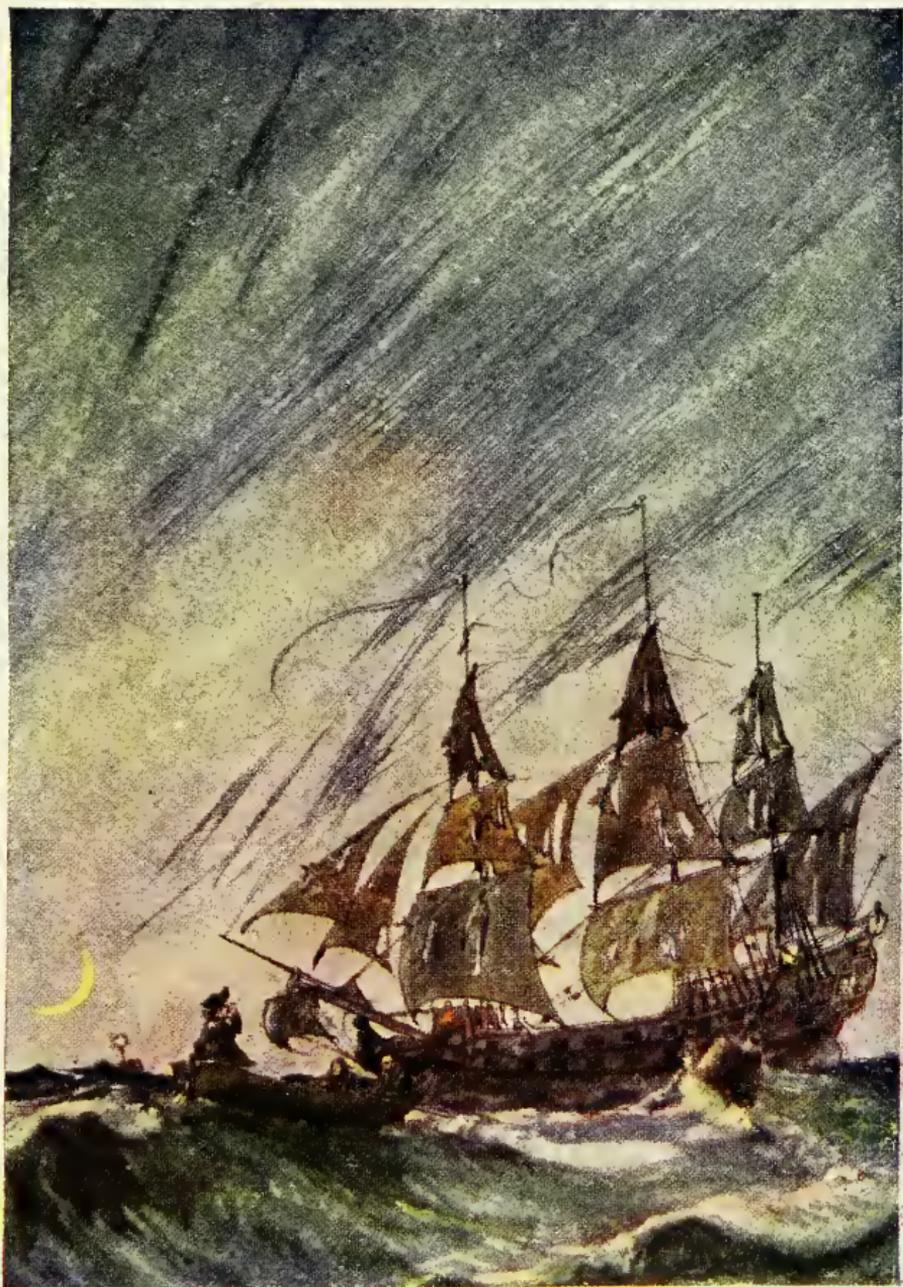
The ship  
 suddenly  
 sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,  
 Still louder and more dread :  
 It reached the ship, it split the bay,  
 The ship went down like lead.

The ancient  
 Mariner is  
 saved in the  
 Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,  
 Which sky and ocean smote,  
 Like one that hath been seven days drowned  
 My body lay afloat ;  
 But swift as dreams, myself I found  
 Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,  
 The boat spun round and round ;  
 And all was still, save that the hill  
 Was telling of the sound.



'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look'  
(The Pilot made reply).

(The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.)



I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked  
 And fell down in a fit ;  
 The holy Hermit raised his eyes,  
 And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,  
 Who now doth crazy go,  
 Laughed loud and long, and all the while  
 His eyes went to and fro.  
 'Ha ! ha !' quoth he, 'full plain I see,  
 The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,  
 I stood on the firm land !  
 The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,  
 And scarcely he could stand.

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man !'  
 The Hermit crossed his brow.  
 'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—  
 What manner of man art thou ?'

The ancient  
 Mariner  
 earnestly en-  
 treateth the  
 Hermit to  
 shrieve him;  
 and the pen-  
 ance of life  
 falls on him.

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched  
 With a woeful agony,  
 Which forced me to begin my tale ;  
 And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,  
 That agony returns ;  
 And till my ghastly tale is told,  
 This heart within me burns.

And ever  
 and anon  
 throughout  
 his future life  
 an agony  
 constraineth  
 him to travel  
 from land to  
 land,

I pass, like night, from land to land ;  
 I have strange power of speech ;  
 That moment that his face I see,  
 I know the man that must hear me :  
 To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door !  
 The wedding-guests are there :  
 But in the garden-bower the bride  
 And bride-maids singing are ;  
 And hark the little vesper bell,  
 Which biddeth me to prayer !

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been  
 Alone on a wide wide sea :  
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself  
 Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,  
 'Tis sweeter far to me,  
 To walk together to the kirk  
 With a goodly company !—

To walk together to the kirk,  
 And all together pray,  
 While each to his great Father bends,  
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends,  
 And youths and maidens gay !

And to  
 teach, by  
 his own ex-  
 ample, love  
 and re-  
 verence to  
 all things  
 that God  
 made and  
 loveth.

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell  
 To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !  
 He prayeth well, who loveth well  
 Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small ;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,  
Whose beard with age is hoar,  
Is gone : and now the Wedding-Guest  
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,  
And is of sense forlorn :  
A sadder and a wiser man,  
He rose the morrow morn.

# CHRISTABEL

## PREFACE<sup>1</sup>

THE first part of the following poem was written in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, at Stowey, in the county of Somerset. The second part, after my return from Germany, in the year one thousand eight hundred, at Keswick, Cumberland. Since the latter date, my poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation. But as, in my very first conception of the tale, I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness, no less than with the loveliness, of a vision; I trust that I shall yet be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come.

It is probable, that if the poem had been finished at either of the former periods, or if even the first and second part had been published in the year 1800, the impression of its originality would have been much greater than I dare at present expect. But for this, I have only my own indolence to blame. The dates are mentioned for the exclusive purpose of precluding charges of plagiarism or servile imitation from myself. For there is among us a set of critics, who seem to hold that every possible thought and image is traditional; who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world, small as well as great; and who would therefore charitably derive every rill they behold flowing, from a perforation made in some other man's tank. I am confident, however, that as far as the present poem is concerned, the celebrated poets whose writings I might be suspected of having imitated, either in particular passages, or in the tone and the spirit of the whole, would be among the first to vindicate me from the charge, and who, on any striking coincidence, would permit me to address them in this doggerel version of two monkish Latin hexameters:

"Tis mine and it is likewise yours,  
But an if this will not do,  
Let it be mine, good friend! for I  
Am the poorer of the two.

I have only to add, that the metre of the Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its

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<sup>1</sup> To the edition of 1816

being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion.

## PART THE FIRST

'TIS the middle of night by the castle clock,  
And the owls have awakened the crowing  
cock!

Tu—whit!—Tu—whoo!  
And hark, again! the crowing cock,  
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,  
Hath a toothless mastiff, which  
From her kennel beneath the rock  
Maketh answer to the clock,  
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;  
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,  
Sixteen short howls, not over loud:  
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

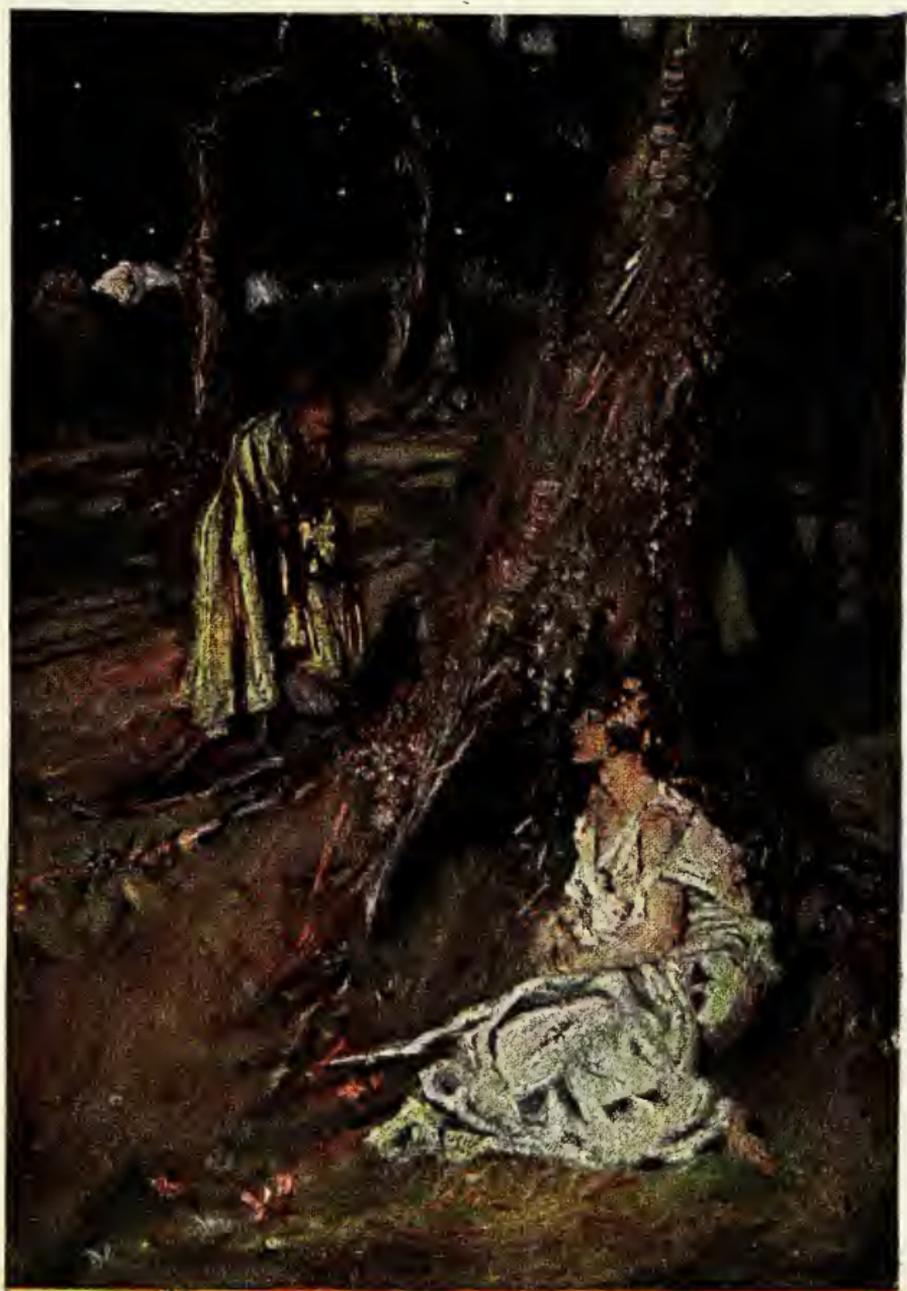
Is the night chilly and dark?  
The night is chilly, but not dark.  
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,  
It covers but not hides the sky.  
The moon is behind, and at the full;  
And yet she looks both small and dull.  
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:  
'Tis a month before the month of May,  
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,  
Whom her father loves so well,  
What makes her in the wood so late,  
A furlong from the castle gate?  
She had dreams all yesternight  
Of her own betrothed knight;  
And she in the midnight wood will pray  
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,  
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,  
And naught was green upon the oak,  
But moss and rarest mistletoe:  
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,  
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,  
The lovely lady, Christabel!  
It moaned as near, as near can be,  
But what it is, she cannot tell.—  
On the other side it seems to be,  
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;  
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?  
There is not wind enough in the air  
To move away the ringlet curl  
From the lovely lady's cheek—  
There is not wind enough to twirl  
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
That dances as often as dance it can,  
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.



There she sees a damsel bright,  
Drest in a silken robe of white.

(Christabel,)



Hush, beating heart of Christabel !  
Jesu, Maria, shield her well !  
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,  
And stole to the other side of the oak.

What sees she there ?

There she sees a damsel bright,  
Drest in a silken robe of white,  
That shadowy in the moonlight shone :  
The neck that made that white robe wan,  
Her stately neck, and arms were bare :  
Her blue-veined feet unsandalled were ;  
And wildly glittered here and there  
The gems entangled in her hair.  
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see  
A lady so richly clad as she—  
Beautiful exceedingly !

Mary mother, save me now !  
(Said Christabel), And who art thou ?

The lady strange made answer meet,  
And her voice was faint and sweet :—  
Have pity on my sore distress,  
I scarce can speak for weariness.  
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear,  
Said Christabel, How camest thou here ?  
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,  
Did thus pursue her answer meet :—

My sire is of a noble line,  
And my name is Geraldine :  
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,  
Me, even me, a maid forlorn :

They choked my cries with force and fright,  
And tied me on a palfrey white.  
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,  
And they rode furiously behind.  
They spurred amain, their steeds were white ;  
And once we crossed the shade of night.  
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,  
I have no thought what men they be ;  
Nor do I know how long it is  
(For I have lain entranced I wis)  
Since one, the tallest of the five,  
Took me from the palfrey's back,  
A weary woman, scarce alive.  
Some muttered words his comrades spoke :  
He placed me underneath this oak,  
He swore they would return with haste ;  
Whither they went I cannot tell—  
I thought I heard, some minutes past,  
Sounds as of a castle bell.  
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),  
And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand  
And comforted fair Geraldine :  
O well, bright dame, may you command  
The service of Sir Leoline ;  
And gladly our stout chivalry  
Will he send forth and friends withal  
To guide and guard you safe and free  
Home to your noble father's hall.

She rose : and forth with steps they passed  
That strove to be, and were not, fast.

Her gracious STARS the lady blest,  
And thus spake on sweet Christabel :  
All our household are at rest,  
The hall as silent as the cell,  
Sir Leoline is weak in health  
And may not well awakened be,  
But we will move as if in stealth,  
And I beseech your courtesy  
This night, to share your couch with me.

They crossed the moat, and Christabel  
Took the key that fitted well ;  
A little door she opened straight,  
All in the middle of the gate ;  
The gate that was ironed within and without,  
Where an army in battle-array had marched out.  
The lady sank, belike through pain,  
And Christabel with might and main  
Lifted her up, a weary weight,  
Over the threshold of the gate :  
Then the lady rose again,  
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,  
They crossed the court : right glad they were.  
And Christabel devoutly cried  
To the lady by her side,  
Praise we the Virgin all divine  
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress !  
Alas, alas ! said Geraldine,  
I cannot speak for weariness.  
So free from danger, free from fear,  
They crossed the court : right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old  
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.  
The mastiff old did not awake,  
Yet she an angry moan did make !  
And what can ail the mastiff bitch ?  
Never till now she uttered yell  
Beneath the eye of Christabel.  
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch :  
For what can ail the mastiff bitch ?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,  
Pass as lightly as you will !  
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,  
Amid their own white ashes lying ;  
But when the lady passed, there came  
A tongue of light, a fit of flame ;  
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,  
And nothing else saw she thereby,  
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,  
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.  
O softly tread, said Christabel,  
My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,  
And jealous of the listening air  
They steal their way from stair to stair,  
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,  
And now they pass the Baron's room,  
As still as death with stifled breath !  
And now have reached her chamber door ;  
And now doth Geraldine press down  
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,  
And not a moonbeam enters here.  
But they without its light can see  
The chamber carved so curiously,  
Carved with figures strange and sweet,  
All made out of the carver's brain,  
For a lady's chamber meet :  
The lamp with twofold silver chain  
Is fastened to an angel's feet.  
The silver lamp burns dead and dim ;  
But Christabel the lamp will trim.  
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,  
And left it swinging to and fro,  
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,  
Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine,  
I pray you, drink this cordial wine !  
It is a wine of virtuous powers ;  
My mother made it of wild flowers.

And will your mother pity me,  
Who am a maiden most forlorn ?  
Christabel answered—Woe is me !  
She died the hour that I was born.  
I have heard the grey-haired friar tell,  
How on her death-bed she did say,  
That she should hear the castle bell  
Strike twelve upon my wedding day.  
O mother dear ! that thou wert here !  
I would, said Geraldine, she were !

But soon with altered voice, said she—  
'Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!  
I have power to bid thee flee.'  
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?  
Why stares she with unsettled eye?  
Can she the bodiless dead espy?  
And why with hollow voice cries she,  
'Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—  
Though thou her guardian spirit be,  
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me.'

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,  
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—  
Alas! said she, this ghastly ride—  
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!  
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,  
And faintly said, "'Tis over now!'

Again the wild-flower wine she drank;  
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,  
And from the floor whereon she sank,  
The lofty lady stood upright;  
She was most beautiful to see,  
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake—  
All they, who live in the upper sky,  
Do love you, holy Christabel!  
And you love them, and for their sake  
And for the good which me befell,  
Even I in my degree will try,  
Fair maiden, to requite you well.  
But now unrobe yourself; for I  
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.

Quoth Christabel, so let it be !  
And as the lady bade, did she.  
Her gentle limbs did she undress,  
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe  
So many thoughts moved to and fro,  
That vain it were her lids to close ;  
So half-way from the bed she rose,  
And on her elbow did recline  
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,  
And slowly rolled her eyes around ;  
Then drawing in her breath aloud,  
Like one that shuddered, she unbound  
The cincture from beneath her breast :  
Her silken robe, and inner vest,  
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,  
Behold ! her bosom and half her side—  
A sight to dream of, not to tell !  
O shield her ! shield sweet Christabel !

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs :  
Ah ! what a stricken look was hers !  
Deep from within she seems half-way<sup>r</sup>  
To lift some weight with sick assay,  
And eyes the maid and seeks delay ;  
Then suddenly, as one defied,  
Collects herself in scorn and pride,  
And lay down by the Maiden's side !—

And in her arms the maid she took,  
     Ah, well-a-day !  
 And with low voice and doleful look  
 These words did say :  
 In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,  
 Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel !  
 Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow  
 This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow ;  
     But vainly thou warrest,  
     For this is alone in  
     Thy power to declare,  
     That in the dim forest  
     Thou heardest a low moaning,  
 And found'st a bright lady, surpassing fair :  
 And didst bring her home with thee in love and in  
     charity,  
 To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.

THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE FIRST

It was a lovely sight to see  
 The lady Christabel, when she  
 Was praying at the old oak tree.  
     Amid the jagged shadows  
     Of mossy leafless boughs,  
     Kneeling in the moonlight,  
     To make her gentle vows ;  
 Her slender palms together prest,  
 Heaving sometimes on her breast ;  
 Her face resigned to bliss or bale—  
 Her face, oh call it fair not pale,  
 And both blue eyes more bright than clear,  
 Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)  
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,  
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,  
Dreaming that alone, which is—  
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,  
The lady who knelt at the old oak tree?  
And lo! the worker of these harms,  
That holds the maiden in her arms,  
Seems to slumber still and mild,  
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,  
O Geraldine! since arms of thine  
Have been the lovely lady's prison.  
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—  
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,  
The night-birds all that hour were still.  
But now they are jubilant anew,  
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo,  
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the Lady Christabel  
Gathers herself from out her trance;  
Her limbs relax, her countenance  
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids  
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—  
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!  
And oft the while she seems to smile  
As infants at a sudden light!  
Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,  
Like a youthful hermitess,  
Beauteous in a wilderness,  
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.

And, if she move unquietly,  
 Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,  
 Comes back and tingles in her feet.  
 No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.  
 What if her guardian spirit 'twere,  
 What if she knew her mother near?  
 But this she knows, in joys and woes,  
 That saints will aid if men will call:  
 For the blue sky bends over all!

PART THE SECOND

EACH matin bell, the Baron saith,  
 Knells us back to a world of death.  
 These words Sir Leoline first said,  
 When he rose and found his lady dead:  
 These words Sir Leoline will say,  
 Many a morn to his dying day.  
 And hence the custom and law began,  
 That still at dawn the sacristan,  
 Who duly pulls the heavy bell,  
 Five and forty beads must tell  
 Between each stroke—a warning knell,  
 Which not a soul can choose but hear  
 From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, So let it knell!  
 And let the drowsy sacristan  
 Still count as slowly as he can!  
 There is no lack of such, I ween,  
 As well fill up the space between.

In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,  
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,  
With ropes of rock and bells of air  
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,  
Who all give back, one after t'other,  
The death-note to their living brother ;  
And oft too, by the knell offended,  
Just as their one ! two ! three ! is ended,  
The devil mocks the doleful tale  
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still ! through mist and cloud  
That merry peal comes ringing loud ;  
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,  
And rises lightly from the bed ;  
Puts on her silken vestments white,  
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,  
And nothing doubting of her spell  
Awakens the lady Christabel.  
'Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel ?  
I trust that you have rested well.'

And Christabel awoke and spied  
The same who lay down by her side—  
O rather say, the same whom she  
Raised up beneath the old oak tree !  
Nay, fairer yet ! and yet more fair !  
For she belike hath drunken deep  
Of all the blessedness of sleep !  
And while she spake, her looks, her air  
Such gentle thankfulness declare,  
That (so it seemed) her girded vests  
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.

'Sure I have sinned!' said Christabel,  
'Now Heaven be praised if all be well!'  
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,  
Did she the lofty lady greet  
With such perplexity of mind  
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed  
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed  
That He, who on the cross did groan,  
Might wash away her sins unknown,  
She forthwith led fair Geraldine  
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall  
Are pacing both into the hall,  
And pacing on through page and groom  
Enter the Baron's presence room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest  
His gentle daughter to his breast,  
With cheerful wonder in his eyes  
The lady Geraldine espies,  
And gave such welcome to the same,  
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,  
And when she told her father's name,  
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,  
Murmuring o'er the name again,  
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas ! they had been friends in youth ;  
But whispering tongues can poison truth.  
And constancy lives in realms above,  
And life is thorny ; and youth is vain ;  
And to be wroth with one we love,  
Doth work like madness in the brain.  
And thus it chanced, as I divine,  
With Roland and Sir Leoline.  
Each spake words of high disdain  
And insult to his heart's best brother :  
They parted—ne'er to meet again !  
But never either found another  
To free the hollow heart from paining—  
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder ;  
A dreary sea now flows between,  
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,  
Shall wholly do away, I ween,  
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,  
Stood gazing on the damsel's face ;  
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine  
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,  
His noble heart swelled high with rage,  
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side,  
He would proclaim it far and wide  
With trump and solemn heraldry,  
That they, who thus had wronged the dame,  
Were base as spotted infamy !  
'And if they dare deny the same,

My herald shall appoint a week,  
And let the recreant traitors seek  
My tourney court—that there and then  
I may dislodge their reptile souls  
From the bodies and forms of men !'  
He spake : his eye in lightning rolls !  
For the lady was ruthlessly seized ; and he kened  
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend !

And now the tears were on his face,  
And fondly in his arms he took  
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,  
Prolonging it with joyous look.  
Which when she viewed, a vision fell  
Upon the soul of Christabel,  
The vision of fear, the touch and pain !  
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again  
(Ah, woe is me ! Was it for thee,  
Thou gentle maid ! such sights to see ?)

Again she saw that bosom old,  
Again she felt that bosom cold,  
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound  
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,  
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid  
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,  
And in its stead that vision blest,  
Which comforted her after-rest,  
While in the lady's arms she lay,  
Had put a rapture in her breast,



Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are  
fleet,

Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,  
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!  
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,  
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!  
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—  
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.  
He bids thee come without delay  
With all thy numerous array,  
And take thy lovely daughter home;  
And he will meet thee on the way  
With all his numerous array,  
White with their panting palfreys' foam,  
And, by mine honour! I will say,  
That I repent me of the day  
When I spake words of fierce disdain  
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!—  
—For since that evil hour hath flown,  
Many a summer's sun hath shone;  
Yet ne'er found I a friend again  
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine.

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,  
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;  
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,  
His gracious hail on all bestowing:—  
Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,  
Are sweeter than my harp can tell,  
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,  
This day my journey should not be:  
So strange a dream hath come to me:

That I had vowed with music loud  
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,  
Warned by a vision in my rest !  
For in my sleep I saw that dove,  
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,  
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—  
Sir Leoline ! I saw the same  
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,  
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.  
Which when I saw and when I heard,  
I wondered what might ail the bird :  
For nothing near it could I see,  
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the  
old tree.

And in my dream, methought, I went  
To search out what might there be found :  
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,  
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.  
I went and peered, and could descry  
No cause for her distressful cry ;  
But yet for her dear lady's sake  
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,  
When lo ! I saw a bright green snake  
Coiled around its wings and neck.  
Green as the herbs on which it couched,  
Close by the dove's its head it crouched ;  
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,  
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers !  
I woke ; it was the midnight hour,  
The clock was echoing in the tower ;  
But though my slumber was gone by,

This dream it would not pass away—  
It seems to live upon my eye!  
And thence I vowed this selfsame day,  
With music strong and saintly song  
To wander through the forest bare,  
Lest aught unholy loiter there.

Thus Bracy said : the Baron, the while,  
Half-listening heard him with a smile ;  
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,  
His eyes made up of wonder and love ;  
And said in courtly accents fine,  
Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,  
With arms more strong than harp or song,  
Thy sire and I will crush the snake !  
He kissed her forehead as he spake,  
And Geraldine in maiden wise,  
Casting down her large bright eyes,  
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine  
She turned her from Sir Leoline ;  
Softly gathering up her train,  
That o'er her right arm fell again ;  
And folded her arms across her chest,  
And couched her head upon her breast,  
And looked askance at Christabel—  
Jesu, Maria, shield her well !

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,  
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,  
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,  
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,  
At Christabel she looked askance !—

One moment—and the sight was fled !  
But Christabel in dizzy trance,  
Stumbling on the unsteady ground—  
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound ;  
And Geraldine again turned round,  
And like a thing, that sought relief,  
Full of wonder and full of grief,  
She rolled her large bright eyes divine  
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas ! her thoughts are gone,  
She nothing sees—no sight but one !  
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,  
I know not how, in fearful wise  
So deeply had she drunken in  
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,  
That all her features were resigned  
To this sole image in her mind :  
And passively did imitate  
That look of dull and treacherous hate,  
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,  
Still picturing that look askance,  
With forced unconscious sympathy  
Full before her father's view—  
As far as such a look could be,  
In eyes so innocent and blue !  
And when the trance was o'er, the maid  
Paused awhile, and inly prayed,  
Then falling at her father's feet,  
'By my mother's soul do I entreat  
That thou this woman send away !'  
She said ; and more she could not say,

For what she knew she could not tell,  
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,  
Sir Leoline? Thy only child  
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,  
So fair, so innocent, so mild ;  
The same, for whom thy lady died !  
O by the pangs of her dead mother  
Think thou no evil of thy child !  
For her, and thee, and for no other,  
She prayed the moment ere she died :  
Prayed that the babe for whom she died,  
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride !  
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,  
Sir Leoline !

And would'st thou wrong thy only child,  
Her child and thine ?

Within the Baron's heart and brain  
If thoughts, like these, had any share,  
They only swelled his rage and pain,  
And did but work confusion there.  
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,  
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,  
Dishonoured thus in his old age ;  
Dishonoured by his only child.  
And all his hospitality  
To th' insulted daughter of his friend,  
By more than woman's jealousy,  
Brought thus to a disgraceful end—  
He rolled his eye with stern regard  
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,

And said in tones abrupt, austere—  
Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?  
I bade thee hence! The bard obeyed;  
And turning from his own sweet maid,  
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,  
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

## THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE SECOND

A LITTLE child, a limber elf,  
Singing, dancing to itself,  
A fairy thing with red round cheeks  
That always finds and never seeks,  
Makes such a vision to the sight  
As fills a father's eyes with light;  
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast  
Upon his heart, that he at last  
Must needs express his love's excess  
With words of unmeant bitterness.  
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together  
Thoughts so unlike each other;  
To mutter and mock a broken charm,  
To dally with wrong that does no harm.  
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty  
At each wild word to feel within  
A sweet recoil of love and pity.  
And what, if in a world of sin  
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)  
Such giddiness of heart and brain  
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,  
So talks as it's most used to do.

# SIBYLLINE LEAVES

## POEMS OCCASIONED BY POLITICAL EVENTS

OR FEELINGS CONNECTED WITH THEM

### ODE TO THE DEPARTING YEAR<sup>1</sup>

Ἴοὺ, ἰοὺ, ὦ ὦ κακά.

Ἵπ' αὐτὸ μὲ δεινὸς ὀρθομαντείας πόνος  
Στροβεῖ, ταράσσω φροῖμοις ἐφημίοις.

Τὸ μέλλον ἤξει. Καὶ σύ μ' ἐν τάχει παρῶν  
Ἄγαν ἀληθόμαντιν οἰκτεῖρας ἐρεῖς.—ÆSCHYL., *Agam.*, 1215.

#### ARGUMENT

THE Ode commences with an address to the Divine Providence, that regulates into one vast harmony all the events of time, however calamitous some of them may appear to mortals. The second Strophe calls on men to suspend their private joys and sorrows, and devote them for a while to the cause of human nature in general. The first Epode speaks of the Empress of Russia, who died of an apoplexy on the 17th of November 1796; having just concluded a subsidiary treaty with the Kings combined against France. The first and second Antistrophe describe the Image of the Departing Year, &c., as in a vision. The second Epode prophesies, in anguish of spirit, the downfall of this country.

SPIRIT who sweepest the wild harp of Time!

It is most hard, with an untroubled ear,

Thy dark inwoven harmonies to hear!

Yet, mine eye fixed on Heaven's unchanging clime,

<sup>1</sup> This Ode was composed on the 24th, 25th, and 26th days of December, 1796, and was first published on the last day of that year.

Long had I listened, free from mortal fear,  
With inward stillness, and a bowed mind ;  
When lo ! its folds far waving on the wind,  
I saw the train of the departing Year !  
Starting from my silent sadness  
Then with no unholy madness  
Ere yet the entered cloud foreclosed my sight,  
I raised the impetuous song, and solemnised his  
flight.

Hither, from the recent tomb,  
From the prison's direr gloom,  
From distemper's midnight anguish ;  
And thence, where poverty doth waste and languish !  
Or where, his two bright torches blending,  
Love illumines manhood's maze ;  
Or where o'er cradled infants bending  
Hope has fixed her wishful gaze ;  
Hither, in perplexed dance,  
Ye Woes ! ye young-eyed Joys ! advance !

By Time's wild harp, and by the hand  
Whose indefatigable sweep  
Raises its fateful strings from sleep,  
I bid you haste, a mixed tumultuous band !  
From every private bower,  
And each domestic hearth,  
Haste for one solemn hour ;  
And with a loud and yet a louder voice,  
O'er Nature struggling in portentous birth,  
Weep and rejoice !  
Still echoes the dread name that o'er the earth

Let slip the storm, and woke the brood of Hell :  
 And now advance in saintly jubilee  
 Justice and Truth ! They too have heard thy spell,  
 They too obey thy name, divinest Liberty !

I marked Ambition in his war-array !  
 I heard the mailed Monarch's troublous cry—  
 ' Ah ! wherefore does the Northern Conqueress stay !  
 Groans not her chariot on its onward way ? '

Fly, mailed Monarch, fly !  
 Stunned by Death's twice mortal mace,  
 No more on murder's lurid face  
 The insatiate hag shall gloat with drunken eye !  
 Manes of the unnumbered slain !  
 Ye that gasped on Warsaw's plain !  
 Ye that erst at Ismail's tower,  
 When human ruin choked the streams,  
 Fell in conquest's glutted nour,  
 'Mid women's shrieks and infants' screams !  
 Spirits of the uncoffined slain,  
 Sudden blasts of triumph swelling,  
 Oft, at night, in misty train,  
 Rush around her narrow dwelling !  
 The exterminating fiend is fled—  
 (Foul her life, and dark her doom)  
 Mighty armies of the dead  
 Dance, like death-fires, round her tomb !  
 Then with prophetic song relate,  
 Each some tyrant-murderer's fate !

Departing Year ! 'twas on no earthly shore  
 My soul beheld thy vision ! Where alone,  
 Voiceless and stern, before the cloudy throne,  
 Aye Memory sits : thy robe inscribed with gore,

With many an unimaginable groan  
 Thou storied'st thy sad hours ! Silence ensued,  
 Deep silence o'er the ethereal multitude,  
 Whose locks with wreaths, whose wreaths with glories  
 shone.

Then, his eye wild ardours glancing,  
 From the choired gods advancing,  
 The Spirit of the Earth made reverence meet,  
 And stood up, beautiful, before the cloudy seat.

Throughout the blissful throng,  
 Hushed were harp and song :  
 Till wheeling round the throne the Lampads seven  
 (The mystic Words of Heaven),  
 Permissive signal make :  
 The fervent Spirit bowed, then spread his wings and  
 spake !

'Thou in stormy blackness throning  
 Love and uncreated Light,  
 By the Earth's unsoled groaning,  
 Seize thy terrors, Arm of might !  
 By peace with proffered insult scared,  
 Masked hate and envying scorn !  
 By years of havoc yet unborn !  
 And hunger's bosom to the frost-winds bared !  
 But chief by Afric's wrongs,  
 Strange, horrible, and foul !  
 By what deep guilt belongs  
 To the deaf Synod, " full of gifts and lies !"  
 By wealth's insensate laugh ! by torture's howl !  
 Avenger, rise !  
 For ever shall the thankless Island scowl,  
 Her quiver full, and with unbroken bow ?

Speak ! from thy storm-black Heaven, O speak aloud !  
 And on the darkling foe  
 Open thine eye of fire from some uncertain cloud !  
 O dart the flash ! O rise and deal the blow !  
 The Past to thee, to thee the Future cries !  
 Hark ! how wide Nature joins her groans below !  
 Rise, God of Nature ! rise.'

The voice had ceased, the vision fled ;  
 Yet still I gasped and reeled with dread.  
 And ever, when the dream of night  
 Renews the phantom to my sight,  
 Cold sweat-drops gather on my limbs ;  
 My ears throb hot ; my eyeballs start ;  
 My brain with horrid tumult swims ;  
 Wild is the tempest of my heart ;  
 And my thick and struggling breath  
 Imitates the toil of death !  
 No stranger agony confounds  
 The soldier on the war-field spread,  
 When all foredone with toil and wounds,  
 Death-like he dozes among heaps of dead !  
 (The strife is o'er, the daylight fled,  
 And the night-wind clamours hoarse !  
 See ! the starting wretch's head  
 Lies pillowed on a brother's corse !)

Not yet enslaved, not wholly vile,  
 O Albion ! O my mother Isle !  
 Thy valleys, fair as Eden's bowers,  
 Glitter green with sunny showers ;

Thy grassy uplands' gentle swells  
    Echo to the bleat of flocks  
(Those grassy hills, those glittering dells  
    Proudly ramparted with rocks);  
And Ocean 'mid his uproar wild  
Speaks safety to his island-child.  
Hence for many a fearless age  
    Has social Quiet loved thy shore ;  
Nor ever proud invader's rage  
Or sacked thy towers, or stained thy fields with gore.

Abandoned of Heaven! mad avarice thy guide,  
At cowardly distance, yet kindling with pride—  
'Mid thy herds and thy corn-fields secure thou hast  
    stood,  
And joined the wild yelling of famine and blood!  
The nations curse thee! They with eager wondering  
    Shall hear Destruction, like a vulture, scream!  
    Strange-eyed Destruction! who with many a dream  
Of central fires through nether seas upthundering  
    Soothes her fierce solitude; yet as she lies  
By livid fount, or red volcanic stream,  
    If ever to her lidless dragon-eyes,  
    O Albion! thy predestined ruins rise,  
The fiend-hag on her perilous couch doth leap,  
Muttering distempered triumph in her charmed sleep.

Away, my soul, away!

In vain, in vain the birds of warning sing—  
And hark! I hear the famished brood of prey  
Flap their lank pennons on the groaning wind!

Away, my soul, away !  
 I, unpartaking of the evil thing,  
     With daily prayer and daily toil  
     Soliciting for food my scanty soil,  
 Have wailed my country with a loud Lament.  
 Now I recentre my immortal mind  
     In the deep sabbath of meek self-content ;  
 Cleansed from the vaporous passions that bedim  
 God's Image, sister of the Seraphim.

## FRANCE

## AN ODE

**Y**E Clouds ! that far above me float and pause,  
 Whose pathless march no mortal may control !  
 Ye Ocean-Waves ! that, wheresoe'er ye roll,  
 Yield homage only to eternal laws !  
 Ye Woods ! that listen to the night-birds singing,  
     Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,  
 Save when your own imperious branches swinging,  
     Have made a solemn music of the wind !  
 Where, like a man beloved of God,  
 Through glooms, which never woodman trod,  
     How oft, pursuing fancies holy,  
 My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,  
     Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,  
 By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound !  
 O ye loud Waves ! and O ye Forests high !  
     And O ye Clouds that far above me soared !  
 Thou rising Sun ! thou blue rejoicing Sky !

Yea, everything that is and will be free  
Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,  
With what deep worship I have still adored  
The spirit of divinest Liberty.

When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared,  
And with that oath, which smote air, earth, and sea,  
Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free,  
Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared !  
With what a joy my lofty gratulation  
Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band :  
And when to whelm the disenchanting nation,  
Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,  
The Monarchs marched in evil day,  
And Britain joined the dire array ;  
Though dear her shores and circling ocean,  
Though many friendships, many youthful loves,  
Had swoln the patriot emotion,  
And flung a magic light o'er all her hills and groves ;  
Yet still my voice, unaltered, sang defeat  
To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,  
And shame too long delayed and vain retreat !  
For ne'er, O Liberty ! with partial aim  
I dimmed thy light or damped thy holy flame ;  
But blessed the pæans of delivered France,  
And hung my head and wept at Britain's name.

'And what,' I said, 'though Blasphemy's loud scream  
With that sweet music of deliverance strove !  
Though all the fierce and drunken passions wove  
A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's dream !

Ye storms, that round the dawning east assembled,  
The Sun was rising, though ye hid his light !'

And when, to soothe my soul, that hoped and  
trembled,  
The dissonance ceased, and all seemed calm and  
bright ;

When France her front deep-scarr'd and gory  
Concealed with clustering wreaths of glory ;

When, insupportably advancing,  
Her arm made mockery of the warrior's tramp ;  
While timid looks of fury glancing,  
Domestic treason, crushed beneath her fatal stamp,  
Writhed like a wounded dragon in his gore ;

Then I reproached my fears that would not flee,  
'And soon,' I said, 'shall Wisdom teach her lore  
In the low huts of them that toil and groan !

And, conquering by her happiness alone,  
Shall France compel the nations to be free,  
Till Love and Joy look round, and call the Earth  
their own.'

Forgive me, Freedom ! O forgive those dreams !

I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,  
From Bleak Helvetia's icy cavern sent—

I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained streams !

Heroes, that for your peaceful country perished,  
And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows

With bleeding wounds ; forgive me, that I cherished  
One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes !

To scatter rage, and traitorous guilt,

Where Peace her jealous home had built ;

A patriot-race to disinherit

Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear ;  
 And with inexpiable spirit  
 To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer—  
 O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind,  
 And patriot only in pernicious toils,  
 Are these thy boasts, Champion of humankind ?  
 To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,  
 Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey ;  
 To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils  
 From freemen torn ; to tempt and to betray ?

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,  
 Slaves by their own compulsion ! In mad game  
 They burst their manacles and wear the name  
 Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain !  
 O Liberty ! with profitless endeavour  
 Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour ;  
 But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever  
 Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power.  
 Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee  
 (Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee),  
 Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions,  
 And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,  
 Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,  
 The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the  
 waves.  
 And there I felt thee !—on that sea-cliff's verge,  
 Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above,  
 Had made one murmur with the distant surge !  
 Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,  
 And shot my being through earth, sea, and air,  
 Possessing all things with intensest love,  
 O Liberty ! my spirit felt thee there.

*February 1797.*

## FEARS IN SOLITUDE

WRITTEN IN APRIL 1798, DURING THE ALARM  
OF AN INVASION

A GREEN and silent spot, amid the hills,  
A small and silent dell! O'er stiller place  
No singing skylark ever poised himself.  
The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,  
Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,  
All golden with the never-bloomless furze,  
Which now blooms most profusely; but the dell,  
Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate  
As vernal cornfield, or the unripe flax,  
When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve,  
The level sunshine glimmers with green light.  
Oh! 'tis a quiet spirit-healing nook!  
Which all, methinks, would love; but chiefly he,  
The humble man, who, in his youthful years,  
Knew just so much of folly, as had made  
His early manhood more securely wise!  
Here he might lie on fern or withered heath,  
While from the singing-lark (that sings unseen  
The minstrelsy that solitude loves best),  
And from the sun, and from the breezy air,  
Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame;  
And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,  
Made up a meditative joy, and found  
Religious meanings in the forms of nature!  
And so, his senses gradually wrapt  
In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,  
And dreaming hears thee still, O singing-lark;  
That singest like an angel in the clouds!

My God ! it is a melancholy thing  
For such a man, who would full fain preserve  
His soul in calmness, yet perforce must feel  
For all his human brethren—O my God !  
It weighs upon the heart, that he must think  
What uproar and what strife may now be stirring  
This way or that way o'er these silent hills—  
Invasion, and the thunder and the shout,  
And all the crash of onset ; fear and rage,  
And undetermined conflict—even now,  
Even now, perchance, and in his native isle :  
Carnage and groans beneath this blessed sun !  
We have offended, oh ! my countrymen !  
We have offended very grievously,  
And been most tyrannous. From east to west  
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven !  
The wretched plead against us ; multitudes  
Countless and vehement, the sons of God,  
Our brethren ! Like a cloud that travels on,  
Steamed up from Cairo's swamps of pestilence,  
Even so, my countrymen ! have we gone forth  
And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,  
And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint  
With slow perdition murders the whole man,  
His body and his soul ! Meanwhile, at home,  
All individual dignity and power  
Engulfed in courts, committees, institutions,  
Associations and societies,  
A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting guild,  
One benefit-club for mutual flattery,  
We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,  
Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth ;  
Contemptuous of all honourable rule,

Yet bartering freedom and the poor man's life  
For gold, as at a market! The sweet words  
Of Christian promise, words that even yet  
Might stem destruction, were they wisely preached,  
Are muttered o'er by men, whose tones proclaim  
How flat and wearisome they feel their trade:  
Rank scoffers some, but most too indolent  
To deem them falsehoods or to know their truth.  
Oh! blasphemous! the book of life is made  
A superstitious instrument, on which  
We gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break;  
For all must swear—all and in every place,  
College and wharf, council and justice-court;  
All, all must swear, the briber and the bribed,  
Merchant and lawyer, senator and priest,  
The rich, the poor, the old man and the young;  
All, all make up one scheme of perjury,  
That faith doth reel; the very name of God  
Sounds like a juggler's charm; and, bold with joy,  
Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,  
(Portentous sight!) the owlet Atheism,  
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,  
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,  
And hooting at the glorious sun in Heaven,  
Cries out, 'Where is it?'

Thankless too for peace  
(Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous seas),  
Secure from actual warfare, we have loved  
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!  
Alas! for ages ignorant of all  
Its ghastlier workings (famine or blue plague,  
Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry-snows),

We, this whole people, have been clamorous  
For war and bloodshed ; animating sports,  
The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,  
Spectators and not combatants ! No guess  
Anticipative of a wrong unfelt,  
No speculation or contingency,  
However dim and vague, too vague and dim  
To yield a justifying cause ; and forth  
(Stuffed out with big preamble, holy names,  
And adjurations of the God in Heaven),  
We send our mandates for the certain death  
Of thousands and ten thousands ! Boys and girls,  
And women, that would groan to see a child  
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,  
The best amusement for our morning-meal !  
The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers  
From curses, who knows scarcely words enough  
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,  
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute  
And technical in victories and defeats,  
And all our dainty terms for fratricide ;  
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues  
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which  
We join no feeling and attach no form !  
As if the soldier died without a wound,  
As if the fibres of this godlike frame  
Were gored without a pang ; as if the wretch,  
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,  
Passed off to Heaven, translated and not killed ;  
As though he had no wife to pine for him,  
No God to judge him ! Therefore, evil days  
Are coming on us, O my countrymen !  
And what if all-avenging Providence,

Strong and retributive, should make us know  
The meaning of our words, force us to feel  
The desolation and the agony  
Of our fierce doings !

Spare us yet awhile,  
Father and God ! Oh ! spare us yet awhile !  
Oh ! let not English women drag their flight  
Fainting beneath the burthen of their babes,  
Of the sweet infants, that but yesterday  
Laughed at the breast ! Sons, brothers, husbands, all  
Who ever gazed with fondness on the forms  
Which grew up with you round the same fireside,  
And all who ever heard the sabbath-bells  
Without the infidel's scorn, make yourselves pure !  
Stand forth ! be men ! repel an impious foe,  
Impious and false, a light yet cruel race,  
Who laugh away all virtue, mingling mirth  
With deeds of murder ; and still promising  
Freedom, themselves too sensual to be free,  
Poison life's amities, and cheat the heart  
Of faith and quiet hope, and all that soothes  
And all that lifts the spirit ! Stand we forth ;  
Render them back upon the insulted ocean,  
And let them toss as idly on its waves  
As the vile sea-weed, which some mountain-blast  
Swept from our shores ! And oh ! may we return  
Not with a drunken triumph, but with fear,  
Repenting of the wrongs with which we stung  
So fierce a foe to frenzy !

I have told,  
O Britons ! O my brethren ! I have told  
Most bitter truth, but without bitterness.

Nor deem my zeal or factious or mis-timed ;  
For never can true courage dwell with them,  
Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look  
At their own vices. We have been too long  
Dupes of a deep delusion ! Some, belike,  
Groaning with restless enmity, expect  
All change from change of constituted power ;  
As if a Government had been a robe,  
On which our vice and wretchedness were tagged  
Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe  
Pulled off at pleasure. Fondly these attach  
A radical causation to a few  
Poor drudges of chastising Providence,  
Who borrow all their hues and qualities  
From our own folly and rank wickedness,  
Which gave them birth and nursed them. Others,  
    meanwhile,  
Dote with a mad idolatry ; and all  
Who will not fall before their images,  
And yield them worship, they are enemies  
Even of their country !

Such have I been deemed—  
But, O dear Britain ! O my Mother Isle !  
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy  
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,  
A husband, and a father ! who revere  
All bonds of natural love, and find them all  
Within the limits of thy rocky shores.  
O native Britain ! O my Mother Isle !  
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy  
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,  
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,

Have drunk in all my intellectual life,  
 All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,  
 All adoration of the God in nature,  
 All lovely and all honourable things,  
 Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel  
 The joy and greatness of its future being?  
 There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul  
 Unborrowed from my country. O divine  
 And beauteous island! thou hast been my sole  
 And most magnificent temple, in the which  
 I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,  
 Loving the God that made me!

May my fears,  
 My filial fears, be vain! and may the vaunts  
 And menace of the vengeful enemy  
 Pass like the gust, that roared and died away  
 In the distant tree: which heard, and only heard,  
 In this low dell, bowed not the delicate grass.

But now the gentle dew-fall sends abroad  
 The fruit-like perfume of the golden furze:  
 The light has left the summit of the hill,  
 Though still a sunny gleam lies beautiful,  
 Aslant the ivied beacon. Now farewell,  
 Farewell, awhile, O soft and silent spot!  
 On the green sheep-track, up the heathy hill,  
 Homeward I wind my way; and lo! recalled  
 From bodings that have well-nigh wearied me,  
 I find myself upon the brow, and pause  
 Startled! And after lonely sojourning  
 In such a quiet and surrounded nook,  
 This burst of prospect, here the shadowy main,  
 Dim tinted, there the mighty majesty

Of that huge amphitheatre of rich  
 And elmy fields, seems like society—  
 Conversing with the mind, and giving it  
 A livelier impulse and a dance of thought!  
 And now, beloved Stowey! I behold  
 Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms  
 Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend;  
 And close behind them, hidden from my view,  
 Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe  
 And my babe's mother dwell in peace! With light  
 And quickened footsteps thitherward I tend,  
 Remembering thee, O green and silent dell!  
 And grateful, that by nature's quietness  
 And solitary musings, all my heart  
 Is softened, and made worthy to indulge  
 Love, and the thoughts that yearn for humankind.

NETHER STOWEY,  
*April 28, 1798.*

## FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER

### A WAR ECLOGUE

*The Scene a desolated Tract in La Vendée. FAMINE is discovered lying on the ground; to her enter FIRE and SLAUGHTER.*

*Fam.* Sisters! sisters! who sent you here?

*Slau.* [to *Fire*]. I will whisper it in her ear.

*Fire.* No! no! no!

Spirits hear what spirits tell:

'Twill make a holiday in Hell.

No! no! no!

Myself, I named him once below,

And all the souls, that damned be,  
 Leaped up at once in anarchy,  
 Clapped their hands and danced for glee,  
 They no longer heeded me ;  
 But laughed to hear Hell's burning rafters  
 Unwillingly re-echo laughters !

No ! no ! no !

Spirits hear what spirits tell :  
 'Twill make a holiday in Hell !

*Fam.* Whisper it, sister ! so and so !  
 In a dark hint, soft and slow.

*Slau.* Letters four do form his name—  
 And who sent you ?

*Both.* The same ! the same !

*Slau.* He came by stealth, and unlocked my den,  
 And I have drunk the blood since then  
 Of thrice three hundred thousand men.

*Both.* Who bade you do it ?

*Slau.* The same ! the same !  
 Letters four do form his name.  
 He let me loose, and cried Halloo !  
 To him alone the praise is due.

*Fam.* Thanks, sister, thanks ! the men have bled,  
 Their wives and their children faint for bread.  
 I stood in a swampy field of battle ;  
 With bones and skulls I made a rattle,  
 To frighten the wolf and carrion-crow  
 And the homeless dog—but they would not go.  
 So off I flew : for how could I bear  
 To see them gorge their dainty fare ?  
 I heard a groan and a peevish squall,  
 And through the chink of a cottage-wall—  
 Can you guess what I saw there ?

*Both.* Whisper it, sister ! in our ear.

*Fam.* A baby beat its dying mother :

I had starved the one and was starving the other !

*Both.* Who bade you do't ?

*Fam.* The same ! the same !

Letters four do form his name.

He let me loose, and cried Halloo !

To him alone the praise is due.

*Fire.* Sisters ! I from Ireland came !

Hedge and corn-fields all on flame.

I triumphed o'er the setting sun !

And all the while the work was done.

On as I strode with my huge strides,

I flung back my head and I held my sides,

It was so rare a piece of fun

To see the sweltered cattle run

With uncouth gallop through the night,

Scared by the red and noisy light !

By the light of his own blazing cot

Was many a naked rebel shot :

The house-stream met the flame and hissed,

While crash ! fell in the roof, I wist,

On some of those old bed-ridden nurses,

That deal in discontent and curses.

*Both.* Who bade you do't ?

*Fire.* The same ! the same !

Letters four do form his name.

He let me loose, and cried Halloo !

To him alone the praise is due.

*All.* He let us loose, and cried Halloo !

How shall we yield him honour due ?

*Fam.* Wisdom comes with lack of food.

I'll gnaw, I'll gnaw the multitude,

Till the cup of rage o'erbrim :  
 They shall seize him and his brood—  
*Slau.* They shall tear him limb from limb !  
*Fire.* O thankless beldames and untrue !  
 And is this all that you can do  
 For him, who did so much for you ?  
 Ninety months he, by my troth !  
 Hath richly catered for you both :  
 And in an hour would you repay  
 An eight years' work ?—Away ! away !  
 I alone am faithful ! I  
 Cling to him everlastingly.

1796.

## LOVE POEMS

### LOVE

**A**LL thoughts, all passions, all delights,  
 Whatever stirs this mortal frame,  
 All are but ministers of Love,  
 And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I  
 Live o'er again that happy hour,  
 When midway on the mount I lay,  
 Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,  
 Had blended with the lights of eve ;  
 And she was there, my hope, my joy,  
 My own dear Genevieve !

She leaned against the armed man,  
The statue of the armed knight ;  
She stood and listened to my lay,  
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,  
My hope ! my joy ! my Genevieve !  
She loves me best, whene'er I sing  
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,  
I sang an old and moving story—  
An old rude song, that suited well  
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a fitting blush,  
With downcast eyes and modest grace,  
For well she knew, I could not choose  
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore  
Upon his shield a burning brand ;  
And that for ten long years he wooed  
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined : and ah !  
The deep, the low, the pleading tone  
With which I sang another's love,  
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a fitting blush,  
With downcast eyes, and modest grace ;  
And she forgave me, that I gazed  
Too fondly on her face !

But when I told the cruel scorn  
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,  
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,  
Nor rested day nor night ;

That sometimes from the savage den,  
And sometimes from the darksome shade,  
And sometimes starting up at once  
In green and sunny glade,—

There came and looked him in the face  
An angel beautiful and bright :  
And that he knew it was a Fiend,  
This miserable Knight !

And that, unknowing what he did,  
He leaped amid a murderous band,  
And saved from outrage worse than death  
The Lady of the Land ;—

And how she wept, and clasped his knees ;  
And how she tended him in vain—  
And ever strove to expiate  
The scorn that crazed his brain ;—

And that she nursed him in a cave ;  
And how his madness went away,  
When on the yellow forest-leaves  
A dying man he lay ;—

His dying words—but when I reached  
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,  
My faltering voice and pausing harp  
Disturbed her soul with pity !

All impulses of soul and sense  
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve ;  
The music and the doleful tale,  
The rich and balmy eve ;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,  
An undistinguishable throng,  
And gentle wishes long subdued,  
Subdued and cherished long !

She wept with pity and delight,  
She blushed with love, and virgin shame ;  
And like the murmur of a dream,  
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,  
As conscious of my look she stept—  
Then suddenly, with timorous eye,  
She fled to me and wept.

She half inclosed me with her arms,  
She pressed me with a meek embrace ;  
And bending back her head, looked up,  
And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,  
And partly 'twas a bashful art,  
That I might rather feel, than see,  
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,  
And told her love with virgin pride ;  
And so I won my Genevieve,  
My bright and beauteous Bride.

## THE BALLAD OF THE DARK LADIE

## A FRAGMENT

BENEATH yon birch with silver bark,  
And boughs so pendulous and fair,  
The brook falls scattered down the rock :  
And all is mossy there.

And there upon the moss she sits,  
The Dark Ladie in silent pain ;  
The heavy tear is in her eye,  
And drops and swells again.

Three times she sends her little page  
Up the castled mountain's breast,  
If he might find the Knight that wears  
The Griffin for his crest.

The sun was sloping down the sky,  
And she had lingered there all day,  
Counting moments, dreaming fears—  
O wherefore can he stay ?

She hears a rustling o'er the brook,  
She sees far off a swinging bough !  
'Tis He ! 'Tis my betrothed Knight !  
Lord Falkland, it is Thou !

She springs, she clasps him round the neck,  
She sobs a thousand hopes and fears,  
Her kisses glowing on his cheeks  
She quenches with her tears.

. . . . .



And there upon the moss she sits,  
The Dark Ladie in silent pain.

(The Ballad of the Dark Ladie.)



'My friends with rude ungentle words  
They scoff and bid me fly to thee!  
O give me shelter in thy breast!  
O shield and shelter me!

'My Henry, I have given thee much,  
I gave what I can ne'er recall,  
I gave my heart, I gave my peace,  
O Heaven! I gave thee all.'

The Knight made answer to the Maid,  
While to his heart he held her hand,  
'Nine castles hath my noble sire,  
None statelier in the land.

'The fairest one shall be my love's,  
The fairest castle of the nine!  
Wait only till the stars peep out,  
The fairest shall be thine:

Wait only till the hand of eve  
Hath wholly closed yon western bars,  
And through the dark we too will steal  
Beneath the twinkling stars!—

'The dark? the dark? No! not the dark!  
The twinkling stars? How, Henry? how?  
O God! 'twas in the eye of noon  
He pledged his sacred vow!

'And in the eye of noon, my love  
Shall lead me from my mother's door,  
Sweet boys and girls all clothed in white  
Strewing flowers before:

‘But first the nodding minstrels go  
 With music meet for lordly bowers,  
 The children next in snow-white vests,  
     Strewing buds and flowers !

‘And then my love and I shall pace,  
 My jet black hair in pearly braids,  
 Between our comely bachelors  
     And blushing bridal maids.’

## LEWTI

## OR THE CIRCASSIAN LOVE-CHAUNT

**A**T midnight by the stream I roved,  
 To forget the form I loved.  
 Image of Lewti ! from my mind  
 Depart ; for Lewti is not kind.

The moon was high, the moonlight gleam  
     And the shadow of a star  
 Heaved upon Tamaha’s stream ;  
     But the rock shone brighter far,  
 The rock half sheltered from my view  
 By pendent boughs of tressy yew—  
 So shines my Lewti’s forehead fair,  
 Gleaming through her sable hair.  
 Image of Lewti ! from my mind  
 Depart ; for Lewti is not kind.

I saw a cloud of palest hue,  
     Onward to the moon it passed ;

Still brighter and more bright it grew,  
With floating colours not a few,  
    Till it reached the moon at last :  
Then the cloud was wholly bright,  
With a rich and amber light !  
And so with many a hope I seek,  
    And with such joy I find my Lewti ;  
And even so my pale wan cheek  
    Drinks in as deep a flush of beauty !  
Nay, treacherous image ! leave my mind,  
If Lewti never will be kind.

The little cloud—it floats away,  
    Away it goes ; away so soon ?  
Alas ! it has no power to stay :  
Its hues are dim, its hues are gray—  
    Away it passes from the moon !  
How mournfully it seems to fly,  
    Ever fading more and more,  
To joyless regions of the sky—  
    And now 'tis whiter than before !  
As white as my poor cheek will be,  
    When, Lewti ! on my couch I lie,  
A dying man for love of thee.  
    Nay, treacherous image ! leave my mind—  
And yet, thou didst not look unkind.

I saw a vapour in the sky,  
    Thin, and white, and very high :  
I ne'er beheld so thin a cloud :  
    Perhaps the breezes that can fly,  
    Now below and now above,

Have snatched aloft the lawny shroud  
Of Lady fair—that died for love.  
For maids, as well as youths, have perished  
From fruitless love too fondly cherished.  
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind—  
For Lewti never will be kind.

Hush! my heedless feet from under  
Slip the crumbling banks for ever:  
Like echoes to a distant thunder,  
They plunge into the gentle river.  
The river-swans have heard my tread,  
And startle from their reedy bed.  
O beauteous birds! methinks ye measure  
Your movements to some heavenly tune!  
O beauteous birds! 'tis such a pleasure  
To see you move beneath the moon,  
I would it were your true delight  
To sleep by day and wake all night.

I know the place where Lewti lies,  
When silent night has closed her eyes;  
It is a breezy jasmine-bower,  
The nightingale sings o'er her head:  
Voice of the night! had I the power  
That leafy labyrinth to thread,  
And creep, like thee, with soundless tread,  
I then might view her bosom white  
Heaving lovely to my sight,  
As these two swans together heave  
On the gently swelling wave.

Oh! that she saw me in a dream,  
 And dreamt that I had died for care;  
 All pale and wasted I would seem,  
 Yet fair withal, as spirits are!  
 I'd die indeed, if I might see  
 Her bosom heave, and heave for me:  
 Soothe! gentle image! soothe my mind!  
 To-morrow Lewti may be kind.

1795.

## THE PICTURE

### OR THE LOVER'S RESOLUTION

**T**HROUGH weeds, and thorns, and matted under-  
 wood

I force my way; now climb, and now descend  
 O'er rocks, or bare or mossy, with wild foot  
 Crushing the purple whorts; while, oft unseen,  
 Hurrying along the drifted forest-leaves,  
 The scared snake rustles. Onward still I toil  
 I know not, ask not whither! A new joy,  
 Lovely as light, sudden as summer gust,  
 And gladsome as the first-born of the spring,  
 Beckons me on, or follows from behind,  
 Playmate, or guide! The master-passion quelled,  
 I feel that I am free. With dun-red bark  
 The fir-trees, and the unfrequent slender oak,  
 Forth from this tangle wild of bush and brake  
 Soar up, and form a melancholy vault  
 High o'er me, murmuring like a distant sea.

Here Wisdom might resort, and here Remorse;  
 Here too the love-lorn man, who, sick in soul,

And of this busy human heart weary,  
 Worships the spirit of unconscious life  
 In tree or wild-flower.—Gentle lunatic !  
 If so he might not wholly cease to be,  
 He would far rather not be that, he is ;  
 But would be something, that he knows not of,  
 In winds or waters, or among the rocks !

But hence, fond wretch ! breathe not contagion here ;  
 No myrtle-walks are these : these are no groves  
 Where Love dare loiter ! if in sullen mood  
 He should stray hither, the low stumps shall gore  
 His dainty feet, the brier and the thorn  
 Makes his plumes haggard. Like a wounded bird  
 Easily caught, ensnare him, O ye nymphs,  
 Ye Oreads chaste, ye dusky Dryades !  
 And you, ye Earth-winds ! you that make at morn  
 The dew-drops quiver on the spiders' webs !  
 You, O ye wingless Airs ! that creep between  
 The rigid stems of heath and bitten furze,  
 Within whose scanty shade, at summer-noon,  
 The mother-sheep hath worn a hollow bed—  
 Ye, that now cool her fleece with dropless damp,  
 Now pant and murmur with her feeding lamb.  
 Chase, chase him, all ye Fays, and elfin Gnomes !  
 With prickles sharper than his darts bemock  
 His little Godship, making him perforce  
 Creep through a thorn-bush on yon hedgehog's back.

This is my hour of triumph ! I can now  
 With my own fancies play the merry fool,  
 And laugh away worse folly, being free.  
 Here will I seat myself, beside this old,

Hollow, and weedy oak, which ivy-twine  
Clothes as with net-work : here will I couch my limbs,  
Close by this river, in this silent shade,  
As safe and sacred from the step of man  
As an invisible world—unheard, unseen,  
And listening only to the pebbly brook  
That murmurs with a dead, yet tinkling sound ;  
Or to the bees, that in the neighbouring trunk  
Make honey-hoards. The breeze that visits me  
Was never Love's accomplice, never raised  
The tendril ringlets from the maiden's brow,  
And the blue, delicate veins above her cheek ;  
Ne'er played the wanton—never half disclosed  
The maiden's snowy bosom, scattering thence  
Eye-poisons for some love-distempered youth,  
Who ne'er henceforth may see an aspen-grove  
Shiver in sunshine, but his feeble heart  
Shall flow away like a dissolving thing.

Sweet breeze ! thou only, if I guess aright,  
Liftest the feathers of the robin's breast,  
That swells its little breast, so full of song,  
Singing above me, on the mountain-ash.  
And thou too, desert stream ! no pool of thine,  
Though clear as lake in latest summer-eve,  
Did e'er reflect the stately virgin's robe,  
The face, the form divine, the downcast look  
Contemplative ! Behold ! her open palm  
Presses her cheek and brow ! her elbow rests  
On the bare branch of half-uprooted tree,  
That leans towards its mirror ! Who erewhile  
Had from her countenance turned, or looked by  
stealth

(For fear is true love's cruel nurse), he now,  
With steadfast gaze and unoffending eye,  
Worships the watery idol, dreaming hopes  
Delicious to the soul, but fleeting, vain,  
E'en as that phantom world on which he gazed,  
But not unheeded gazed : for see, ah ! see,  
The sportive tyrant with her left hand plucks  
The heads of tall flowers that behind her grow,  
Lychnis, and willow-herb, and foxglove bells :  
And suddenly, as one that toys with time,  
Scatters them on the pool ! Then all the charm  
Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair  
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,  
And each mis-shape the other. Stay awhile,  
Poor youth, who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes,  
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon  
The visions will return ! And lo ! he stays :  
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms  
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more  
The pool becomes a mirror ; and behold  
Each wild-flower on the marge inverted there,  
And there the half-uprooted tree—but where,  
O where the virgin's snowy arm, that leaned  
On its bare branch ? He turns, and she is gone !  
Homeward she steals through many a woodland maze  
Which he shall seek in vain. Ill-fated youth !  
Go, day by day, and waste thy manly prime  
In mad love-yearning by the vacant brook,  
Till sickly thoughts bewitch thine eyes, and thou  
Behold'st her shadow still abiding there,  
The Naiad of the mirror !

Not to thee,  
O wild and desert stream ! belongs this tale :

Gloomy and dark art thou—the crowded firs  
Spire from thy shores, and stretch across thy bed,  
Making thee doleful as a cavern-well :  
Save when the shy kingfishers build their nest  
On thy steep banks, no loves hast thou, wild stream !

This be my chosen haunt—emancipate  
From passion's dreams, a freeman, and alone,  
I rise and trace its devious course. O lead,  
Lead me to deeper shades and lonelier glooms.  
Lo ! stealing through the canopy of firs,  
How fair the sunshine spots that mossy rock,  
Isle of the river, whose disparted waves  
Dart off asunder with an angry sound,  
How soon to reunite ! And see ! they meet,  
Each in the other lost and found : and see !  
Placeless, as spirits, one soft water-sun  
Throbbing within them, heart at once and eye !  
With its soft neighbourhood of filmy clouds,  
The stains and shadings of forgotten tears,  
Dimness o'erswum with lustre ! Such the hour  
Of deep enjoyment, following love's brief feuds ;  
And hark, the noise of a near waterfall !  
I pass forth into light—I find myself  
Beneath a weeping birch (most beautiful  
Of forest-trees, the lady of the woods),  
Hard by the brink of a tall weedy rock  
That overbrows the cataract. How bursts  
The landscape on my sight ! Two crescent hills  
Fold in behind each other, and so make  
A circular vale, and land-locked, as might seem,  
With brook and bridge, and grey stone cottages,  
Half hid by rocks and fruit-trees. At my feet,

The whortleberries are bedewed with spray,  
Dashed upwards by the furious waterfall.  
How solemnly the pendent ivy-mass  
Swings in its winnow ; all the air is calm.  
The smoke from cottage chimneys, tinged with light,  
Rises in columns ; from this house alone,  
Close by the waterfall, the column slants,  
And feels its ceaseless breeze. But what is this ?  
That cottage, with its slanting chimney-smoke,  
And close beside its porch a sleeping child,  
His dear head pillowed on a sleeping dog—  
One arm between its fore-legs, and the hand  
Holds loosely its small handful of wild flowers,  
Unfilleted, and of unequal lengths.  
A curious picture, with a master's haste  
Sketched on a strip of pinky-silver skin,  
Peeled from the birchen bark ! Divinest maid !  
Yon bark her canvas, and those purple berries  
Her pencil ! See, the juice is scarcely dried  
On the fine skin ! She has been newly here ;  
And lo ! yon patch of heath has been her couch—  
The pressure still remains ! O blessed couch !  
For this mayst thou flower early, and the sun,  
Slanting at eve, rest bright, and linger long  
Upon thy purple bells ! O Isabel !  
Daughter of genius ! stateliest of our maids !  
More beautiful than whom Alcæus wooed,  
The Lesbian woman of immortal song !  
O child of genius ! stately, beautiful,  
And full of love to all, save only me,  
And not ungentle e'en to me ! My heart,  
Why beats it thus ? Through yonder coppice-wood  
Needs must the pathway turn, that leads straightway

On to her father's house. She is alone !  
 The night draws on—such ways are hard to hit—  
 And fit it is I should restore this sketch,  
 Dropt unawares no doubt. Why should I yearn  
 To keep the relique ? 'twill but idly feed  
 The passion that consumes me. Let me haste !  
 The picture in my hand which she has left ;  
 She cannot blame me that I followed her :  
 And I may be her guide the long wood through.

## THE NIGHT-SCENE

## A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT

*Sandoval.* You loved the daughter of Don Man-  
 rique ?

*Earl Henry.* Loved ?

*Sandoval.* Did you not say you wooed her ?

*Earl Henry.* Once I loved

Her whom I dared not woo !

*Sandoval.* And wooed, perchance,  
 One whom you loved not !

*Earl Henry.* Oh ! I were most base,  
 Not loving Oropeza. True, I wooed her,  
 Hoping to heal a deeper wound ; but she  
 Met my advances with impassioned pride,  
 That kindled love with love. And when her sire,  
 Who in his dream of hope already grasped  
 The golden circlet in his hand, rejected  
 My suit with insult, and in memory  
 Of ancient feuds poured curses on my head,  
 Her blessings overtook and baffled them !

But thou art stern, and with unkindly countenance  
Art inly reasoning whilst thou listenest to me.

*Sandoval.* Anxiously, Henry! reasoning anxiously.  
But Oropeza—

*Earl Henry.* Blessings gather round her!  
Within this wood there winds a secret passage,  
Beneath the walls, which opens out at length  
Into the gloomiest covert of the garden.—  
The night ere my departure to the army,  
She, nothing trembling, led me through that gloom,  
And to that covert by a silent stream,  
Which, with one star reflected near its marge,  
Was the sole object visible around me.  
No leaflet stirred; the air was almost sultry;  
So deep, so dark, so close, the umbrage o'er us!  
No leaflet stirred;—yet pleasure hung upon  
The gloom and stillness of the balmy night-air.  
A little further on an arbour stood,  
Fragrant with flowering trees—I well remember  
What an uncertain glimmer in the darkness  
Their snow-white blossoms made—thither she led me,  
To that sweet bower! Then Oropeza trembled—  
I heard her heart beat—if 'twere not my own.

*Sandoval.* A rude and scaring note, my friend!

*Earl Henry.* Oh! no!

I have small memory of aught but pleasure.  
The inquietudes of fear, like lesser streams,  
Still flowing, still were lost in those of love:  
So love grew mightier from the fear, and Nature,  
Fleeing from pain, sheltered herself in joy.  
The stars above our heads were dim and steady,  
Like eyes suffused with rapture.—Life was in us:  
We were all life, each atom of our frames

A living soul—I vowed to die for her :  
 With the faint voice of one who, having spoken,  
 Relapses into blessedness, I vowed it :  
 That solemn vow, a whisper scarcely heard,  
 A murmur breathed against a lady's ear.  
 Oh ! there is joy above the name of pleasure,  
 Deep self-possession, an intense repose.

*Sandoval* [*with a sarcastic smile*]. No other than  
 as eastern sages paint

The God, who floats upon a lotos leaf,  
 Dreams for a thousand ages ; then awakening,  
 Creates a world, and smiling at the bubble,  
 Relapses into bliss.

*Earl Henry.* Ah ! was that bliss  
 Feared as an alien, and too vast for man ?  
 For suddenly, impatient of its silence,  
 Did Oropeza, starting, grasp my forehead.  
 I caught her arms ; the veins were swelling on  
 them.

Through the dark bower she sent a hollow voice ;—  
 'Oh ! what if all betray me ? what if thou ?'  
 I swore, and with an inward thought that seemed  
 The purpose and the substance of my being,  
 I swore to her, that were she red with guilt,  
 I would exchange my unblenched state with hers.—  
 Friend ! by that winding passage, to that bower  
 I now will go—all objects there will teach me  
 Unwavering love, and singleness of heart.  
 Go, Sandoval ! I am prepared to meet her—  
 Say nothing of me—I myself will seek her—  
 Nay, leave me, friend ! I cannot bear the torment  
 And keen inquiry of that scanning eye.

[*Earl Henry retires into the wood.*]

*Sandoval* [*alone*]. O Henry! always striv'st thou to  
 be great  
 By thine own act—yet art thou never great  
 But by the inspiration of great passion.  
 The whirl-blast comes, the desert-sands rise up  
 And shape themselves: from earth to heaven they  
 stand,  
 As though they were the pillars of a temple,  
 Built by Omnipotence in its own honour!  
 But the blast pauses, and their shaping spirit  
 Is fled: the mighty columns were but sand,  
 And lazy snakes trail o'er the level ruins!

## LINES

COMPOSED IN A CONCERT-ROOM

NOR cold, nor stern, my soul! yet I detest  
 These scented rooms, where, to a gaudy throng,  
 Heaves the proud harlot her distended breast  
 In intricacies of laborious song.

These feel not Music's genuine power, not deign  
 To melt at Nature's passion-warbled plaint;  
 But when the long-breathed singer's uptrilled strain  
 Bursts in a squall—they gape for wonderment.

Hark! the deep buzz of vanity and hate!  
 Scornful, yet envious, with self-torturing sneer  
 My lady eyes some maid of humbler state,  
 While the pert captain, or the primmer priest,  
 Prattles accordant scandal in her ear.

O give me, from this heartless scene released,  
To hear our old musician, blind and gray  
(Whom stretching from my nurse's arms I kissed),  
His Scottish tunes and warlike marches play,  
By moonshine, on the balmy summer-night,  
The while I dance amid the tedded hay  
With merry maids, whose ringlets toss in light.

Or lies the purple evening on the bay  
Of the calm glossy lake, O let me hide  
Unheard, unseen, behind the alder-trees,  
For round their roots the fisher's boat is tied,  
On whose trim seat doth Edmund stretch at ease,  
And while the lazy boat sways to and fro,  
Breathes in his flute sad airs, so wild and slow,  
That his own cheek is wet with quiet tears.

But O, dear Anne! when midnight wind careers,  
And the gust pelting on the out-house shed  
Makes the cock shrilly on the rain-storm crow,  
To hear thee sing some ballad full of woe,  
Ballad of shipwrecked sailor floating dead,  
Whom his own true-love buried in the sands!  
Thee, gentle woman, for thy voice re-measures  
Whatever tones and melancholy pleasures  
The things of nature utters; birds or trees  
Or moan of ocean-gale in weedy caves,  
Or where the stiff grass 'mid the heath-plant waves,  
Murmur and music thin of sudden breeze.

## THE KEEPSAKE

**T**HE tedded hay, the first-fruits of the soil,  
 The tedded hay and corn-sheaves in one field,  
 Show summer gone, ere come. The foxglove tall  
 Sheds its loose purple bells, or in the gust,  
 Or when it bends beneath the upspringing lark,  
 Or mountain-finch alighting. And the rose  
 (In vain the darling of successful love)  
 Stands, like some boasted beauty of past years,  
 The thorns remaining, and the flowers all gone.  
 Nor can I find, amid my lonely walk  
 By rivulet, or spring, or wet road-side,  
 That blue and bright-eyed floweret of the brook,  
 Hope's gentle gem, the sweet Forget-me-not!<sup>1</sup>  
 So will not fade the flowers which Emmeline  
 With delicate fingers on the snow-white silk  
 Has worked (the flowers which most she knew I loved),  
 And more beloved than they, her auburn hair.

In the cool morning twilight, early waked  
 By her full bosom's joyous restlessness,  
 Softly she rose, and lightly stole along,  
 Down the slope coppice to the woodbine bower,  
 Whose rich flowers, swinging in the morning breeze,  
 Over their dim fast-moving shadows hung,  
 Making a quiet image of disquiet

<sup>1</sup> One of the names (and meriting to be the only one) of the *Myosotis Scorpioides Palustris*, a flower from six to twelve inches high, with blue blossom and bright yellow eye. It has the same name over the whole Empire of Germany (*Vergissmein nicht*), and, I believe, in Denmark and Sweden.

In the smooth, scarcely moving river-pool.  
There, in that bower where first she owned her love,  
And let me kiss my own warm tear of joy  
From off her glowing cheek, she sate and stretched  
The silk upon the frame, and worked her name  
Between the Moss-Rose and Forget-me-not—  
Her own dear name, with her own auburn hair !  
That forced to wander till sweet spring return,  
I yet might ne'er forget her smile, her look,  
Her voice (that even in her mirthful mood  
Has made me wish to steal away and weep),  
Nor yet the entrancement of that maiden kiss  
With which she promised, that when spring returned,  
She would resign one half of that dear name,  
And own thenceforth no other name but mine !

## TO A YOUNG LADY

ON HER RECOVERY FROM A FEVER

**W**HY need I say, Louisa dear !  
How glad I am to see you here,  
A lovely convalescent ;  
Risen from the bed of pain and fear,  
And feverish heat incessant.

The sunny showers, the dappled sky,  
The little birds that warble high,  
Their vernal loves commencing,  
Will better welcome you than I  
With their sweet influencing,

Believe me, while in bed you lay,  
 Your danger taught us all to pray :  
     You made us grow devouter !  
 Each eye looked up and seemed to say,  
     How can we do without her ?

Besides, what vexed us worse, we knew,  
 They have no need of such as you  
     In the place where you were going :  
 This World has angels all too few,  
     And Heaven is overflowing !

### SOMETHING CHILDISH, BUT VERY NATURAL

WRITTEN IN GERMANY

**I**F I had but two little wings,  
 And were a little feathery bird,  
     To you I'd fly, my dear !  
 But thoughts like these are idle things,  
     And I stay here.

But in my sleep to you I fly :  
     I'm always with you in my sleep !  
     The world is all one's own.  
 But then one wakes, and where am I ?  
     All, all alone.

Sleep stays not, though a monarch bids,  
     So I love to wake ere break of day :  
     For though my sleep be gone,  
 Yet while 'tis dark, one shuts one's lids,  
     And still dreams on,

## ANSWER TO A CHILD'S QUESTION

**D**O you ask what the birds say? The sparrow,  
the dove,  
The linnet, and thrush, say, 'I love and I love!'  
In the winter they're silent—the wind is so strong;  
What it says I don't know, but it sings a loud song.  
But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm  
weather,  
And singing, and loving—all come back together.  
But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,  
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,  
That he sings, and he sings; and for ever sings he—  
'I love my Love, and my Love loves me!'

## A CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER

**E**RE on my bed my limbs I lay,  
God grant me grace my prayers to say  
O God! preserve my mother dear  
In strength and health for many a year;  
And, O! preserve my father too,  
And may I pay him reverence due;  
And may I my best thoughts employ  
To be my parents' hope and joy;  
And, O! preserve my brothers both  
From evil doings and from sloth,  
And may we always love each other,  
Our friends, our father, and our mother.

And still, O Lord, to me impart  
 An innocent and grateful heart,  
 That after my last sleep I may  
 Awake to thy eternal day! Amen.

### THE VISIONARY HOPE

SAD lot, to have no hope! Though lowly kneeling  
 He fain would frame a prayer within his breast,  
 Would fain entreat for some sweet breath of healing,  
 That his sick body might have ease and rest;  
 He strove in vain! the dull sighs from his chest  
 Against his will the stifling load revealing,  
 Though Nature forced; though like some captive  
 guest,

Some royal prisoner at his conqueror's feast,  
 An alien's restless mood but half concealing,  
 The sternness on his gentle brow confessed,  
 Sickness within and miserable feeling:  
 Though obscure pangs made curses of his dreams,  
 And dreaded sleep, each night repelled in vain,  
 Each night was scattered by its own loud screams:  
 Yet never could his heart command, though fain,  
 One deep full wish to be no more in pain.

That Hope, which was his inward bliss and boast,  
 Which waned and died, yet ever near him stood,  
 Though changed in nature, wander where he would—  
 For Love's despair is but Hope's pining ghost!  
 For this one hope he makes his hourly moan,  
 He wishes and can wish for this alone!  
 Pierced, as with light from Heaven, before its gleams  
 (So the love-stricken visionary deems)

Disease would vanish, like a summer shower,  
 Whose dews fling sunshine from the noon-tide bower !  
 Or let it stay ! yet this one Hope should give  
 Such strength that he would bless his pains and live.

## THE HAPPY HUSBAND

OFt, oft methinks, the while with Thee  
 I breathe, as from the heart, thy dear  
 And dedicated name, I hear

A promise and a mystery,  
 A pledge of more than passing life,  
 Yea, in that very name of Wife !

A pulse of love, that ne'er can sleep !  
 A feeling that upbraids the heart  
 With happiness beyond desert,  
 That gladness half requests to weep !  
 Nor bless I not the keener sense  
 And unalarming turbulence

Of transient joys, that ask no sting  
 From jealous fears, or coy denying ;  
 But born beneath Love's brooding wing  
 And into tenderness soon dying,  
 Wheel out their giddy moment, then  
 Resign the soul to love again ;—

A more precipitated vein  
 Of notes, that eddy in the flow  
 Of smoothest song, they come, they go,  
 And leave their sweeter understrain  
 Its own sweet self—a love of Thee  
 That seems, yet cannot greater be !

## RECOLLECTIONS OF LOVE

HOW warm this woodland wild Recess !  
Love surely hath been breathing here ;  
And this sweet bed of heath, my dear !  
Swells up, then sinks with faint caress,  
As if to have you yet more near.

Eight springs have flown, since last I lay  
On sea-ward Quantock's heathy hills,  
Where quiet sounds from hidden rills  
Float here and there, like things astray,  
And high o'erhead the skylark shrills.

No voice as yet had made the air  
Be music with your name ; yet why  
That asking look ? that yearning sigh ?  
That sense of promise everywhere ?  
Beloved ! flew your spirit by ?

As when a mother doth explore  
The rose-mark on her long-lost child,  
I met, I loved you, maiden mild !  
As whom I long had loved before—  
So deeply had I been beguiled.

You stood before me like a thought,  
A dream remembered in a dream.  
But when those meek eyes first did seem  
To tell me, Love within you wrought—  
O Greta, dear domestic stream !

Has not, since then, Love's prompture deep,  
 Has not Love's whisper evermore  
 Been ceaseless, as thy gentle roar?  
 Sole voice, when other voices sleep,  
 Dear under-song in clamour's hour.

## MEDITATIVE POEMS

IN BLANK VERSE

### HYMN BEFORE SUNRISE, IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

Besides the rivers Arve and Arveiron, which have their sources in the foot of Mont Blanc, five conspicuous torrents rush down its sides; and within a few paces of the Glaciers, the Gentiana Major grows in immense numbers with its 'flowers of loveliest blue.'

**H**AST thou a charm to stay the morning-star  
 In his steep course? So long he seems to  
 pause  
 On thy bald awful head, O sovran Blanc!  
 The Arve and Arveiron at thy base  
 Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful Form!  
 Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,  
 How silently! Around thee and above  
 Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,  
 An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it,  
 As with a wedge! But when I look again,  
 It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,  
 Thy habitation from eternity!  
 O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,

Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,  
 Didst vanish from my thought : entranced in prayer  
 I worshipped the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,  
 So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,  
 Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my thought,  
 Yea, with my life and life's own secret joy :  
 Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,  
 Into the mighty vision passing—there  
 As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven !

Awake, my soul ! not only passive praise  
 Thou owest ! not alone these swelling tears,  
 Mute thanks and secret ecstasy ! Awake,  
 Voice of sweet song ! Awake, my Heart, awake !  
 Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my Hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovran of the Vale !  
 O struggling with the darkness all the night,  
 And visited all night by troops of stars,  
 Or when they climb the sky or when they sink :  
 Companion of the morning-star at dawn,  
 Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn  
 Co-herald : wake, O wake, and utter praise !  
 Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth ?  
 Who filled thy countenance with rosy light ?  
 Who made thee parent of perpetual streams ?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad !  
 Who called you forth from night and utter death,  
 From dark and icy caverns called you forth,  
 Down those precipitous, black, jagged Rocks,  
 For ever shattered and the same for ever ?

Who gave you your invulnerable life,  
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,  
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?  
And who commanded (and the silence came),  
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

Ye ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow  
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—  
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,  
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!  
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!  
Who made you glorious as the gates of Heaven  
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun  
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers  
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?—  
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,  
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!  
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!  
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!  
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,  
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!  
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!  
Ye eagles, playmates of the mountain-storm!  
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!  
Ye signs and wonders of the element!  
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,  
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,  
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene  
Into the depth of clouds, that veil thy breast—

Thou too again, stupendous Mountain ! thou  
 That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low  
 In adoration, upward from thy base  
 Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,  
 Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,  
 To rise before me—Rise, O ever rise,  
 Rise like a cloud of incense, from the Earth !  
 Thou kingly Spirit throned among the hills,  
 Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,  
 Great hierarch ! tell thou the silent sky,  
 And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,  
 Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

## LINES

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM AT ELBINGERODE  
 IN THE HARTZ FOREST

I STOOD on Brocken's<sup>1</sup> sovran height, and saw  
 Woods crowding upon woods, hills over hills.  
 A surging scene, and only limited  
 By the blue distance. Heavily my way  
 Downward I dragged through fir groves evermore,  
 Where bright green moss heaves in sepulchral forms  
 Speckled with sunshine ; and, but seldom heard,  
 The sweet bird's song became a hollow sound ;  
 And the breeze, murmuring indivisibly,  
 Preserved its solemn murmur most distinct  
 From many a note of many a waterfall,  
 And the brook's chatter ; 'midst whose islet stones  
 The dingy kidling with its tinkling bell

<sup>1</sup> The highest mountain in the Hartz, as well as in North Germany.

Leaped frolicsome, or old romantic goat  
 Sat, his white beard slow waving. I moved on  
 In low and languid mood :<sup>1</sup> for I had found  
 That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive  
 Their finer influence from the Life within ;  
 Fair cyphers else : fair, but of import vague  
 Or unconcerning, where the heart not finds  
 History or prophecy of friend, or child,  
 Or gentle maid, our first and early love,  
 Or father, or the venerable name  
 Of our adored country ! O thou Queen,  
 Thou delegated Deity of Earth,  
 O dear, dear England ! how my longing eye  
 Turned westward, shaping in the steady clouds  
 Thy sands and high white cliffs !

My native Land !

Filled with the thought of thee this heart was proud,  
 Yea, mine eye swam with tears : that all the view  
 From sovran Brocken, woods and woody hills,  
 Floated away, like a departing dream,  
 Feeble and dim ! Stranger, these impulses  
 Blame thou not lightly ; nor will I profane,  
 With hasty judgment or injurious doubt,  
 That man's sublimer spirit, who can feel  
 That God is everywhere ! the God who framed  
 Mankind to be one mighty family,  
 Himself our Father, and the World our Home.

1 . . . When I have gazed

From some high eminence on goodly vales  
 And cots and villages embowered below,  
 The thought would rise that all to me was strange  
 Amid the scenes so fair, nor one small spot  
 Where my tired mind might rest, and call it home.

SOUTHEY'S *Hymn to the Penates*,

## INSCRIPTION

FOR A FOUNTAIN ON A HEATH

**T**HIS Sycamore, oft musical with bees,—  
Such tents the Patriarchs loved! O long  
unharm'd

May all its aged boughs o'er-canopy  
The small round basin, which this jutting stone  
Keeps pure from falling leaves! Long may the  
Spring

Quietly as a sleeping infant's breath,  
Send up cold water to the traveller  
With soft and even pulse! Nor ever cease  
Yon tiny cone of sand its soundless dance,  
Which at the bottom, like a fairy's page,  
As merry and no taller, dances still,  
Nor wrinkles the smooth surface of the Fount.  
Here twilight is and coolness: here is moss,  
A soft seat, and a deep and ample shade.  
Thou may'st toil far and find no second tree.  
Drink, Pilgrim, here; here rest! and if thy heart  
Be innocent, here too shalt thou refresh  
Thy Spirit, listening to some gentle sound,  
Or passing gale or hum of murmuring bees!

## A TOMBLESS EPITAPH

**T**IS true, Idoloclastes Satyrane!  
(So call him, for so mingling blame with praise,  
And smiles with anxious looks, his earliest friends,  
Masking his birth-name, wont to character

His wild-wood fancy and impetuous zeal),  
Tis true that, passionate for ancient truths,  
And honouring with religious love the great  
Of elder times, he hated to excess,  
With an unquiet and intolerant scorn,  
The hollow puppets of a hollow age,  
Ever idolatrous, and changing ever  
Its worthless idols! learning, power, and time  
(Too much of all) thus wasting in vain war  
Of fervid colloquy.  Sickness, 'tis true,  
Whole years of weary days, besieged him close,  
Even to the gates and inlets of his life!  
But it is true, no less, that strenuous, firm,  
And with a natural gladness, he maintained  
The citadel unconquered, and in joy  
Was strong to follow the delightful Muse.  
For not a hidden path, that to the shades  
Of the beloved Parnassian forest leads,  
Lurked undiscovered by him; not a rill  
There issues from the fount of Hippocrene,  
But he had traced it upward to its source,  
Through open glade, dark glen, and secret dell,  
Knew the gay wild-flowers on its banks, and  
    cull'd  
Its med'cinable herbs.  Yea, oft alone,  
Piercing the long-neglected holy cave,  
The haunt obscure of old Philosophy,  
He bade with lifted torch its starry walls  
Sparkle, as erst they sparkled to the flame  
Of odorous lamps tended by Saint and Sage.  
O framed for calmer times and nobler hearts!  
O studious Poet, eloquent for truth!  
Philosopher! contemning wealth and death,

Yet docile, childlike, full of Life and Love !  
 Here, rather than on monumental stone,  
 This record of thy worth thy Friend inscribes,  
 Thoughtful, with quiet tears upon his cheek.

### THIS LIME-TREE BOWER MY PRISON

In the June of 1797, some long-expected Friends paid a visit to the author's cottage ; and on the morning of their arrival, he met with an accident, which disabled him from walking during the whole time of their stay. One evening, when they had left him for a few hours, he composed the following lines in the garden-bower.

WELL, they are gone, and here must I remain,  
 This lime-tree bower my prison ! I have lost  
 Beauties and feelings, such as would have been  
 Most sweet to my remembrance even when age  
 Had dimmed mine eyes to blindness ! They, mean-  
 while,  
 Friends, whom I never more may meet again,  
 On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,  
 Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,  
 To that still roaring dell, of which I told ;  
 The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,  
 And only speckled by the mid-day sun ;  
 Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock  
 Flings arching like a bridge ;—that branchless ash,  
 Unsunned and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves  
 Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,  
 Fanned by the waterfall ! and there my friends

Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,<sup>1</sup>  
That all at once (a most fantastic sight !)  
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge  
Of the blue clay-stone.

Now, my friends emerge  
Beneath the wide wide Heaven—and view again  
The many-steepled tract magnificent  
Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,  
With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up  
The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles  
Of purple shadow ! Yes ! they wander on  
In gladness all ; but thou, methinks, most glad,  
My gentle-hearted Charles ! for thou hast pined  
And hungered after Nature, many a year,  
In the great City pent, winning thy way  
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain  
And strange calamity ! Ah ! slowly sink  
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious sun !  
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,  
Ye purple heath-flowers ! richlier burn, ye clouds :  
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves !  
And kindle, thou blue ocean ! So my Friend  
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,  
Silent with swimming sense ; yea, gazing round  
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem  
Less gross than bodily ; and of such hues  
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes  
Spirits perceive his presence.

<sup>1</sup> *Of long lank weeds.* The *Asplenium scolopendrium*, called in some countries the Adder's Tongue, in others the Hart's Tongue ; but Withering gives the Adder's Tongue as the trivial name of the *ophioglossum* only.

## A delight

Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad  
As I myself were there ! Nor in this bower,  
This little lime-tree bower, have I not marked  
Much that has soothed me. Pale beneath the  
blaze

Hung the transparent foliage ; and I watched  
Some broad and sunny leaf, and loved to see  
The shadow of the leaf and stem above  
Dappling its sunshine ! And that walnut-tree  
Was richly tinged, and a deep radiance lay  
Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps  
Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass  
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue  
Through the late twilight : and though now the bat  
Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,  
Yet still the solitary humble-bee  
Sings in the bean-flower ! Henceforth I shall know  
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure ;  
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,  
No waste so vacant, but may well employ  
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart  
Awake to Love and Beauty ; and sometimes  
'Tis well to be bereft of promised good,  
That we may lift the Soul, and contemplate  
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.  
My gentle-hearted Charles ! when the last rook  
Beat its straight path along the dusky air  
Homewards, I blest it ! deeming, its black wing  
(Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)  
Had crossed the mighty orb's dilated glory,  
While thou stood'st gazing ; or when all was still,

Flew creaking<sup>1</sup> o'er thy head, and had a charm  
 For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom  
 No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

## TO A FRIEND

WHO HAD DECLARED HIS INTENTION OF WRITING  
 NO MORE POETRY

**D**EAR Charles! whilst yet thou wert a babe,  
 I ween  
 That Genius plunged thee in that wizard fount  
 High Castalie: and (sureties of thy faith)  
 That Pity and Simplicity stood by,  
 And promised for thee, that thou shouldst re-  
 nounce  
 The world's low cares and lying vanities,  
 Steadfast and rooted in the heavenly Muse,  
 And washed and sanctified to Poesy.  
 Yes—thou wert plunged, but with forgetful hand  
 Held, as by Thetis erst her warrior son:  
 And with those recreant unbaptized heels  
 Thou'rt flying from thy bounden minist'ries—  
 So sore it seems and burthensome a task  
 To weave unwithering flowers! But take thou heed:

<sup>1</sup> *Flew creaking.* Some months after I had written this line, it gave me pleasure to find that Bartram had observed the same circumstance of the Savanna Crane. 'When these birds move their wings in flight, their strokes are slow, moderate, and regular; and even when at a considerable distance or high above us, we plainly hear the quill feathers; their shafts and webs upon one another creak as the joints or working of a vessel in a tempestuous sea.'

For thou art vulnerable, wild-eyed boy,  
 And I have arrows<sup>1</sup> mystically dipt,  
 Such as may stop thy speed. Is thy Burns  
 dead?

And shall he die unwept, and sink to earth  
 'Without the meed of one melodious tear?'  
 Thy Burns, and Nature's own beloved bard,  
 Who to the 'Illustrious<sup>2</sup> of his native Land  
 So properly did look for patronage.'  
 Ghost of Mæcenas! hide thy blushing face!  
 They snatched him from the sickle and the  
 plough—  
 To gauge ale-firkins.

Oh! for shame return!

On a bleak rock, midway the Aonian mount,  
 There stands a lone and melancholy tree,  
 Whose aged branches to the midnight blast  
 Make solemn music: pluck its darkest bough,  
 Ere yet the unwholesome night-dew be exhaled,  
 And weeping wreath it round thy Poet's tomb.  
 Then in the outskirts, where pollutions grow,  
 Pick the rank henbane and the dusky flowers  
 Of nightshade, or its red and tempting fruit,  
 These with stopped nostril and glove-guarded  
 hand

Knit in nice intertexture, so to twine  
 The illustrious brow of Scotch Nobility.

1796.

<sup>1</sup> Pind., Olymp. ii. 1. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Verbatim from Burns's dedication of his Poem to the Nobility and Gentry of the Caledonian Hunt.

## TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

COMPOSED ON THE NIGHT AFTER HIS RECITATION OF A  
POEM ON THE GROWTH OF AN INDIVIDUAL MIND

FRIEND of the wise! and teacher of the good!  
 Into my heart have I received that lay  
 More than historic, that prophetic lay  
 Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)  
 Of the foundations and the building up  
 Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell  
 What may be told, to the understanding mind  
 Revealable; and what within the mind  
 By vital breathings secret as the soul  
 Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart  
 Thoughts all too deep for words!—

Theme hard as high,  
 Of smiles spontaneous, and mysterious fears  
 (The first-born they of Reason and twin-birth),  
 Of tides obedient to external force,  
 And currents self-determined, as might seem,  
 Or by some inner power; of moments awful,  
 Now in thy inner life, and now abroad,  
 When power streamed from thee, and thy soul  
 received  
 The light reflected, as a light bestowed—  
 Of fancies fair, and milder hours of youth,  
 Hyblean murmurs of poetic thought  
 Industrious in its joy, in vales and glens,  
 Native or outland, lakes and famous hills!

Or on the lonely high-road, when the stars  
 Were rising ; or by secret mountain-streams,  
 The guides and the companions of thy way !

Of more than Fancy, of the Social Sense  
 Distending wide, and man beloved as man,  
 Where France in all her towns lay vibrating  
 Like some becalmed bark beneath the burst  
 Of Heaven's immediate thunder, when no cloud  
 Is visible, or shadow on the main.  
 For thou wert there, thine own brows garlanded,  
 Amid the tremor of a realm aglow,  
 Amid a mighty nation jubilant,  
 When from the general heart of humankind  
 Hope sprang forth like a full-born Deity !  
 ——Of that dear Hope afflicted and struck down,  
 So summoned homeward, thenceforth calm and  
     sure  
 From the dread watch-tower of man's absolute self,  
 With light unwaning on her eyes, to look  
 Far on—herself a glory to behold,  
 The Angel of the vision ! Then (last strain)  
 Of Duty, chosen laws controlling choice,  
 Action and joy !—An Orphic song indeed,  
 A song divine of high and passionate thoughts  
 To their own music chanted !

O great Bard !

Ere yet that last strain dying awed the air,  
 With steadfast eye I viewed thee in the choir  
 Of ever-enduring men. The truly great  
 Have all one age, and from one visible space  
 Shed influence ! They, both in power and act,

Are permanent, and Time is not with them,  
Save as it worketh for them, they in it.  
Nor less a sacred roll, than those of old,  
And to be placed, as they, with gradual fame  
Among the archives of mankind, thy work  
Makes audible a linked lay of Truth,  
Of Truth profound a sweet continuous lay,  
Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes !  
Ah ! as I listened with a heart forlorn,  
The pulses of my being beat anew :  
And even as life returns upon the drowned,  
Life's joy rekindling roused a throng of pains—  
Keen pangs of Love, awakening as a babe  
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart ;  
And fears self-willed, that shunned the eye of  
    hope,  
And hope that scarce would know itself from fear ;  
Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain,  
And genius given, and knowledge won in vain ;  
And all which I had culled in wood-walks wild,  
And all which patient toil had reared, and all  
Commune with thee had opened out—but flowers  
Strewed on my corse, and borne upon my bier,  
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave !

That way no more ! and ill beseems it me,  
Who came a welcomer in herald's guise,  
Singing of glory, and futurity,  
To wander back on such unhealthful road,  
Plucking the poisons of self-harm ! And ill  
Such intertwine beseems triumphal wreaths  
Strewed before thy advancing !

Nor do thou,  
Sage Bard ! impair the memory of that hour  
Of thy communion with my nobler mind  
By pity or grief, already felt too long !  
Nor let my words import more blame than needs.  
The tumult rose and ceased : for peace is nigh  
Where wisdom's voice has found a listening heart.  
Amid the howl of more than wintry storms,  
The halcyon hears the voice of vernal hours  
Already on the wing.

Eve following eve,  
Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of Home  
Is sweetest ! moments for their own sake hailed,  
And more desired, more precious for thy song,  
In silence listening, like a devout child,  
My soul lay passive, by thy various strain  
Driven as in surges now beneath the stars,  
With momentary stars of my own birth,  
Fair constellated foam,<sup>1</sup> still darting off  
Into the darkness ; now a tranquil sea,  
Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon.

And when—O Friend ! my comforter and guide !  
Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength !—  
Thy long-sustained Song finally closed,  
And thy deep voice had ceased—yet thou thyself

<sup>1</sup> 'A beautiful white cloud of foam at momentary intervals coursed by the side of the vessel with a roar, and little stars of flame danced and sparkled and went out in it: and every now and then light detachments of this white cloud-like foam darted off from the vessel's side, each with its own small constellation, over the sea, and scoured out of sight like a Tartar troop over a wilderness.'—*The Friend*, p. 220.

Wert still before my eyes, and round us both  
 That happy vision of beloved faces—  
 Scarce conscious, and yet conscious of its close  
 I sate, my being blended in one thought  
 (Thought was it? or aspiration? or resolve?)  
 Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound—  
 And when I rose, I found myself in prayer.

## THE NIGHTINGALE

A CONVERSATION POEM. APRIL 1798

NO cloud, no relique of the sunken day  
 Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip  
 Of sullen light, no obscure trembling hues.  
 Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge!  
 You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,  
 But hear no murmuring: it flows silently,  
 O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,  
 A balmy night! and though the stars be dim,  
 Yet let us think upon the vernal showers  
 That gladden the green earth, and we shall find  
 A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.  
 And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,  
 'Most musical, most melancholy' bird!<sup>1</sup>  
 A melancholy bird! Oh! idle thought!  
 In nature there is nothing melancholy.

<sup>1</sup> 'Most musical, most melancholy.' This passage in Milton possesses an excellence far superior to that of mere description. It is spoken in the character of the melancholy man, and has therefore a dramatic propriety. The author makes this remark, to rescue himself from the charge of having alluded with levity to a line in Milton.—C.

But some night-wandering man whose heart was  
pierced

With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,  
Or slow distemper, or neglected love  
(And so, poor wretch! filled all things with himself,  
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale  
Of his own sorrow), he, and such as he,  
First named these notes a melancholy strain.  
And many a poet echoes the conceit;  
Poet who hath been building up the rhyme  
When he had better far have stretched his limbs  
Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,  
By sun or moon-light, to the influxes  
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements  
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song  
And of his frame forgetful! so his fame  
Should share in Nature's immortality,  
A venerable thing! and so his song  
Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself  
Be loved like Nature! But 'twill not be so;  
And youths and maidens most poetical,  
Who lose the deepening twilights of the spring  
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still  
Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs  
O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.

My Friend, and thou, our Sister! we have learnt  
A different lore: we may not thus profane  
Nature's sweet voices, always full of love  
And joyance! 'Tis the merry Nightingale  
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates  
With fast thick warble his delicious notes,

As he were fearful that an April night  
Would be too short for him to utter forth  
His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul  
Of all its music !

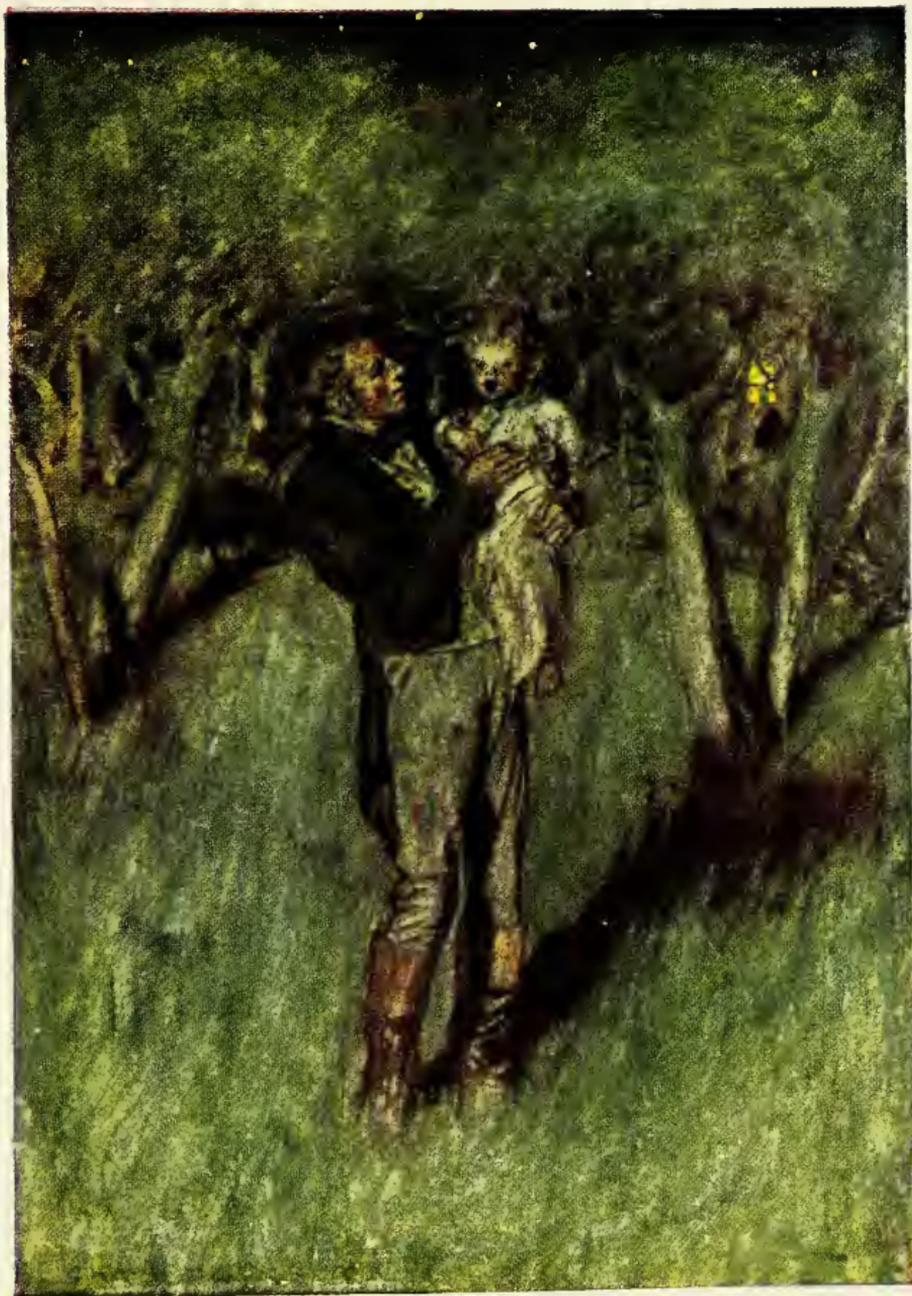
And I know a grove  
Of large extent, hard by a castle huge,  
Which the great lord inhabits not ; and so  
This grove is wild with tangling underwood,  
And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,  
Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.  
But never elsewhere in one place I knew  
So many nightingales ; and far and near,  
In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,  
They answer and provoke each other's song,  
With skirmish and capricious passagings,  
And murmurs musical and swift ' jug-jug,'  
And one low piping sound more sweet than all—  
Stirring the air with such a harmony,  
That should you close your eyes, you might almost  
Forget it was not day ! On moonlit bushes,  
Whose dewy leaflets are but half disclosed,  
You may perchance behold them on the twigs,  
Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and  
full,  
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade  
Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle Maid,  
Who dwelleth in her hospitable home  
Hard by the castle, and at latest eve  
(Even like a lady vowed and dedicate  
To something more than Nature in the grove)

Glides through the pathways; she knows all their  
notes,

That gentle Maid! and oft a moment's space,  
What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,  
Hath heard a pause of silence; till the moon  
Emerging, hath awakened earth and sky  
With one sensation, and these wakeful birds  
Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,  
As if some sudden gale had swept at once  
A hundred airy harps! And she hath watched  
Many a nightingale perched giddily  
On blossomy twig still swinging from the breeze,  
And to that motion tune his wanton song  
Like tipsy joy that reels with tossing head.

Farewell, O Warbler! till to-morrow eve,  
And you, my friends! farewell, a short farewell!  
We have been loitering long and pleasantly,  
And now for our dear homes.—That strain again!  
Full fain it would delay me! My dear babe,  
Who, capable of no articulate sound,  
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,  
How he would place his hand beside his ear,  
His little hand, the small forefinger up,  
And bid us listen! And I deem it wise  
To make him Nature's playmate. He knows well  
The evening-star; and once, when he awoke  
In most distressful mood (some inward pain  
Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream)  
I hurried with him to our orchard plot,  
And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,  
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,  
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped tears,



And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,  
Suspends his sobs.

(The Nightingale.)



Did glitter in the yellow moonbeam! Well!—  
It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven  
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up  
Familiar with these songs, that with the night  
He may associate joy.—Once more, farewell,  
Sweet Nightingale! Once more, my friends! farewell.

## FROST AT MIDNIGHT

THE frost performs its secret ministry,  
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry  
Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before.  
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,  
Have left me to that solitude, which suits  
Abstruser musings: save that at my side  
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.  
'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs  
And vexes meditation with its strange  
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,  
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,  
With all the numberless goings on of life,  
Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame  
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;  
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,  
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.  
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature  
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,  
Making it a companionable form,  
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling spirit  
By its own moods interprets, everywhere  
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,  
And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,  
How oft, at school, with most believing mind,  
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,  
To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft,  
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt  
Of my sweet birthplace, and the old church-tower,  
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang  
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,  
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me  
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear  
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!  
So gazed I, till the soothing things I dreamt  
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!  
And so I brooded all the following morn,  
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye  
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:  
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched  
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,  
For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,  
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,  
My playmate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,  
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,  
Fill up the interspersed vacancies  
And momentary pauses of the thought!  
My Babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart  
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,  
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore  
And in far other scenes! For I was reared  
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,  
And saw naught lovely but the sky and stars.  
But thou, my Babe! shalt wander like a breeze

By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags  
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,  
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores  
And mountain crags : so shalt thou see and hear  
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible  
Of that eternal language, which thy God  
Utters, who from eternity doth teach  
Himself in all, and all things in himself.  
Great universal Teacher ! he shall mould  
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,  
Whether the summer clothe the general earth  
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing  
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch  
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch  
Smokes in the sun-thaw ; whether the eave-drops fall,  
Heard only in the trances of the blast,  
Or if the secret ministry of frost  
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,  
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

## THE THREE GRAVES

### A FRAGMENT OF A SEXTON'S TALE

[The Author has published the following humble fragment, encouraged by the decisive recommendation of more than one of our most celebrated living Poets. The language was intended to be dramatic ; that is suited to the narrator ; and the metre corresponds to the homeliness of the diction. It is therefore presented as the fragment, not of a Poem, but of a common Ballad-tale. Whether this is sufficient to justify the adoption of such a style, in any metrical composition not professedly ludicrous, the Author is

himself in some doubt. At all events, it is not presented as poetry, and it is in no way connected with the Author's judgment concerning poetic diction. Its merits, if any, are exclusively psychological. The story which must be supposed to have been narrated in the first and second parts is as follows.

Edward, a young farmer, meets at the house of Ellen her bosom friend Mary, and commences an acquaintance, which ends in a mutual attachment. With her consent, and by the advice of their common friend Ellen, he announces his hopes and intentions to Mary's mother, a widow-woman bordering on her fortiefti year, and from constant health, the possession of a competent property, and from having had no other children but Mary and another daughter (the father died in their infancy), retaining for the greater part her personal attractions and comeliness of appearance; but a woman of low education and violent temper. The answer which she at once returned to Edward's application was remarkable—'Well, Edward! you are a handsome young fellow, and you shall have my daughter.' From this time all their wooing passed under the mother's eye; and, in fine, she became herself enamoured of her future son-in-law, and practised every art, both of endearment and of calumny, to transfer his affections from her daughter to herself. (The outlines of the Tale are positive facts, and of no very distant date, though the Author has purposely altered the names and the scene of action, as well as invented the characters of the parties and the detail of the incidents.) Edward, however, though perplexed by her strange detractions from her daughter's good qualities, yet in the innocence of his own heart still mistaking her increasing fondness for motherly affection, she at length, overcome by her miserable passion, after much abuse of Mary's temper and moral tendencies, exclaimed with violent emotion—'O Edward! indeed, indeed, she is not fit for you—she has not a heart to love you as you deserve. It is I that love you! Marry me, Edward! and I will this very day settle all my property on you.' The lover's eyes were now opened; and thus taken by surprise, whether from the effect of the horror which he felt, acting as it were hysterically on his nervous system, or that at the first moment he lost the sense of guilt of the proposal in the feeling of its strangeness and absurdity, he flung her from him and burst into a fit of laughter. Irritated by this almost to frenzy, the woman fell on her knees, and in a loud voice that approached to a scream, she prayed for a curse both on him and on her own child. Mary happened to be in the room directly above them, heard Edward's laugh, and

her mother's blasphemous prayer, and fainted away. He, hearing the fall, ran upstairs, and taking her in his arms, carried her off to Ellen's home; and after some fruitless attempts on her part toward a reconciliation with her mother, she was married to him.— And here the third part of the Tale begins.

I was not led to choose this story from any partiality to tragic, much less to monstrous events (though at the time that I composed the verses, somewhat more than twelve years ago, I was less averse to such subjects than at present), but from finding in it a striking proof of the possible effect on the imagination, from an Idea violently and suddenly impressed on it. I had been reading Bryan Edwards's account of the effect of the Oby witchcraft on the Negroes in the West Indies, and Hearne's deeply interesting anecdotes of similar workings on the imagination of the Copper Indians (those of my readers who have it in their power will be well repaid for the trouble of referring to those works for the passages alluded to), and I conceived the design of showing that instances of this kind are not peculiar to savage or barbarous tribes, and of illustrating the mode in which the mind is affected in these cases, and the progress and symptoms of the morbid action on the fancy from the beginning.

The Tale is supposed to be narrated by an old Sexton, in a country churchyard, to a traveller whose curiosity had been awakened by the appearance of three graves, close by each other, to two only of which there were gravestones. On the first of these was the name, and dates, as usual: on the second, no name, but only a date, and the words, 'The Mercy of God is infinite.']

THE grapes upon the Vicar's wall  
 Were ripe as ripe could be;  
 And yellow leaves in sun and wind  
 Were falling from the tree.

On the hedge-elms in the narrow lane  
 Still swung the spikes of corn:  
 Dear Lord! it seems but yesterday—  
 Young Edward's marriage-morn.

Up through that wood behind the church,  
There leads from Edward's door  
A mossy track, all over-boughed,  
For half a mile or more.

And from their house-door by that track  
The bride and bridegroom went ;  
Sweet Mary, though she was not gay,  
Seemed cheerful and content.

But when they to the churchyard came,  
I've heard poor Mary say,  
As soon as she stepped into the sun,  
Her heart it died away.

And when the Vicar joined their hands  
Her limbs did creep and freeze ;  
But when they prayed, she thought she saw  
Her mother on her knees.

And o'er the church-path they returned—  
I saw poor Mary's back,  
Just as she stepped beneath the boughs  
Into the mossy track.

Her feet upon the mossy track  
The married maiden set :  
That moment—I have heard her say—  
She wished she could forget.

The shade o'er-flushed her limbs with heat—  
Then came a chill like death :  
And when the merry bells rang out,  
They seemed to stop her breath,

Beneath the foulest mother's curse  
No child could ever thrive :  
A mother is a mother still,  
The holiest thing alive.

So five months passed : the mother still  
Would never heal the strife ;  
But Edward was a loving man,  
And Mary a fond wife.

' My sister may not visit us,  
My mother says her nay,  
O Edward ! you are all to me,  
I wish for your sake I could be  
More lifesome and more gay.

' I'm dull and sad ! indeed, indeed  
I know I have no reason !  
Perhaps I am not well in health,  
And 'tis a gloomy season.'

'Twas a drizzly time—no ice, no snow !  
And on the few fine days  
She stirred not out, lest she might meet  
Her mother in the ways.

But Ellen, in spite of miry ways  
And weather dark and dreary,  
Trudged every day to Edward's house,  
And made them all more cheery.

Oh ! Ellen was a faithful friend,  
More dear than any sister !  
As cheerful too as singing lark ;  
And she ne'er left them till 'twas dark,  
And then they always missed her.

And now Ash-Wednesday came—that day  
But few to church repair :  
For on that day you know we read  
The Commination prayer.

Our late old Vicar, a kind man,  
Once, Sir, he said to me,  
He wished that service was clean out  
Of our good liturgy.

The mother walked into the church—  
To Ellen's seat she went :  
Though Ellen always kept her church  
All church-days during Lent.

And gentle Ellen welcomed her  
With courteous looks and mild :  
Thought she, 'What if her heart should melt,  
And all be reconciled !'

The day was scarcely like a day—  
The clouds were black outright :  
And many a night, with half a moon  
I've seen the church more light.

The wind was wild ; against the glass  
The rain did beat and bicker ;  
The church-tower swinging overhead,  
You scarce could hear the Vicar !

And then and there the mother knelt,  
And audibly she cried—  
'Oh ! may a clinging curse consume  
This woman by my side !

‘O hear me, hear me, Lord in Heaven.  
Although you take my life—  
O curse this woman, at whose house  
Young Edward woo’d his wife.

‘By night and day, in bed and bower,  
O let her cursed be!’  
So having prayed, steady and slow,  
She rose up from her knee,  
And left the church, nor e’er again  
The church-door entered she.

I saw poor Ellen kneeling still,  
So pale, I guessed not why :  
When she stood up, there plainly was  
A trouble in her eye.

And when the prayers were done, we all  
Came round and asked her why :  
Giddy she seemed, and sure there was  
A trouble in her eye.

But ere she from the church-door stepped  
She smiled and told us why :  
‘It was a wicked woman’s curse,’  
Quoth she, ‘and what care I?’

She smiled, and smiled, and passed it off  
Ere from the door she stept—  
But all agree it would have been  
Much better had she wept.

And if her heart was not at ease,  
This was her constant cry—  
‘It was a wicked woman’s curse—  
God’s good, and what care I?’

There was a hurry in her looks,  
Her struggles she redoubled :  
'It was a wicked woman's curse,  
And why should I be troubled?'

These tears will come—I dandled her  
When 'twas the merest fairy—  
Good creature! and she hid it all :  
She told it not to Mary.

But Mary heard the tale : her arms  
Round Ellen's neck she threw ;  
'O Ellen, Ellen, she cursed me,  
And now she hath cursed you!'

I saw young Edward by himself  
Stalk fast adown the lee,  
He snatched a stick from every fence,  
A twig from every tree.

He snapped them still with hand or knee,  
And then away they flew !  
As if with his uneasy limbs  
He knew not what to do !

You see, good sir ! that single hill ?  
His farm lies underneath ;  
He heard it there, he heard it all,  
And only gnashed his teeth.

Now Ellen was a darling love  
In all his joys and cares :  
And Ellen's name and Mary's name  
Fast-linked they both together came,  
Whene'er he said his prayers.

And in the moment of his prayers  
He loved them both alike;  
Yea, both sweet names with one sweet joy  
Upon his heart did strike!

He reached his home, and by his looks  
They saw his inward strife:  
And they clung round him with their arms,  
Both Ellen and his wife.

And Mary could not check her tears,  
So on his breast she bowed;  
Then frenzy melted into grief,  
And Edward wept aloud.

Dear Ellen did not weep at all,  
But closelier did she cling,  
And turned her face and looked as if  
She saw some frightful thing.

## PART IV

To see a man tread over graves  
I hold it no good mark;  
'Tis wicked in the sun and moon,  
And bad luck in the dark!

You see that grave? The Lord He gives,  
The Lord He takes away:  
O Sir! the child of my old age  
Lies there as cold as clay.

Except that grave, you scarce see one  
That was not dug by me!  
I'd rather dance upon 'em all  
Than tread upon these three!

'Ay, Sexton! 'tis a touching tale.'  
You, Sir! are but a lad;  
This month I'm in my seventieth year,  
And still it makes me sad.

And Mary's sister told it me,  
For three good hours and more,  
Though I had heard it, in the main,  
From Edward's self before.

Well! it passed off! the gentle Ellen  
Did well nigh dote on Mary;  
And she went oftener than before,  
And Mary loved her more and more;  
She managed all the dairy.

To market she on market-days,  
To church on Sundays came;  
All seemed the same: all seemed so, Sir!  
But all was not the same!

Had Ellen lost her mirth? Oh! no!  
But she was seldom cheerful;  
And Edward looked as if he thought  
That Ellen's mirth was fearful.

When by herself, she to herself  
Must sing some merry rhyme;  
She could not now be glad for hours,  
Yet silent all the time.



'Ay, Sexton! 'tis a touching tale'

(The Three Graves.)



And while she soothed her friend, through all  
Her soothing words 'twas plain  
She had a sore grief of her own,  
A haunting in her brain.

And oft she said, I'm not grown thin!  
And then her wrist she spanned;  
And once when Mary was downcast,  
She took her by the hand,  
And gazed upon her, and at first  
She gently pressed her hand;

Then harder, till her grasp at length  
Did gripe like a convulsion!  
Alas! said she, we ne'er can be  
Made happy by compulsion!

And once her both arms suddenly  
Round Mary's neck she flung,  
And her heart panted, and she felt  
The words upon her tongue.

She felt them coming, but no power  
Had she the words to smother;  
And with a kind of shriek she cried,  
'O Christ! you're like your mother!'

So gentle Ellen now no more  
Could make this sad house cheery;  
And Mary's melancholy ways  
Drove Edward wild and weary.

Lingering he raised his latch at eve,  
Though tired in heart and limb:  
He loved no other place, and yet  
Home was no home to him.

One evening he took up a book,  
And nothing in it read ;  
Then flung it down, and groaning cried,  
'Oh! Heaven! that I were dead.'

Mary looked up into his face,  
And nothing to him said ;  
She tried to smile, and on his arm  
Mournfully leaned her head.

And he burst into tears, and fell  
Upon his knees in prayer :  
'Her heart is broke! O God! my grief,  
It is too great to bear!'

'Twas such a foggy time as makes  
Old sextons, Sir! like me,  
Rest on their spades to cough; the spring  
Was late uncommonly.

And then the hot days, all at once,  
They came, we knew not how :  
You looked about for shade, when scarce  
A leaf was on a bough.

It happened then ('twas in the bower  
A furlong up the wood :  
Perhaps you know the place, and yet  
I scarce know how you should) ;

No path leads thither, 'tis not nigh  
To any pasture-plot ;  
But clustered near the chattering brook,  
Lone hollies marked the spot.

Those hollies of themselves a shape  
As of an arbour took,  
A close, round arbour ; and it stands  
Not three strides from a brook.

Within this arbour, which was still  
With scarlet berries hung,  
Were these three friends, one Sunday morn  
Just as the first bell rung.

'Tis sweet to hear a brook, 'tis sweet  
To hear the Sabbath-bell,  
'Tis sweet to hear them both at once  
Deep in a woody dell.

His limbs along the moss, his head  
Upon a mossy heap,  
With shut-up senses, Edward lay :  
That brook e'en on a working day  
Might chatter one to sleep.

And he had passed a restless night,  
And was not well in health ;  
The women sat down by his side,  
And talked as 'twere by stealth.

'The sun peeps through the close thick leaves,  
See, dearest Ellen ! see !  
'Tis in the leaves, a little sun,  
No bigger than your ee ;

'A tiny sun, and it has got  
A perfect glory too ;  
Ten thousand threads and hairs of light,  
Make up a glory, gay and bright,  
Round that small orb, so blue.'

And then they argued of those rays,  
What colour they might be ;  
Says this, 'They're mostly green ;' says that,  
'They're amber-like to me.'

So they sat chatting, while bad thoughts  
Were troubling Edward's rest ;  
But soon they heard his hard quick pants,  
And the thumping in his breast.

'A mother too !' these self-same words  
Did Edward mutter plain ;  
His face was drawn back on itself,  
With horror and huge pain.

Both groaned at once, for both knew well  
What thoughts were in his mind ;  
When he waked up, and stared like one  
That hath been just struck blind.

He sat upright ; and ere the dream  
Had had time to depart,  
'O God, forgive me ! (he exclaimed)  
I have torn out her heart.'

Then Ellen shrieked, and forthwith burst  
Into ungentle laughter ;  
And Mary shivered, where she sat,  
And never she smiled after.

Carmen reliquum in futurum tempus relegatum. To-morrow !  
and To-morrow ! and To-morrow !—

## ODES AND MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

### DEJECTION : AN ODE

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,  
With the old Moon in her arm ;  
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear !  
We shall have a deadly storm.

*Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens.*

WELL ! if the Bard was weather-wise who made  
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spens,  
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence  
Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade  
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,  
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes  
Upon the strings of this Eolian lute,  
Which better far were mute.  
For lo ! the new Moon winter-bright !  
And overspread with phantom light  
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread  
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread),  
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling  
The coming on of rain and squally blast.  
And oh ! that even now the gust were swelling,  
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast !  
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they  
awed,  
And sent my soul abroad,  
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,  
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and  
live !

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,  
 A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,  
 Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,  
     In word, or sigh, or tear—  
 O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,  
 To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,  
 All this long eve, so balmy and serene,  
 Have I been gazing on the western sky,  
     And its peculiar tint of yellow green :  
 And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye !  
 And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,  
 That give away their motion to the stars ;  
 Those stars, that glide behind them or between,  
 Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen :  
 Yon crescent Moon as fixed as if it grew  
 In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue ;  
 I see them all so excellently fair,  
 I see, not feel, how beautiful they are !

    My genial spirits fail ;  
     And what can these avail  
 To lift the smothering weight from off my breast ?  
     It were a vain endeavour,  
     Though I should gaze for ever  
 On that green light that lingers in the west :  
 I may not hope from outward forms to win  
 The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

O lady! we receive but what we give,  
 And in our life alone does nature live :  
 Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud !  
     And would we aught behold, of higher worth,

Than that inanimate cold world allowed  
 To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,  
 Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth,  
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud  
 Enveloping the Earth—  
 And from the soul itself must there be sent  
 A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,  
 Of all sweet sounds the life and element !

O pure of heart ! thou need'st not ask of me  
 What this strong music in the soul may be!  
 What, and wherein it doth exist,  
 This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,  
 This beautiful and beauty-making power.

Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,  
 Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,  
 Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,  
 Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,  
 Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,

A new Earth and new Heaven,  
 Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud—  
 Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—

We in ourselves rejoice !  
 And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight.  
 All melodies the echoes of that voice,  
 All colours a suffusion from that light.

There was a time when, though my path was rough,  
 This joy within me dallied with distress,  
 And all misfortunes were but as the stuff  
 Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness.  
 For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,  
 And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.

But now afflictions bow me down to earth :  
 Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,  
     But oh ! each visitation  
 Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,  
     My shaping spirit of Imagination.  
 For not to think of what I needs must feel,  
     But to be still and patient, all I can ;  
 And haply by abstruse research to steal  
     From my own nature all the natural man—  
     This was my sole resource, my only plan :  
 Till that which suits a part infects the whole,  
 And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,  
     Reality's dark dream !

I turn from you, and listen to the wind,  
     Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream  
 Of agony by torture lengthened out  
 That lute sent forth ! Thou Wind, that ravest without,  
     Bare craig, or mountain-tairn,<sup>1</sup> or blasted tree,  
 Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,  
 Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,  
     Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,  
 Mad Lutanist ! who in this month of showers,  
 Of dark brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,  
 Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,  
 The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.  
     Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds !  
 Thou mighty Poet, e'en to frenzy bold !

<sup>1</sup> Tairn is a small lake, generally, if not always, applied to the lakes up in the mountains, and which are the feeders of those in the valleys. This address to the Storm-wind will not appear extravagant to those who have heard it at night, and in a mountainous country.

What tell'st thou now about ?

'Tis of the rushing of a host in rout,  
With groans of trampled men, with smarting  
wounds—

At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the  
cold !

But hush ! there is a pause of deepest silence !

And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,  
With groans, and tremulous shudderings—all is over—

It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and  
loud !

A tale of less affright,  
And tempered with delight,

As Otway's self had framed the tender lay—

'Tis of a little child

Upon a lonesome wild,

Not far from home, but she hath lost her way :

And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,

And now screams loud, and hopes to make her  
mother hear.

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep :

Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep !

Visit her, gentle Sleep ! with wings of healing,

And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,

May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,

Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth !

With light heart may she rise,

Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,

Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice ;

To her may all things live, from pole to pole,

Their life the eddying of her living soul !

O simple spirit, guided from above,  
 Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,  
 Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

ODE TO GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF  
 DEVONSHIRE

ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH STANZA IN HER 'PASSAGE  
 OVER MOUNT GOTHARD'

'And hail the chapel! hail the platform wild  
 Where Tell directed the avenging dart,  
 With well-strung arm, that first preserved his child,  
 Then aimed the arrow at the tyrant's heart.'

**S**PLENDOR'S fondly fostered child!  
 And did you hail the platform wild,  
 Where once the Austrian fell  
 Beneath the shaft of Tell!  
 O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!  
 Whence learn'd you that heroic measure?

Light as a dream your days their circlets ran,  
 From all that teaches brotherhood to Man  
 Far, far removed! from want, from hope, from fear!  
 Enchanting music lulled your infant ear,  
 Obeisance, praises soothed your infant heart:  
 Emblazonments and old ancestral crests,  
 With many a bright obtrusive form of art,  
 Detained your eye from nature: stately vests,  
 That veiling strove to deck your charms divine,  
 Rich viands and the pleasurable wine,  
 Were yours unearned by toil; nor could you see  
 The unenjoying toiler's misery.

And yet, free Nature's uncorrupted child,  
 You hailed the chapel and the platform wild,  
     Where once the Austrian fell  
     Beneath the shaft of Tell!  
 O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!  
 Whence learn'd you that heroic measure?

There crowd your finely-fibred frame,  
     All living faculties of bliss;  
 And Genius to your cradle came,  
 His forehead wreathed with lambent flame,  
     And bending low, with godlike kiss  
     Breathed in a more celestial life;  
 But boasts not many a fair compeer,  
     A heart as sensitive to joy and fear?  
 And some, perchance, might wage an equal strife,  
 Some few, to nobler being wrought,  
 Co-rivals in the nobler gift of thought.  
     Yet these delight to celebrate  
     Laurelled war and plummy state;  
     Or in verse and music dress  
     Tales of rustic happiness—  
 Pernicious tales! insidious strains!  
     That steel the rich man's breast,  
     And mock the lot unblest,  
 The sordid vices and the abject pains,  
 Which evermore must be  
 The doom of ignorance and penury!  
 But you, free Nature's uncorrupted child,  
 You hailed the chapel and the platform wild,  
     Where once the Austrian fell  
     Beneath the shaft of Tell!

O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure !  
 Whence learn'd you that heroic measure ?

You were a mother ! That most holy name,  
 Which Heaven and Nature bless,  
 I may not vilely prostitute to those  
 Whose infants owe them less  
 Than the poor caterpillar owes  
 Its gaudy parent fly.

You were a mother ! at your bosom fed  
 The babes that loved you. You, with laughing  
 eye,

Each twilight-thought, each nascent feeling read,  
 Which you yourself created. Oh ! delight !

A second time to be a mother,  
 Without the mother's bitter groans :

Another thought, and yet another,

By touch, or taste, by looks or tones

O'er the growing sense to roll,

The mother of your infant's soul !

The Angels of the Earth, who, while he guides

His chariot-planet round the goal of day,

All trembling gazes on the eye of God,

A moment turned his awful face away ;

And as he viewed you, from his aspect sweet

New influences in your being rose,

Blest intuitions and communions fleet

With living Nature, in her joys and woes !

Thenceforth your soul rejoiced to see

The shrine of social Liberty !

O beautiful ! O Nature's child !

'Twas thence you hailed the platform wild

Where once the Austrian fell  
 Beneath the shaft of Tell!  
 O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!  
 Thence learn'd you that heroic measure.

## ODE TO TRANQUILLITY

TRANQUILLITY! thou better name  
 Than all the family of Fame!  
 Thou ne'er wilt leave my riper age  
 To low intrigue, or factious rage;  
 For oh! dear child of thoughtful Truth,  
 To thee I gave my early youth,  
 And left the bark, and blest the steadfast shore,  
 Ere yet the tempest rose and scared me with its roar.

Who late and lingering seeks thy shrine,  
 On him but seldom, Power divine,  
 Thy spirit rests! Satiety  
 And Sloth, poor counterfeits of thee,  
 Mock the tired worldling. Idle hope  
 And dire remembrance interlope,  
 To vex the feverish slumbers of the mind:  
 The bubble floats before, the spectre stalks behind.

But me thy gentle hand will lead  
 At morning rough the accustomed mead;  
 And in the sultry summer's heat  
 Will build me up a mossy seat;  
 And when the gust of Autumn crowds,  
 And breaks the busy moonlight clouds,  
 Thou best the thought canst raise, the heart attune,  
 Light as the busy clouds, calm as the gliding moon.

The feeling heart, the searching soul,  
 To thee I dedicate the whole!  
 And while within myself I trace  
 The greatness of some future race,  
 Aloof with hermit-eye I scan  
 The present works of present man—  
 A wild and dream-like trade of blood and guile,  
 Too foolish for a tear, too wicked for a smile!

LINES TO W. L.

WHILE HE SANG A SONG TO PURCELL'S MUSIC

WHILE my young cheek retains its healthful  
 hues,  
 And I have many friends who hold me dear;  
 L——! methinks, I would not often hear  
 Such melodies as thine, lest I should lose  
 All memory of the wrongs and sore distress,  
 For which my miserable brethren weep!  
 But should uncomforted misfortunes steep  
 My daily bread in tears and bitterness;  
 And if at death's dread moment I should lie,  
 With no beloved face at my bed-side,  
 To fix the last glance of my closing eye,  
 Methinks, such strains, breathed by my angel-  
 guide,  
 Would make me pass the cup of anguish by,  
 Mix with the blest, nor know that I had died!

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG MAN OF  
FORTUNE

WHO ABANDONED HIMSELF TO AN INDOLENT AND  
CAUSELESS MELANCHOLY

HENCE that fantastic wantonness of woe,  
O Youth to partial Fortune vainly dear!  
To plundered want's half-sheltered hovel go,  
Go, and some hunger-bitten infant hear  
Moan haply in a dying mother's ear:  
Or when the cold and dismal fog-damps brood  
O'er the rank churchyard with sear elm-leaves strewed,  
Pace round some widow's grave, whose dearer part  
Was slaughtered, where o'er his uncoffined limbs  
The flocking flesh-birds screamed. Then, while thy  
heart  
Groans, and thine eye a fiercer sorrow dims,  
Know (and the truth shall kindle thy young mind)  
What nature makes thee mourn, she bids thee heal!  
O object! if, to sickly dreams resigned,  
All effortless thou leave life's common-weal  
A prey to tyrants, murderers of mankind.

MELANCHOLY

A FRAGMENT

STRETCHED on a mouldered Abbey's broadest  
wall,  
Where ruining ivies propped the ruins steep—  
Her folded arms wrapping her tattered pall,  
Had Melancholy mused herself to sleep.

The fern was pressed beneath her hair,  
 The dark green adder's tongue was there ;  
 And still as past the flagging sea-gale weak,  
 The long lank leaf bowed fluttering o'er her cheek.

That pallid cheek was flushed : her eager look  
 Beamed eloquent in slumber ! Inly wrought,  
 Imperfect sounds her moving lips forsook,  
 And her bent forehead worked with troubled  
 thought.  
 Strange was the dream——

### A CHRISTMAS CAROL

THE shepherds went their hasty way,  
 And found the lowly stable-shed  
 Where the Virgin-Mother lay :  
 And now they checked their eager tread.  
 For to the Babe, that at her bosom clung,  
 A mother's song the Virgin-Mother sung.

They told her how a glorious light,  
 Streaming from a heavenly throng,  
 Around them shone, suspending night !  
 While sweeter than a mother's song,  
 Blest Angels heralded the Saviour's birth,  
 'Glory to God on high ! and Peace on Earth.'

She listened to the tale divine,  
 And closer still the Babe she prest ;  
 And while she cried, ' The Babe is mine !'  
 The milk rushed faster to her breast :  
 Joy rose within her, like a summer's morn ;  
 Peace, Peace on Earth ! the Prince of Peace is born.

Thou Mother of the Prince of Peace,  
 Poor, simple, and of low estate!  
 That strife should vanish, battle cease,  
 O why should this thy soul elate?  
 Sweet music's loudest note, the poet's story,——  
 Didst thou ne'er love to hear of fame and glory?

And is not War a youthful king,  
 A stately hero clad in mail?  
 Beneath his footsteps laurels spring;  
 Him Earth's majestic monarchs hail  
 Their friend, their playmate! and his bold bright eye  
 Compels the maiden's love-confessing sigh.

'Tell this in some more courtly scene,  
 To maids and youths in robes of state!  
 I am a woman poor and mean,  
 And therefore is my soul elate.  
 War is a ruffian, all with guilt defiled,  
 That from the aged father tears his child!

'A murderous fiend, by fiends adored,  
 He kills the sire and starves the son;  
 The husband kills, and from her board  
 Steals all his widow's toil had won;  
 Plunders God's world of beauty; rends away  
 All safety from the night, all comfort from the day.

'Then wisely is my soul elate  
 That strife should vanish, battle cease:  
 I'm poor and of a low estate,  
 The Mother of the Prince of Peace.  
 Joy rises in me, like a summer's morn:  
 Peace, Peace on Earth! the Prince of Peace is born.'

## HUMAN LIFE

## ON THE DENIAL OF IMMORTALITY

**I**F dead, we cease to be ; if total gloom  
 Swallow up life's brief flash for aye, we fare  
 As summer-gusts, of sudden birth and doom,  
 Whose sound and motion not alone declare,  
 But are their whole of being ! If the breath  
 Be life itself, and not its task and tent,  
 If even a soul like Milton's can know death ;  
 O Man ! thou vessel purposeless, unmeant,  
 Yet drone-hive strange of phantom purposes !  
 Surplus of nature's dread activity,  
 Which, as she gazed on some nigh-finished vase  
 Retreating slow, with meditative pause,  
 She formed with restless hands unconsciously !  
 Blank accident ! nothing's anomaly !  
 If rootless thus, thus substanceless thy state,  
 Go, weigh thy dreams, and be thy hopes, thy fears,  
 The counter-weights !—Thy laughter and thy tears  
 Mean but themselves, each fittest to create,  
 And to repay the other ! Why rejoices  
 Thy heart with hollow joy for hollow good ?  
 Why cowl thy face beneath the mourner's hood  
 Why waste thy sighs, and thy lamenting voices,  
 Image of image, ghost of ghostly elf,  
 That such a thing as thou feel'st warm or cold ?  
 Yet what and whence thy gain, if thou withhold  
 These costless shadows of thy shadowy self ?  
 Be sad ! be glad ! be neither ! seek, or shun !  
 Thou hast no reason why ! Thou canst have none ;  
 Thy being's being is contradiction.

## THE VISIT OF THE GODS

IMITATED FROM SCHILLER

NEVER, believe me,  
Appear the Immortals,  
Never alone :

Scarce had I welcomed the sorrow-beguiler,  
Iacchus ! but in came boy Cupid the smiler ;  
Lo ! Phoebus the glorious descends from his throne !  
They advance, they float in, the Olympians all !  
With divinities fills my  
Terrestrial hall !

How shall I yield you  
Due entertainment,  
Celestial quire ?

Me rather, bright guests ! with your wings of up-  
buoyance  
Bear aloft to your homes, to your banquets of joyance,  
That the roofs of Olympus may echo my lyre !  
Hah ! we mount ! on their pinions they waft up my soul !  
O give me the nectar !  
O fill me the bowl !

Give him the nectar !  
Pour out for the poet,  
Hebe ! pour free !

Quicken his eyes with celestial dew,  
That Styx the detested no more he may view,  
And like one of us Gods may conceit him to be !  
Thanks, Hebe ! I quaff it ! Io Pæan, I cry !  
The wine of the Immortals  
Forbids me to die !

## THE PANG MORE SHARP THAN ALL

## AN ALLEGORY

HE too has flitted from his secret nest,  
 Hope's last and dearest Child without a  
 name!—

Has flitted from me, like the warmthless flame,  
 That makes false promise of a place of rest  
 To the tired Pilgrim's still believing mind ;—  
 Or like some Elfin Knight in kingly court,  
 Who having won all guerdons in his sport,  
 Glides out of view, and whither none can find !

Yes ! He hath flitted from me—with what aim,  
 Or why, I know not ! 'Twas a home of bliss,  
 And He was innocent, as the pretty shame  
 Of babe, that tempts and shuns the menaced kiss,  
 From its twy-cluster'd hiding-place of snow !  
 Pure as the babe, I ween, and all aglow  
 As the dear hopes, that swell the mother's breast—  
 Her eyes down gazing o'er her clasped charge ;—  
 Yet gay as that twice happy father's kiss,  
 That well might glance aside, yet never miss,  
 Where the sweet mark embossed so sweet a targe—  
 Twice wretched he who hath been doubly blest !

Like a loose blossom on a gusty night  
 He flitted from me—and has left behind  
 (As if to them his faith he ne'er did plight)  
 Of either sex and answerable mind  
 Two playmates, twin-births of his foster-dame :  
 The one a steady lad (Esteem he hight),

And Kindness is the gentler sister's name.  
 Dim likeness now, tho' fair she be and good,  
 Of that bright Boy who hath us all forsook ;—  
 But in his full-eyed aspect when she stood,  
 And while her face reflected every look,  
 And in reflection kindled—she became  
 So like Him, that almost she seemed the same !  
 Ah ! He is gone, and yet will not depart !—  
 Is with me still, yet I from Him exiled !  
 For still there lives within my secret heart  
 The magic image of the magic Child,  
 Which there He made up-grow by his strong art  
 As in that crystal orb—wise Merlin's feat,—  
 The wondrous ' World of Glass,' wherein inisled  
 All longed for things their beings did repeat ;—  
 And there He left it, like a Sylph beguiled,  
 To live and yearn and languish incomplete !

Can wit of man a heavier grief reveal ?  
 Can sharper pang from hate or scorn arise ?—  
 Yes ! one more sharp there is that deeper lies,  
 Which fond Esteem but mocks when he would heal.  
 Yet neither scorn nor hate did it devise,  
 But sad compassion and atoning zeal !  
 One pang more blighting-keen than hope betrayed !  
 And this it is my woeful hap to feel,  
 When at her Brother's hest, the twin-born Maid,  
 With face averted and unsteady eyes,  
 Her truant playmate's faded robe puts on ;  
 And inly shrinking from her own disguise  
 Enacts the faery Boy that's lost and gone.  
 O worse than all ! O pang all pangs above,  
 Is Kindness counterfeiting absent Love !

## KUBLA KHAN: OR, A VISION IN A DREAM

### A FRAGMENT

In the summer of the year 1797, the author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effect of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in 'Purchas's Pilgrimage': 'Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto: and thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall.' The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses; during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone had been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter:

Then all the charm  
Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair,  
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,  
And each mis-shape the other. Stay awhile,  
Poor youth! who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes—  
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon  
The visions will return! And lo! he stays,  
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms  
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more  
The pool becomes a mirror.

Yet from the still surviving recollections in his mind, the Author has frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him. *Ἀύριον ἄδιον ἄσω*: but the to-morrow is yet to come.

As a contrast to this vision, I have annexed a fragment of a very different character, describing with equal fidelity the dream of pain and disease.—1816.

**I**N Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled round:  
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;  
And here were forests ancient as the hills,  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted  
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!  
A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!  
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,  
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing.  
A mighty fountain momentarily was forced:  
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst  
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,  
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:  
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever  
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion  
 Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,  
 Then reached the caverns measureless to man,  
 And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean :  
 And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far  
 Ancestral voices prophesying war !

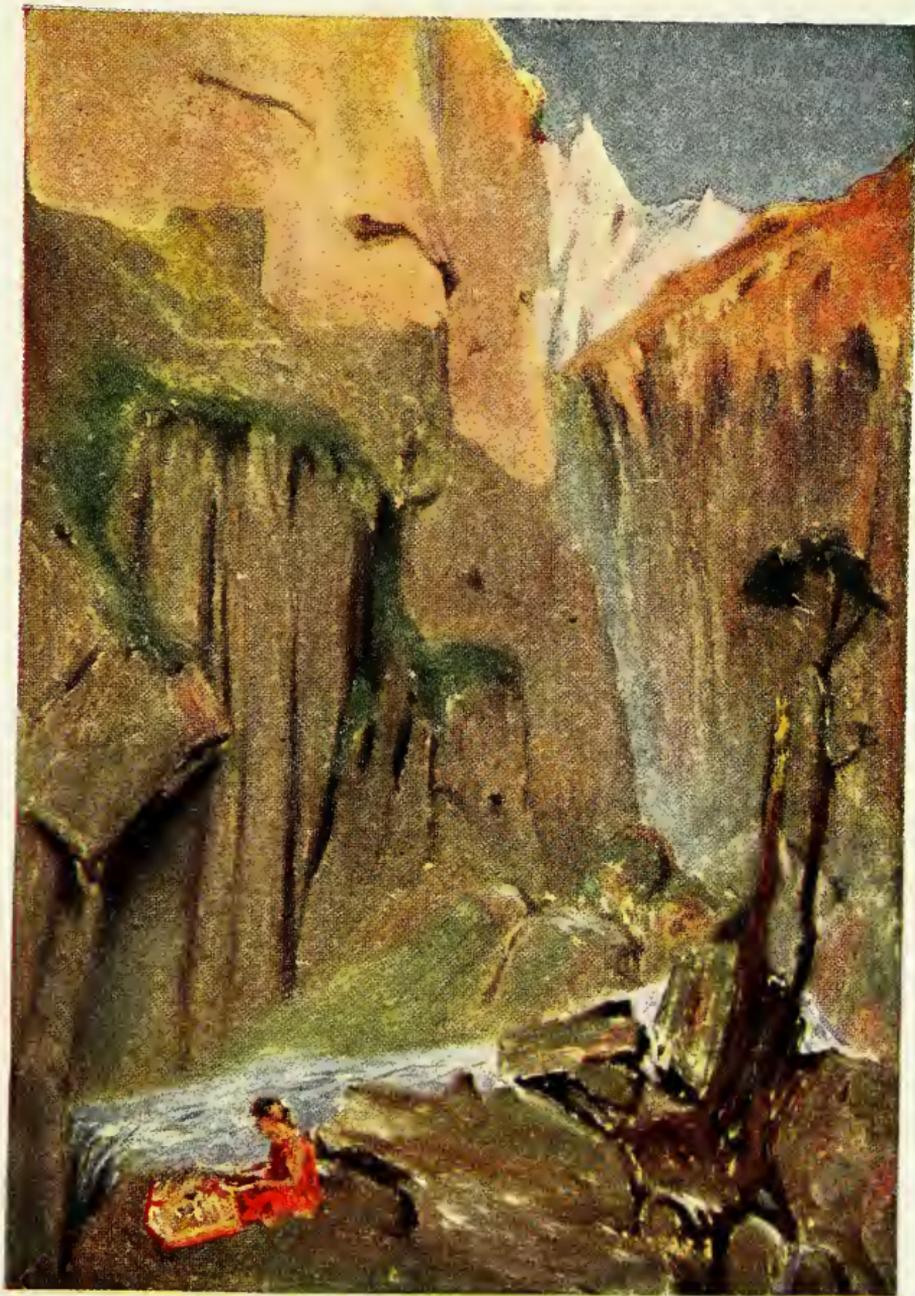
The shadow of the dome of pleasure  
 Floated midway on the waves ;  
 Where was heard the mingled measure  
 From the fountain and the caves.

It was a miracle of rare device,  
 A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice !

A damsel with a dulcimer  
 In a vision once I saw :  
 It was an Abyssinian maid,  
 And on her dulcimer she played,  
 Singing of Mount Abora.

Could I revive within me  
 Her symphony and song,  
 To such a deep delight 'twould win me

That with music loud and long,  
 I would build that dome in air,  
 That sunny dome ! those caves of ice !  
 And all who heard should see them there,  
 And all should cry, Beware ! Beware !  
 His flashing eyes, his floating hair !  
 Weave a circle round him thrice,  
 And close your eyes with holy dread,  
 For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
 And drunk the milk of Paradise.



It was an Abyssinian maid,  
And on her dulcimer she played.

(Kubla Khan.)



## THE PAINS OF SLEEP

**E**RE on my bed my limbs I lay,  
 It hath not been my use to pray  
 With moving lips or bended knees ;  
 But silently, by slow degrees,  
 My spirit I to Love compose,  
 In humble trust mine eyelids close,  
 With reverential resignation,  
 No wish conceived, no thought exprest,  
 Only a sense of supplication ;  
 A sense o'er all my soul imprest  
 That I am weak, yet not unblest,  
 Since in me, round me, everywhere  
 Eternal strength and wisdom are.

But yester-night I prayed aloud  
 In anguish and in agony,  
 Up-starting from the fiendish crowd  
 Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me :  
 A lurid light, a trampling throng,  
 Sense of intolerable wrong,  
 And whom I scorned, those only strong  
 Thirst of revenge, the powerless will  
 Still baffled, and yet burning still !  
 Desire with loathing strangely mixed  
 On wild or hateful objects fixed.  
 Fantastic passions ! maddening brawl !  
 And shame and terror over all !  
 Deeds to be hid which were not hid,  
 Which all confused I could not know,  
 Whether I suffered, or I did :

For all seemed guilt, remorse, or woe,  
My own or others, still the same  
Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame.

So two nights passed : the night's dismay  
Saddened and stunned the coming day.  
Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me  
Distemper's worst calamity.  
The third night, when my own loud scream  
Had waked me from the fiendish dream,  
O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,  
I wept as I had been a child ;  
And having thus by tears subdued  
My anguish to a milder mood,  
Such punishments, I said, were due  
To natures deepliest stained with sin,—  
For aye entempesting anew  
The unfathomable hell within  
The horror of their deeds to view,  
To know and loathe, yet wish and do !  
Such griefs with such men well agree  
But wherefore, wherefore fall on me ?  
To be beloved is all I need,  
And whom I love, I love indeed.

## PROSE IN RHYME

### OR, EPIGRAMS, MORALITIES, AND THINGS WITHOUT A NAME

"Ερως ἄει λάγνηδρος ἔταιρος.

In many ways does the full heart reveal  
The presence of the love it would conceal :  
But in far more th' estranged heart lets know  
The absence of the love, which yet it fain would show.

### DUTY SURVIVING SELF-LOVE

THE ONLY SURE FRIEND OF DECLINING LIFE

A SOLILOQUY

UNCHANGED within to see all changed without  
Is a blank lot and hard to bear, no doubt.  
Yet why at other's Wanings shouldst thou fret ?  
Then only might'st thou feel a just regret,  
Hadst thou withheld thy love or hid thy light  
In selfish forethought of neglect and slight.  
O wiselier then, from feeble yearnings freed,  
*While, and on whom,* thou may'st—shine on! nor  
heed  
Whether the object by reflected light  
Return thy radiance or absorb it quite ;

And tho' thou notest from thy safe recess  
 Old friends burn dim, like lamps in noisome air,  
 Love them for what they *are*: nor love them less,  
 Because to *thee* they are not what they *were*.

## SONG

**T**HO' veiled in spires of myrtle wreath,  
 Love is a sword that cuts its sheath,  
 And thro' the clefts, itself has made,  
 We spy the flashes of the Blade!

But thro' the clefts, itself had made,  
 We likewise see love's flashing blade  
 By rust consumed or snapt in twain:  
 And only Hilt and Stump remain.

## PHANTOM OR FACT?

## A DIALOGUE IN VERSE

*Author*

**A** LOVELY form there sate beside my bed,  
 And such a feeding calm its presence shed,  
 A tender Love so pure from earthly leaven  
 That I unnethe the fancy might control,  
 'Twas my own spirit newly come from heaven  
 Wooing its gentle way into my soul!  
 But ah! the change—It had not stirred, and yet  
 Alas! that change how fain would I forget?

That shrinking back, like one that had mistook !  
 That weary, wandering, disavowing Look !  
 'Twas all another, feature, look, and frame,  
 And still, methought, I knew it was the same !

*Friend*

This riddling Tale, to what does it belong ?  
 Is't History ? Vision ? or an idle Song ?  
 Or rather say at once, within what space  
 Of Time this wild disastrous change took place ?

*Author*

Call it a *moment's* work (and such it seems),  
 This Tale's a Fragment from the Life of Dreams ;  
 But say, that years matured the silent strife,  
 And 'tis a Record from the Dream of Life.

## WORK WITHOUT HOPE

LINES COMPOSED 21ST FEBRUARY 1827

ALL Nature seems at work. Stags leave their lair—  
 The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—  
 And WINTER, slumbering in the open air,  
 Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring !  
 And I, the while, the sole unbusy thing,  
 Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where Amaranths blow,  
 Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.  
 Bloom, O ye Amaranths ! bloom for whom ye may,  
 For me ye bloom not ! Glide, rich streams, away !

With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll :  
 And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul ?  
 WORK WITHOUT HOPE draws nectar in a sieve,  
 And HOPE without an object cannot live.

### YOUTH AND AGE

**V**ERSE, a Breeze 'mid blossoms straying,  
 Where HOPE clung, feeding like a bee—  
 Both were mine ! Life went a maying  
                     With NATURE, HOPE, and POESY,  
                                     When I was young !  
*When* I was young ?—Ah, woeful **WHEN** !  
 Ah for the Change 'twixt Now and Then !  
 This breathing House not built with hands,  
 This body that does me grievous wrong,  
 O'er aery Cliffs and glittering Sands,  
 How lightly *then* it flashed along :—  
 Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,  
 On winding Lakes and Rivers wide,  
 That ask no aid of Sail or Oar,  
 That fear no spite of Wind or Tide !  
 Nought cared this Body for wind or weather  
 When **YOUTH** and I lived in't together.

FLOWERS are lovely ; LOVE is flower-like ;  
 FRIENDSHIP is a sheltering tree ;  
 O the Joys, that came down shower-like,  
 Of FRIENDSHIP, LOVE, and LIBERTY,  
                                     Ere I was old !

*Ere* I was old ? Ah woeful **ERE**,  
 Which tells me, **YOUTH**'s no longer here !

O YOUTH! for years so many and sweet,  
 'Tis known, that thou and I were one,  
 I'll think it but a fond conceit—  
 It cannot be, that thou art gone!  
 Thy Vesper-bell hath not yet tolled:—  
 And thou wert aye a Masker bold!  
 What strange Disguise hast now put on,  
 To *make believe*, that thou art gone?  
 I see these Locks in silvery slips,  
 This drooping Gait, this altered Size:  
 But SPRINGTIDE blossoms on thy Lips,  
 And Tears take sunshine from thine eyes!  
 Life is but Thought: so think I will  
 That YOUTH and I are House-mates still.

### A DAY DREAM

**M**Y eyes make pictures when they're shut:—  
 I see a Fountain, large and fair,  
 A Willow and a ruined Hut,  
 And thee, and me, and Mary there.  
 O Mary! make thy gentle lap our pillow!  
 Bend o'er us, like a bower, my beautiful green Willow!

A wild-rose roofs the ruined shed,  
 And that and summer well agree:  
 And, lo! where Mary leans her head,  
 Two dear names carved upon the tree!  
 And Mary's tears, they are not tears of sorrow:  
 Our sister and our friend will both be here to-  
 morrow.

'Twas Day! But now few, large, and bright  
 The stars are round the crescent moon!  
 And now it is a dark warm Night,  
 The balmiest of the month of June!  
 A glow-worm fallen, and on the marge remounting  
 Shines, and its shadow shines, fit stars for our sweet  
 fountain.

O ever—ever be thou blest!  
 For dearly, ASRA! love I thee!  
 This brooding warmth across my breast,  
 This depth of tranquil bliss—ah me!  
 Fount, Tree, and Shed are gone, I know not  
 whither,  
 But in one quiet room we three are still together.

The shadows dance upon the wall,  
 By the still dancing fire-flames made;  
 And now they slumber, moveless all!  
 And now they melt to one deep shade!  
 But not from me shall this mild darkness steal  
 thee:  
 I dream thee with mine eyes, and at my heart I feel  
 thee!

Thine eyelash on my cheek doth play—  
 'Tis Mary's hand upon my brow!  
 But let me check this tender lay,  
 Which none may hear but she and thou!  
 Like the still hive at quiet midnight humming,  
 Murmur it to yourselves, ye two beloved women!

## CONSTANCY TO AN IDEAL OBJECT

**S**INCE all, that beat about in Nature's range,  
 Or veer or vanish ; why should'st thou remain  
 The only constant in a world of change,  
 O yearning THOUGHT, that liv'st but in the brain ?  
 Call to the HOURS, that in the distance play,  
 The faery people of the future day——  
 Fond THOUGHT ! not one of all that shining swarm  
 Will breathe on *thee* with life-enkindling breath,  
 Till when, like strangers shelt'ring from a storm,  
 Hope and Despair meet in the porch of Death !  
 Yet still thou haunt'st me : and though well I see,  
 She is not thou, and only thou art she,  
 Still, still as though some dear *embodied* Good,  
 Some *living* Love before my eyes there stood  
 With answering look a ready ear to lend,  
 I mourn to thee and say—' Ah ! loveliest Friend !  
 That this the meed of all my toils might be,  
 To have a home, an English home, and thee !  
 Vain repetition ! Home and Thou are one.  
 The peacefull'st cot, the moon shall shine upon,  
 Lulled by the Thrush and wakened by the Lark,  
 Without thee were but a becalmed Bark,  
 Whose Helmsman on an Ocean waste and wide  
 Sits mute and pale his mouldering helm beside.'

And art thou nothing ? Such thou art, as when  
 The woodman, winding westward up the glen  
 At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze  
 The viewless snow-mist weaves a glist'ning haze,

Sees full before him, gliding without tread,  
 An image<sup>1</sup> with a glory round its head :  
 The enamoured rustic worships its fair hues,  
 Nor knows he *makes* the shadow he pursues !

## THE BLOSSOMING OF THE SOLITARY DATE-TREE

### A LAMENT

I seem to have an indistinct recollection of having read either in one of the ponderous tomes of George of Venice, or in some other compilation from the uninspired Hebrew Writers, an Apologue or Rabbinical Tradition to the following purpose :—

While our first parents were yet standing before their offended Maker, and the last words of the sentence were yet sounding in Adam's ear, the guileful false serpent, a counterfeit and a usurper from the beginning, presumptuously took on himself the character of advocate or moderator, and pretending to intercede for Adam, exclaimed : 'Nay, Lord, in thy justice, for the Man was the least in fault. Rather let the Woman return at once to the dust, and let Adam remain here all the days of his now mortal life, and enjoy the respite thou mayest grant him, in this thy Paradise which thou gavest to him, and hast planted with every tree pleasant to the sight of man and of delicious fruitage.' And the word of the Most High answered Satan : '*The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.* Treacherous Fiend ! guilt deep as thine could not be, yet the love of kind not extinguished. But if having done what thou hast done, thou hadst yet the heart of man within thee, and the yearning of

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<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon, which the Author has himself experienced, and of which the reader may find a description in one of the earlier volumes of the Manchester Philosophical Transactions, is applied figuratively in the following passages of the 'Aids to Reflection' :—

'Pindar's fine remark respecting the different effects of music, on different characters, holds equally true of Genius: as many as are not delighted by it are disturbed, perplexed, irritated. The beholder either recognises it *as a projected form of his own Being, that moves before him with a Glory round its head*, or recoils from it as a spectre.'—*Aids to Reflection*, p. 220.

the soul for its answering image and completing counterpart, O spirit desperately wicked! the sentence thou counsellest had been thy own.'

The title of the following poem was suggested by a fact mentioned by Linnæus, of a Date-tree in a nobleman's garden which year after year had put forth a full show of blossoms, but never produced fruit, till a branch from a Date-tree had been conveyed from a distance of some hundred leagues. The first leaf of the MS. from which the poem has been transcribed, and which contained the two or three introductory stanzas, is wanting: and the author has in vain taxed his memory to repair the loss. But a rude draft of the poem contains the substance of these stanzas, and the reader is requested to receive it as the substitute. It is not impossible, that some congenial spirit, whose years do not exceed those of the author, at the time the poem was written, may find a pleasure in restoring the Lament to its original integrity by a reduction of the thoughts to the requisite Metre.

S. T. C.

**B**ENEATH the blaze of a tropical sun the mountain peaks are the Thrones of Frost, through the absence of objects to reflect the rays. 'What no one with us shares, seems scarce our own.' The presence of a ONE,

The best beloved, who loveth me best,

is for the heart, what the supporting air from within is for the hollow globe with its suspended car. Deprive it of this, and all without that would have buoyed it aloft even to the seat of the gods, becomes a burthen and crushes it into flatness.

The finer the sense for the beautiful and the lovely, and the fairer and lovelier the object presented to the sense, the more exquisite the individual's capacity of joy, and the more ample his means and opportunities of enjoyment, the more heavily will he feel the ache of solitariness, the more unsubstantial becomes the feast spread around him. What matters

it, whether in fact the viands and the ministering graces are shadowy or real, to him who has not hand to grasp nor arms to embrace them?

Hope, Imagination, honourable Aims,  
 Free Commune with the choir that cannot die,  
 Science and Song, delight in little things,  
 The buoyant child surviving in the man,  
 Fields, forests, ancient mountains, ocean, sky,  
 With all their voices mute—O dare I accuse  
 My earthly lot as guilty of my spleen,  
 Or call my niggard destiny! No! no!  
 It is her largeness, and her overflow,  
 Which being incomplete, disquieteth me so!

For never touch of gladness stirs my heart,  
 But tim'rously beginning to rejoice  
 Like a blind Arab, that from sleep doth start  
 In lonesome tent, I listen for *thy* voice.  
 Beloved! 'tis not thine; thou art not there!  
 Then melts the bubble into idle air,  
 And wishing without hope I restlessly despair.

The mother with anticipated glee  
 Smiles o'er the child, that standing by her chair  
 And flatt'ning its round cheek upon her knee  
 Looks up, and doth its rosy lips prepare  
 To mock the coming sounds. At that sweet sight  
 She hears her own voice with a new delight;  
 And if the babe perchance should lisp the notes aright,

Then is she tenfold gladder than before!  
 But should disease or chance the darling take,  
 What then avails those songs, which sweet of yore  
 Were only sweet for their sweet echo's sake?

Dear maid ! no prattler at a mother's knee  
 Was e'er so dearly prized as I prize *thee* :  
 Why was I made for Love and Love denied to me ?

### FANCY IN NUBIBUS

OR, THE POET IN THE CLOUDS

O ! IT is pleasant with a heart at ease,  
 Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,  
 To make the shifting clouds be what you please,  
 Or let the easily persuaded eyes  
 Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould  
 Of a friend's fancy ; or with head bent low  
 And cheek aslant see rivers flow of gold  
 'Twixt crimson banks ; and then, a traveller, go  
 From mount to mount through CLOUDLAND, gorgeous  
 land !  
 Or list'ning to the tide, with closed sight,  
 Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand  
 By those deep sounds possessed with inward light  
 Beheld the ILIAD and the ODYSSEE  
 Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

### THE TWO FOUNTS

STANZAS ADDRESSED TO A LADY ON HER RECOVERY,  
 WITH UNBLEMISHED LOOKS, FROM A SEVERE  
 ATTACK OF PAIN

'T WAS my last waking thought, how it could be,  
 That thou, sweet friend, such anguish should'st  
 endure :  
 When straight from Dreamland came a dwarf, and he  
 Could tell the cause, forsooth, and knew the cure,

Methought he fronted me with peering look  
 Fixed on my heart ; and read aloud in game  
 The loves and griefs therein, as from a book ;  
 And uttered praise like one who wished to blame.

In every heart (quoth he) since Adam's sin  
 Two FOUNTS there are, of SUFFERING and of CHEER !  
*That* to let forth, and *this* to keep within !  
 But she, whose aspect I find imagined here,

Of PLEASURE only will to all dispense,  
*That* Fount alone unlock, by no distress  
 Choked or turned inward ; but still issue thence  
 Unconquered cheer, persistent loveliness.

As on the driving cloud the shiny Bow,  
 That gracious thing made up of tears and light,  
 'Mid the wild rack and rain that slants below  
 Stands smiling forth, unmoved and freshly bright :

As though the spirits of all lovely flowers,  
 Inweaving each its wreath and dewy crown,  
 Or e'er they sank to earth in vernal showers,  
 Had built a bridge to tempt the angels down.

Ev'n so, Eliza ! on that face of thine,  
 On that benignant face, whose look alone  
 (The soul's translucence through her crystal shrine !)  
 Has power to soothe all anguish but thine own.

A Beauty hovers still, and ne'er takes wing,  
 But with a silent charm compels the stern  
 And tort'ring Genius of the BITTER SPRING,  
 To shrink aback, and cower upon his urn.

Who then needs wonder, if (no outlet found  
 In passion, spleen, or strife), the FOUNT OF PAIN  
 O'erflowing beats against its lovely mound,  
 And in wild flashes shoots from heart to brain?

Sleep, and the Dwarf with that unsteady gleam  
 On his raised lip, that aped a critic smile,  
 Had passed : yet I, my sad thoughts to beguile,  
 Lay weaving on the tissue of my dream :

Till audibly at length I cried, as though  
 Thou hadst indeed been present to my eyes,  
 O sweet, sweet sufferer ! if the case be so,  
 I pray thee, be *less* good, *less* sweet, *less* wise !

In every look a barbed arrow send,  
 On those soft lips let scorn and anger live !  
 Do *any* thing, rather than thus, sweet friend !  
 Hoard for thyself the pain, thou wilt not give !

## THE WANDERINGS OF CAIN

### PREFATORY NOTE

A prose composition, one not in metre at least, seems *primâ facie* to require explanation or apology. It was written in the year 1798, near Nether Stowey in Somersetshire, at which place (*sanctum et amabile nomen !* rich by so many associations and recollections) the Author had taken up his residence in order to enjoy the society and close neighbourhood of a dear and honoured friend, T. Poole, Esq. The work was to have been written in concert with another, whose name is too venerable within the precincts of genius to be unnecessarily brought into connection with such a trifle, and who

was then residing at a small distance from Nether Stowey. The title and subject were suggested by myself, who likewise drew out the scheme and the contents for each of the three books or cantos of which the work was to consist, and which, the reader is to be informed, was to have been finished in one night! My partner undertook the first canto; I the second: and whichever had *done first*, was to set about the third. Almost thirty years have passed by; yet at this moment I cannot without something more than a smile moot the question which of the two things was the more impracticable, for a mind so eminently original to compose another man's thoughts and fancies, or for a taste so austere and pure and simple to imitate the Death of Abel? Methinks I see his grand and noble countenance as at the moment when, having despatched my own portion of the task at full finger-speed, I hastened to him with my manuscript—that look of humorous despondency fixed on his almost blank sheet of paper, and then its silent mock-piteous admission of failure struggling with the sense of the exceeding ridiculousness of the whole scheme—which broke up in a laugh: and the 'Ancient Mariner' was written instead.

Years afterward, however, the draft of the Plan and proposed Incidents, and the portion executed, obtained favour in the eyes of more than one person, whose judgment on a poetic work could not but have weighed with me, even though no parental partiality had been thrown into the same scale, as a make-weight: and I determined on commencing anew, and composing the whole in stanzas, and made some progress in realising this intention, when adverse gales drove my bark off the 'Fortunate Isles' of the Muses; and then other and more momentous interests prompted a different voyage, to firmer anchorage and a securer port. I have in vain tried to recover the lines from the Palimpsest tablet of my memory: and I can only offer the introductory stanza, which had been committed to writing for the purpose of procuring a friend's judgment on the metre, as a specimen.

Encinctured with a twine of leaves,  
 That leafy twine his only dress!  
 A lovely Boy was plucking fruits,  
 By moonlight, in a wilderness.  
 The morn was bright, the air was free,  
 And fruits and flowers together grew  
 On many a shrub and many a tree:  
 And all put on a gentle hue,  
 Hanging in the shadowy air,  
 Like a picture rich and rare,

It was a climate where, they say,  
 The night is more beloved than day.  
 But who that beauteous Boy beguiled,  
 That beauteous Boy to linger here?  
 Alone, by night, a little child,  
 In place so silent and so wild—  
 Has he no friend, no loving Mother near?

I have here given the birth, parentage, and premature decease of the 'Wanderings of Cain, a poem,'—entreating, however, my readers not to think so meanly of my judgment as to suppose that I either regard or offer it as any excuse for the publication of the following fragment (and I may add, of one or two others in its neighbourhood) in its primitive crudity. But I should find still greater difficulty in forgiving myself, were I to record *pro tædio publico* a set of petty mishaps and annoyances which I myself wish to forget. I must be content, therefore, with assuring the friendly Reader, that the less he attributes its appearance to the Author's will, choice, or judgment, the nearer to the truth he will be.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

## CANTO II

'A LITTLE further, O my father, yet a little further, and we shall come into the open moonlight.' Their road was through a forest of fir-trees; at its entrance the trees stood at distances from each other, and the path was broad, and the moonlight and the moonlight shadows reposed upon it, and appeared quietly to inhabit that solitude. But soon the path winded and became narrow; the sun at high noon sometimes speckled, but never illumined it, and now it was dark as a cavern.

'It is dark, O my father!' said Enos, 'but the path under our feet is smooth and soft, and we shall soon come out into the open moonlight.'

'Lead on, my child!' said Cain: 'guide me, little child!' And the innocent little child clasped a

finger of the hand which had murdered the righteous Abel, and he guided his father. 'The fir-branches drip upon thee, my son.' 'Yea, pleasantly, father, for I ran fast and eagerly to bring thee the pitcher and the cake, and my body is not yet cool. How happy the squirrels are that feed on these fir-trees! they leap from bough to bough, and the old squirrels play round their young ones in the nest. I clomb a tree yesterday at noon, O my father, that I might play with them, but they leapt away from the branches, even to the slender twigs did they leap, and in a moment I beheld them on another tree. Why, O my father, would they not play with me? I would be good to them as thou art good to me: and I groaned to them even as thou groanest when thou givest me to eat, and when thou coverest me at evening, and as often as I stand at thy knee and thine eyes look at me?' Then Cain stopped, and stifling his groans he sank to the earth, and the child Enos stood in the darkness beside him.

And Cain lifted up his voice and cried bitterly, and said, 'The Mighty One that persecuteth me is on this side and on that; he pursueth my soul like the wind, like the sand-blast he passeth through me; he is around me even as the air! O that I might be utterly no more! I desire to die—yea, the things that never had life, neither move they upon the earth—behold! they seem precious to mine eyes. O that a man might live without the breath of his nostrils. So I might abide in darkness, and blackness, and an empty space! Yea, I would lie down, I would not rise, neither would I stir my limbs till I became as the rock in the den of the

lion, on which the young lion resteth his head whilst he sleepeth. For the torrent that roareth far off hath a voice; and the clouds in heaven look terribly on me; the Mighty One who is against me speaketh in the wind of the cedar grove; and in silence am I dried up.' Then Enos spake to his father, 'Arise, my father, arise, we are but a little way from the place where I found the cake and the pitcher. And Cain said, 'How knowest thou?' and the child answered—'Behold, the bare rocks are a few of thy strides distant from the forest; and while even now thou wert lifting up thy voice, I heard the echo.' Then the child took hold of his father, as if he would raise him: and Cain being faint and feeble rose slowly on his knees and pressed himself against the trunk of a fir, and stood upright and followed the child.

The path was dark till within three strides' length of its termination, when it turned suddenly; the thick black trees formed a low arch, and the moonlight appeared for a moment like a dazzling portal. Enos ran before and stood in the open air; and when Cain, his father, emerged from the darkness, the child was affrighted. For the mighty limbs of Cain were wasted as by fire; his hair was as the matted curls on the Bison's forehead, and so glared his fierce and sullen eye beneath: and the black abundant locks on either side, a rank and tangled mass, were stained and scorched, as though the grasp of a burning iron hand had striven to rend them; and his countenance told in a strange and terrible language of agonies that had been, and were, and were still to continue to be.

The scene around was desolate; as far as the eye could reach it was desolate: the bare rocks faced each other, and left a long and wide interval of thin white sand. You might wander on and look round and round, and peep into the crevices of the rocks and discover nothing that acknowledged the influence of the seasons. There was no spring, no summer, no autumn: and the winter's snow, that would have been lovely, fell not on these hot rocks and scorching sands. Never morning lark had poised himself over this desert; but the huge serpent often hissed there beneath the talons of the vulture, and the vulture screamed, his wings imprisoned within the coils of the serpent. The pointed and shattered summits of the ridges of the rocks made a rude mimicry of human concerns, and seemed to prophesy mutely of things that then were not; steeples, and battlements, and ships with naked masts. As far from the Wood as a boy might sling a pebble of the brook, there was one rock by itself at a small distance from the main ridge. It had been precipitated there perhaps by the groan which the Earth uttered when our first father fell. Before you approached, it appeared to lie flat on the ground, but its base slanted from its point, and between its point and the sands a tall man might stand upright. It was here that Enos had found the pitcher and cake, and to this place he led his father. But ere they had reached the rock they beheld a human shape: his back was towards them, and they were advancing unperceived, when they heard him smite his breast and cry aloud, 'Woe is me! woe is me! I must

never die again, and yet I am perishing with thirst and hunger.'

Pallid, as the reflection of the sheeted lightning on the heavy-sailing night-cloud, became the face of Cain; but the child Enos took hold of the shaggy skin, his father's robe, and raised his eyes to his father, and listening whispered, 'Ere yet I could speak, I am sure, O my father, that I heard that voice. Have not I often said that I remembered a sweet voice. O my father! this is it:' and Cain trembled exceedingly. The voice was sweet indeed, but it was thin and querulous like that of a feeble slave in misery, who despairs altogether, yet cannot refrain himself from weeping and lamentation. And, behold! Enos glided forward, and creeping softly round the base of the rock, stood before the stranger, and looked up into his face. And the Shape shrieked, and turned round, and Cain beheld him, that his limbs and his face were those of his brother ABEL whom he had killed! And Cain stood like one who struggles in his sleep because of the exceeding terribleness of a dream.

Thus as he stood in silence and darkness of Soul, the SHAPE fell at his feet, and embraced his knees, and cried out with a bitter outcry, 'Thou eldest son of Adam, whom Eve, my mother, brought forth, cease to torment me! I was feeding my flocks in green pastures by the side of quiet rivers, and thou killedst me; and now I am in misery.' Then Cain closed his eyes, and hid them with his hands; and again he opened his eyes, and looked around him, and said to Enos, 'What beholdest thou? Didst thou hear a voice, my son?' 'Yes, my father, I beheld a man

in unclean garments, and he uttered a sweet voice, full of lamentation.' Then Cain raised up the Shape that was like Abel, and said, 'The Creator of our father, who had respect unto thee, and unto thy offering, wherefore hath he forsaken thee?' Then the Shape shrieked a second time, and rent his garment, and his naked skin was like the white sands beneath their feet; and he shrieked yet a third time, and threw himself on his face upon the sand that was black with the shadow of the rock, and Cain and Enos sate beside him; the child by his right hand, and Cain by his left. They were all three under the rock, and within the shadow. The Shape that was like Abel raised himself up, and spake to the child: 'I know where the cold waters are, but I may not drink; wherefore didst thou then take away my pitcher?' But Cain said, 'Didst thou not find favour in the sight of the Lord thy God?' The Shape answered, 'The Lord is God of the living only, the dead have another God.' Then the child Enos lifted up his eyes and prayed; but Cain rejoiced secretly in his heart. 'Wretched shall they be all the days of their mortal life,' exclaimed the Shape, 'who sacrifice worthy and acceptable sacrifices to the God of the dead; but after death their toil ceaseth. Woe is me, for I was well beloved by the God of the living, and cruel wert thou, O my brother, who didst snatch me away from his power and his dominion.' Having uttered these words, he rose suddenly, and fled over the sands; and Cain said in his heart, 'The curse of the Lord is on me; but who is the God of the dead?' and he ran after the Shape, and the Shape fled shrieking over the sands, and the sands

rose like white mists behind the steps of Cain, but the feet of him that was like Abel disturbed not the sands. He greatly outran Cain, and turning short, he wheeled round, and came again to the rock where they had been sitting, and where Enos still stood ; and the child caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and he fell upon the ground. And Cain stopped, and beholding him not, said, 'He has passed into the dark woods,' and he walked slowly back to the rocks ; and when he reached it the child told him that he had caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and that the man had fallen upon the ground ; and Cain once more sat beside him, and said, 'Abel, my brother, I would lament for thee, but that the spirit within me is withered, and burnt up with extreme agony. Now, I pray thee, by thy flocks, and by thy pastures, and by the quiet rivers which thou lovedst, that thou tell me all that thou knowest. Who is the God of the dead ? where doth he make his dwelling ? what sacrifices are acceptable unto him ? for I have offered, but have not been received ; I have prayed, and have not been heard ; and how can I be afflicted more than I already am ?' The Shape arose and answered, 'O that thou hadst had pity on me as I will have pity on thee. Follow me, Son of Adam ! and bring thy child with thee !'

And they three passed over the white sands between the rocks, silent as the shadows.

## THE GARDEN OF BOCCACCIO

OF late, in one of those most weary hours,  
When life seems emptied of all genial powers,  
A dreary mood, which he who ne'er has known  
May bless his happy lot, I sate alone ;  
And, from the numbing spell to win relief,  
Call'd on the Past for thought of glee or grief.  
In vain ! bereft alike of grief and glee,  
I sate and cow'r'd o'er my own vacancy !  
And as I watch'd the dull continuous ache,  
Which, all else slumb'ring, seem'd alone to wake ;  
O Friend ! long wont to notice, yet conceal,  
And soothe by silence what words cannot heal,  
I but half saw that quiet hand of thine  
Place on my desk this exquisite design.  
Boccaccio's Garden and its faery,  
The love, the joyaunce, and the gallantry !  
An Idyll, with Boccaccio's spirit warm,  
Framed in the silent poesy of form.  
Like flocks adown a newly-bathed steep  
Emerging from a mist : or like a stream  
Of music soft that not dispels the sleep,  
But casts in happier mould the slumberer's dream,  
Gazed by an idle eye with silent might  
The picture stole upon my inward sight.  
A tremulous warmth crept gradual o'er my chest,  
As though an infant's finger touch'd my breast.  
And one by one (I know not whence) were brought  
All spirits of power that most had stirr'd my thought

In selfless boyhood, on a new world tost  
Of wonder, and in its own fancies lost ;  
Or charm'd my youth, that, kindled from above,  
Loved ere it loved, and sought a form for love ;  
Or lent a lustre to the earnest scan  
Of manhood, musing what and whence is man !  
Wild strain of Scalds, that in the sea-worn caves  
Rehearsed their war-spell to the winds and waves ;  
Or fateful hymn of those prophetic maids,  
That call'd on Hertha in deep forest glades ;  
Or minstrel lay, that cheer'd the baron's feast ;  
Or rhyme of city pomp, of monk and priest,  
Judge, mayor, and many a guild in long array,  
To high-church pacing on the great saint's day.  
And many a verse which to myself I sang,  
That woke the tear yet stole away the pang,  
Of hopes which in lamenting I renew'd.  
And last, a matron now, of sober mien,  
Yet radiant still and with no earthly sheen,  
Whom as a faery child my childhood woo'd  
Even in my dawn of thought—Philosophy ;  
Though then unconscious of herself, pardie,  
She bore no other name than Poesy ;  
And, like a gift from heaven, in life's glee,  
That had but newly left a mother's knee,  
Prattled and play'd with bird and flower, and  
stone,  
As if with elfin playfellows well known,  
And life reveal'd to innocence alone.  
Thanks, gentle artist ! now I can descry  
Thy fair creation with a mastering eye,  
And *all* awake ! And now in fixed gaze stand  
Now wander through the Eden of thy hand ;

Praise the green arches, on the fountain clear  
 See fragment shadows of the crossing deer ;  
 And with that serviceable nymph I stoop  
 The crystal from its restless pool to scoop.  
 I see no longer ! I myself am there,  
 Sit on the ground-sward, and the banquet share.  
 'Tis I, that sweep that lute's love-echoing strings,  
 And gaze upon the maid who gazing sings ;  
 Or pause and listen to the tinkling bells  
 From the high tower, and think that there she  
 dwells.

With old Boccaccio's soul I stand possest,  
 And breathe an air like life, that swells my chest.

The brightness of the world, O thou once free,  
 And always fair, rare land of courtesy !  
 O Florence ! with the Tuscan fields and hills  
 And famous Arno, fed with all their rills ;  
 Thou brightest star of star-bright Italy !  
 Rich, ornate, populous, all treasures thine,  
 The golden corn, the olive, and the vine.  
 Fair cities, gallant mansions, castles old,  
 And forests, where beside his leafy hold  
 The sullen boar hath heard the distant horn,  
 And whets his tusks against the gnarled thorn ;  
 Palladian palace with its storied halls ;  
 Fountains, where Love lies listening to their falls ;  
 Gardens, where flings the bridge its airy span,  
 And Nature makes her happy home with man ;  
 Where many a gorgeous flower is duly fed  
 With its own rill, on its own spangled bed,  
 And wreathes the marble urn, or leans its head,  
 A mimic mourner, that with veil withdrawn  
 Weeps liquid gems, the presents of the dawn ;—

Thine all delights, and every muse is thine ;  
 And more than all, the embrace and entertwine  
 Of all with all in gay and twinkling dance !  
 'Mid gods of Greece and warriors of romance,  
 See ! Boccace sits, unfolding on his knees  
 The new-found roll of old Mæonides ;  
 But from his mantle's fold, and near the heart,  
 Peers Ovid's Holy Book of Love's sweet smart !<sup>1</sup>  
 O all-enjoying and all-blending sage,  
 Long be it mine to con thy mazy page,  
 Where, half conceal'd, the eye of fancy views  
 Fauns, nymphs, and winged saints, all gracious to thy  
 muse !

Still in thy garden let me watch their pranks,  
 And see in Dian's vest between the ranks  
 Of the trim vines, some maid that half believes  
 The *vestal* fires, of which her lover grieves,  
 With that sly satyr peeping through the leaves !

1828.

<sup>1</sup> I know few more striking or more interesting proofs of the overwhelming influence which the study of the Greek and Roman classics exercised on the judgments, feelings, and imaginations of the literati of Europe at the commencement of the restoration of literature, than the passage in the *Filopopo* of Boccaccio : where the sage instructor, Racheo, as soon as the young prince and the beautiful girl Biancofiore had learned their letters, sets them to study the Holy Book, Ovid's 'Art of Love.' 'Incominciò Racheo a mettere il suo officio in esecuzione con intera sollecitudine. E loro, in breve tempo, insegnato a conoscer le lettere, fece leggere il santo libro d'Ovvidio, nel quale il sommo poeta mostra, come i santi fuochi di Venere si debbano ne freddi cuori accendere.'

## HYMN TO THE EARTH

*Imitated from Stolberg's 'Hymne an Die Erde'*

## HEXAMETERS

**E**ARTH! thou mother of numberless children,  
 the nurse and the mother,  
 Hail! O Goddess, thrice hail! Blest be thou! and  
 blessing, I hymn thee!  
 Forth, ye sweet sounds! from my harp, and my voice  
 shall float on your surges—  
 Soar thou aloft, O my soul! and bear up my song on  
 thy pinions.

Travelling the vale with mine eyes—green meadows  
 and lake with green island,  
 Dark in its basin of rock, and the bare steam flowing  
 in brightness,  
 Thrill'd with thy beauty and love in the wooden slope  
 of the mountain,  
 Here, great mother, I lie, thy child, with his head on  
 thy bosom!  
 Playful the spirits of noon, that rushing soft through  
 thy tresses,  
 Green-hair'd goddess! refresh me; and hark! as they  
 hurry or linger,  
 Fill the pause of my harp, or sustain it with musical  
 murmurs.  
 Into my being thou murmurest joy, and tenderest  
 sadness

Shedd'st thou, like dew, on my heart, till the joy and  
the heavenly sadness

Pour themselves forth from my heart in tears, and the  
hymn of thanksgiving.

Earth! thou mother of numberless children, the nurse  
and the mother,

Sister thou of the stars, and beloved by the Sun, the  
rejoicer!

Guardian and friend of the moon, O earth, whom the  
comets forget not,

Yea, in the measureless distance wheel round and  
again they behold thee!

Fadeless and young (and what if the latest birth of  
creation?)

Bride and consort of Heaven, that looks down upon  
thee enamour'd!

Say, mysterious Earth! O say, great mother and  
goddess,

Was it not well with thee then, when first thy lap was  
ungirdled,

Thy lap to the genial Heaven, the day that he woo'd  
thee and won thee!

Fair was thy blush, the fairest and first of the blushes  
of morning!

Deep was the shudder, O Earth! the throe of thy self-  
retention:

Inly thou strovest to flee, and didst seek thyself at  
thy centre!

Mightier far was the joy of thy sudden resilience; and  
forthwith

Myriad myriads of lives teem'd forth from the mighty  
embracement.

Thousand-fold tribes of dwellers, impell'd by thousand-  
 fold instincts,  
 Fill'd, as a dream, the wide waters ; the rivers sang on  
 their channels ;  
 Laugh'd on their shores the hoarse seas ; the yearning  
 ocean swell'd upward ;  
 Young life low'd through the meadows, the woods,  
 and the echoing mountains,  
 Wander'd bleating in valleys, and warbled on blossom-  
 ing branches.

. . . . .  
 ? 1799.

## ON A CATARACT

FROM A CAVERN NEAR THE SUMMIT OF A  
 MOUNTAIN PRECIPICE

*After Stolberg's 'Unsterblicher Jüngling'*

### STROPHE

**U**NPERISHING youth !  
 Thou leapest from forth  
 The cell of thy hidden nativity ;  
 Never mortal saw  
 The cradle of the strong one ;  
 Never mortal heard  
 The gathering of his voices ;  
 The deep-murmur'd charm of the son of the rock,  
 That is lisp'd evermore at his slumberless fountain.  
 There's a cloud at the portal, a spray-woven veil  
 At the shrine of his ceaseless renewing ;  
 It embosoms the roses of dawn,

It entangles the shafts of the noon,  
 And into the bed of its stillness  
 The moonshine sinks down as in slumber,  
 That the son of the rock, that the nursling of heaven  
 May be born in a holy twilight !

1799.

### THE KNIGHT'S TOMB

**W**HERE is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kellyn?  
 Where may the grave of that good man be?—  
 By the side of a spring, on the breast of Helvellyn,  
 Under the twigs of a young birch tree !  
 The oak that in summer was sweet to hear,  
 And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,  
 And whistled and roar'd in the winter alone,  
 Is gone,—and the birch in its stead is grown.—  
 The Knight's bones are dust,  
 And his good sword rust ;—  
 His soul is with the saints, I trust.

? 1817.

### CATULLIAN HENDECASYLLABLES

**H**EAR, my beloved, an old Milesian story !—  
 High, and embosom'd in congregated laurels,  
 Glimmer'd a temple upon a breezy headland ;  
 In the dim distance amid the skyey billows  
 Rose a fair island ; the god of flocks had blest it.  
 From the far shores of the bleat-resounding island  
 Oft by the moonlight a little boat came floating,  
 Came to the sea-cave beneath the breezy headland,

Where amid myrtles a pathway stole in mazes  
 Up to the groves of the high embosom'd temple.  
 There in a thicket of dedicated roses,  
 Oft did a priestess, as lovely as a vision,  
 Pouring her soul to the son of Cytherea,  
 Pray him to hover around the slight canoe-boat,  
 And with invisible pilotage to guide it  
 Over the dusk wave, until the nightly sailor  
 Shivering with ecstasy sank under her bosom.

? 1799.

## THE SNOW-DROP

### A FRAGMENT

**F**EAR thou no more, thou timid Flower!  
 Fear thou no more the winter's might,  
 The whelming thaw, the ponderous shower,  
 The silence of the freezing night!  
 Since Laura murmur'd o'er thy leaves  
 The potent sorceries of song,  
 To thee, meek Flow'ret! gentler gales  
 And cloudless skies belong.

. . . . .

She droop'd her head, she stretch'd her arm,  
 She whisper'd low her witching rhymes,  
 Fame unreluctant heard the charm,  
 And bore thee to Pierian climes!  
 Fear thou no more the Matin Frost  
 That sparkled on thy bed of snow:  
 For there, 'mid laurels ever green,  
 Immortal thou shalt blow.

Thy petals boast a white more soft,  
 The spell hath so perfumed thee,  
 That careless Love shall deem thee oft  
 A blossom from his Myrtle tree.  
 Then laughing o'er the fair deceit  
 Shall race with some Etesian wind  
 To seek the woven arboret  
     Where Laura lies reclin'd.

All them whom Love and Fancy grace,  
 When grosser eyes are clos'd in sleep,  
 The gentle spirits of the place  
 Waft up the insuperable steep,  
 On whose vast summit broad and smooth  
 Her nest the Phœnix Bird conceals,  
 And where by cypresses o'erhung  
     The heavenly Lethe steals.

A sea-like sound the branches breathe,  
 Stirr'd by the breeze that loiters there ;  
 And all that stretch their limbs beneath,  
 Forget the coil of mortal care.  
 Strange mists along the margins rise,  
 To heal the guests who thither come,  
 And fit the soul to re-endure  
     Its earthly martyrdom.

. . . . .  
*MS.* ? 1800.

## MUTUAL PASSION

*Altered and Modernised from an Old Poet*

I LOVE, and he loves me again,  
 Yet dare I not tell who :  
 For if the nymphs should know my swain,  
 I fear they'd love him too.  
 Yet while my joy's unknown,  
 Its rosy buds are but half-blown :  
 What no one with me shares, seems scarce my own.

I'll tell, that if they be not glad,  
 They yet may envy me :  
 But then if I grow jealous mad,  
 And of them pitied be,  
 'Twould vex me worse than scorn !  
 And yet it cannot be forborne,  
 Unless my heart would like my thoughts be torn.

He is, if they can find him, fair  
 And fresh, and fragrant too ;  
 As after rain the summer air,  
 And looks as lilies do,  
 That are this morning blown !  
 Yet, yet I doubt, he is not known,  
 Yet, yet I fear to have him fully shown.

But he hath eyes so large, and bright,  
 Which none can see, and doubt  
 That Love might thence his torches light  
 Tho' Hate had put them out !

But then to raise my fears,  
 His voice——what maid so ever hears  
 Will be my rival, though she have but ears.

I'll tell no more! yet I love him,  
 And he loves me ; yet so,  
 That never one low wish did dim  
 Our love's pure light, I know——  
 In each so free from blame,  
 That both of us would gain new fame,  
 If love's strong fears would let me tell his name !  
 ? 1799.

## THEKLA'S SONG

*From Schiller*

THE cloud doth gather, the greenwood roar,  
 The damsel paces along the shore ;  
 The billows they tumble with might, with might ;  
 And she flings out her voice to the darksome night ;  
 Her bosom is swelling with sorrow ;  
 The world it is empty, the heart will die,  
 There's nothing to wish for beneath the sky :  
 Thou Holy One, call thy Child away !  
 I've lived and loved, and that was to-day—  
 Make ready my grave-clothes to-morrow.

## LOVE'S FIRST HOPE

FAIR is Love's first hope to gentle mind !  
 As Eve's first star thro' fleecy cloudlet peeping ;  
 And sweeter than the gentle south-west wind,  
 O'er willowy meads, and shadow'd waters creeping,  
 And Ceres' golden fields ; the sultry hind  
 Meets it with brow uplift, and stays his reaping.

## NAMES

*From Lessing*

I ASK'D my fair one happy day,  
 What I should call her in my lay ;  
 By what sweet name from Rome or Greece ;  
 Lalage, Neæra, Chloris,  
 Sappho, Lesbia, or Doris,  
 Arethusa or Lucrece.

' Ah ! ' replied my gentle fair,  
 ' Beloved, what are names but air ?  
 Choose thou whatever suits the line ;  
 Call me Sappho, call me Chloris,  
 Call me Lalage or Doris,  
 Only, only call me Thine.'

## ALICE DU CLOS

OR, THE FORKED TONGUE : A BALLAD

' One word with two meanings is the traitor's shield and shaft :  
 and a slit tongue be his blazon ! '—*Caucasian Proverb.*

' THE Sun is not yet risen,  
 But the dawn lies red on the dew :  
 Lord Julian has stolen from the hunters away,  
 Is seeking, Lady, for you.  
 Put on your dress of green,  
 Your buskins and your quiver ;  
 Lord Julian is a hasty man,  
 Long waiting brook'd he never,

I dare not doubt him, that he means  
To wed you on a day,  
Your lord and master for to be,  
And you his lady gay.  
O Lady! throw your book aside!  
I would not that my Lord should chide.'

Thus spake Sir Hugh the vassal knight  
To Alice, child of old Du Clos,  
As spotless fair, as airy light  
As that moon-shiny doe,  
The gold star on its brow, her sire's ancestral crest!  
For ere the lark had left his nest,  
She in the garden bower below  
Sate loosely wrapt in maiden white,  
Her face half drooping from the sight,  
A snow-drop on a tuft of snow!

O close your eyes, and strive to see  
The studious maid, with book on knee,—  
Ah! earliest-open'd flower;  
While yet with keen unblunted light  
The morning star shone opposite  
The lattice of her bower—  
Alone of all the starry host,  
As if in prideful scorn  
Of flight and fear he stay'd behind,  
To brave th' advancing morn.

O! Alice could read passing well,  
And she was conning then  
Dan Ovid's mazy tale of loves,  
And gods, and beasts, and men.

The vassal's speech, his taunting vain,  
 It thrill'd like venom thro' her brain ;  
 Yet never from the book  
 She rais'd her head, nor did she deign  
 The knight a single look.

' Off, traitor friend ! how dar'st thou fix  
 Thy wanton gaze on me ?  
 And why, against my earnest suit,  
 Does Julian send by thee ?

' Go, tell thy Lord, that slow is sure :  
 Fair speed his shafts to-day !  
 I follow here a stronger lure,  
 And chase a gentler prey.'

She said : and with a baleful smile  
 The vassal knight reel'd off—  
 Like a huge billow from a bark  
 Toil'd in the deep sea-trough,  
 That shouldering sideways in mid plunge,  
 Is travers'd by a flash,  
 And staggering onward, leaves the ear  
 With dull and distant crash.

And Alice sat with troubled mien  
 A moment ; for the scoff was keen,  
 And through her veins did shiver !  
 Then rose and donn'd her dress of green,  
 Her buskins and her quiver.

There stands the flow'ring may-thorn tree !  
From thro' the veiling mist you see  
The black and shadowy stem ;—  
Smit by the sun the mist in glee  
Dissolves to lightsome jewelry—  
Each blossom hath its gem !

With tear-drop glittering to a smile,  
The gay maid on the garden-stile  
Mimics the hunter's shout.  
'Hip ! Florian, hip ! To horse, to horse !  
Go, bring the palfrey out.  
My Julian's out with all his clan,  
And, bonny boy, you wis,  
Lord Julian is a hasty man,  
Who comes late, comes amiss.'

Now Florian was a stripling squire,  
A gallant boy of Spain,  
That toss'd his head in joy and pride,  
Behind his lady fair to ride,  
But blushed to hold her train.

The huntress is in her dress of green,—  
And forth they go ; she with her bow,  
Her buskins and her quiver !—  
The squire—no younger e'er was seen—  
With restless arm and laughing een,  
He makes his javelin quiver.

And had not Ellen stayed the race,  
And stopp'd to see, a moment's space,  
The whole great globe of light

Give the last parting kiss-like touch  
To the eastern ridge, it lack'd not much,  
They had o'erta'en the knight.

It chanced that up the covert lane,  
Where Julian waiting stood,  
A neighbour knight prick'd on to join  
The huntsmen in the wood.

And with him must Lord Julian go,  
Tho' with an anger'd mind :  
Betroth'd not wedded to his bride,  
In vain he sought, 'twixt shame and pride,  
Excuse to stay behind.

He bit his lip, he wrung his glove,  
He look'd around, he look'd above,  
But pretext none could find or frame.  
Alas ! alas ! and well-a-day !  
It grieves me sore to think, to say,  
That names so seldom meet with Love,  
Yet Love wants courage without a name !

Straight from the forest's skirt the trees  
O'er-branching, made an aisle,  
Where hermit old might pace and chaunt  
As in a minster's pile.

From underneath its leafy screen,  
And from the twilight shade,  
You pass at once into a green,  
A green and lightsome glade.

And there Lord Julian sat on steed ;  
    Behind him, in a round,  
Stood knight and squire, and menial train ;  
Against the leash the greyhounds strain ;  
    The horses paw'd the ground.

When up the alley green, Sir Hugh  
    Spurr'd in upon the sward,  
And mute, without a word, did he  
    Fall in behind his lord.

Lord Julian turn'd his steed half round,—  
    ' What ! doth not Alice deign  
To accept your loving convoy, knight ?  
Or doth she fear our woodland sleight,  
    And joins us on the plain ?'

With stifled tones the knight replied,  
And look'd askance on either side,—  
    ' Nay, let the hunt proceed !—  
The Lady's message that I bear,  
I guess would scantily please your ear,  
    And less deserves your heed.

' You sent betimes. Not yet unbarr'd  
    I found the middle door ;—  
Two stirrers only met my eyes,  
    Fair Alice, and one more.

' I came unlook'd for : and, it seem'd,  
    In an unwelcome hour ;  
And found the daughter of Du Clos  
    Within the latic'd bower.

‘But hush! the rest may wait. If lost  
 No great loss, I divine;  
 And idle words will better suit  
 A fair maid’s lips than mine.’

‘God’s wrath! speak out, man,’ Julian cried,  
 O’ermaster’d by the sudden smart;—  
 And feigning wrath, sharp, blunt, and rude,  
 The knight his subtle shift pursued.—  
 ‘Scowl not at me; command my skill,  
 To lure your hawk back, if you will,  
 But not a woman’s heart.’

“Go! (said she) tell him,—slow is sure;  
 Fair speed his shafts to-day!  
 I follow here a stronger lure,  
 And chase a gentler prey.”

‘The game, pardie, was full in sight,  
 That then did, if I saw aright,  
 The fair dame’s eyes engage;  
 For turning, as I took my ways,  
 I saw them fix’d with steadfast gaze  
 Full on her wanton page.’

The last word of the traitor knight  
 It had but entered Julian’s ear,—  
 From two o’erarching oaks between,  
 With glist’ning helm-like cap is seen,  
 Borne on in giddy cheer,

A youth, that ill his steed can guide;  
 Yet with reverted face doth ride,

As answering to a voice,  
 That seems at once to laugh and chide—  
 ‘Not mine, dear mistress,’ still he cried,  
 ‘’Tis this mad filly’s choice.’

With sudden bound, beyond the boy,  
 See! see! that face of hope and joy,  
 That regal front! those cheeks aglow!  
 Thou needed’st but the crescent sheen,  
 A quiver’d Dian to have been,  
 Thou lovely child of old Du Clos!

Dark as a dream Lord Julian stood,  
 Swift as a dream, from forth the wood,  
 Sprang on the plighted Maid!  
 With fatal aim, and frantic force,  
 The shaft was hurl’d!—a lifeless corse,  
 Fair Alice from her vaulting horse,  
 Lies bleeding on the glade.

? 1825.

ON OBSERVING A BLOSSOM ON THE  
 FIRST OF FEBRUARY 1796

SWEET flower! that peeping from thy russet stem  
 Unfoldest timidly (for in strange sort  
 This dark, frieze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering month  
 Hath borrow’d Zephyr’s voice, and gazed upon thee  
 With blue voluptuous eye), alas, poor Flower!  
 These are but flatteries of the faithless year.  
 Perchance, escaped its unknown polar cave,  
 Even now the keen North-East is on its way.

## AD VILMUM AXIOLOGUM

TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

**T**HIS be the meed, that thy song creates a  
thousand-fold echo!

Sweet as the warble of woods, that awakes at the gale  
of the morning!

List! the Hearts of the Pure, like caves in the ancient  
mountains

Deep, deep *in* the Bosom, and *from* the Bosom re-  
sound it,

Each with a different tone, complete or in musical  
fragments—

All have welcomed thy Voice, and receive and retain  
and prolong it!

This is the word of the Lord! it is spoken and Beings  
Eternal

Live and are borne as an Infant, the Eternal begets  
the Immortal,

Love is the Spirit of Life, and Music the Life of the  
Spirit!

*MS.* ? 1805.

## AN ODE TO THE RAIN

COMPOSED BEFORE DAYLIGHT, ON THE MORNING  
APPOINTED FOR THE DEPARTURE OF A VERY  
WORTHY, BUT NOT VERY PLEASANT VISITOR, WHOM  
IT WAS FEARED THE RAIN MIGHT DETAIN

**I** KNOW it is dark; and though I have lain,  
Awake, as I guess, an hour or twain,  
I have not once open'd the lids of my eyes,  
But I lie in the dark, as a blind man lies.

O Rain ! that I lie listening to,  
 You're but a doleful sound at best :  
 I owe you little thanks, 'tis true,  
 For breaking thus my needful rest !  
 Yet if, as soon as it is light,  
 O Rain ! you will but take your flight,  
 I'll neither rail, nor malice keep,  
 Though sick and sore for want of sleep.  
 But only now, for this one day,  
 Do go, dear Rain ! do go away !

O Rain ! with your dull two-fold sound,  
 The clash hard by, and the murmur all round !  
 You know, if you know aught, that we,  
 Both night and day, but ill agree :  
 For days and months, and almost years,  
 Have limp'd on through this vale of tears,  
 Since body of mine, and rainy weather,  
 Have lived on easy terms together.  
 Yet if, as soon as it is light,  
 O Rain ! you will but take your flight,  
 Though you should come again to-morrow,  
 And bring with you both pain and sorrow ;  
 Though stomach should sicken and knees should  
 swell—  
 I'll nothing speak of you but well.  
 But only now for this one day,  
 Do go, dear Rain ! do go away !

Dear Rain ! I ne'er refused to say  
 You're a good creature in your way ;  
 Nay, I could write a book myself,  
 Would fit a parson's lower shelf,

Showing how very good you are.—  
What then? sometimes it must be fair!  
And if sometimes, why not to-day?  
Do go, dear Rain! do go away!

Dear Rain! if I've been cold and shy,  
Take no offence! I'll tell you why.  
A dear old Friend e'en now is here,  
And with him came my sister dear;  
After long absence now first met,  
Long months by pain and grief beset—  
We three dear friends! in truth, we groan  
Impatiently to be alone.  
We three, you mark! and not one more!  
The strong wish makes my spirit sore.  
We have so much to talk about,  
So many sad things to let out;  
So many tears in our eye-corners,  
Sitting like little Jacky Horners—  
In short, as soon as it is day,  
Do go, dear Rain! do go away.

And this I'll swear to you, dear Rain!  
Whenever you shall come again,  
Be you as dull as e'er you could  
(And by the bye 'tis understood,  
You're not so pleasant as you're good),  
Yet, knowing well your worth and place,  
I'll welcome you with cheerful face;  
And though you stay'd a week or more,  
Were ten times duller than before;  
Yet with kind heart, and right good will,  
I'll sit and listen to you still;

Nor should you go away, dear Rain!  
Uninvited to remain.

But only now, for this one day,  
Do go, dear Rain! do go away.

1802.

### TO NATURE

**I**T may indeed be phantasy when I  
Essay to draw from all created things  
Deep, heartfelt, inward joy that closely clings;  
And trace in leaves and flowers that round me lie  
Lessons of love and earnest piety.  
So let it be; and if the wide world rings  
In mock of this belief, it brings  
Nor fear, nor grief, nor vain perplexity.  
So will I build my altar in the fields,  
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be,  
And the sweet fragrance that the wild flower yields  
Shall be the incense I will yield to Thee,  
Thee only God! and Thou shalt not despise  
Even me, the priest of this poor sacrifice.

? 1820.

### A STRANGER MINSTREL

WRITTEN TO MRS. ROBINSON, A FEW WEEKS  
BEFORE HER DEATH

**A**S late on Skiddaw's mount I lay supine,  
Midway th' ascent, in that repose divine  
When the soul centred in the heart's recess  
Hath quaff'd its fill of Nature's loveliness,

Yet still beside the fountain's marge will stay,  
 And fain would thirst again, again to quaff;  
 Then when the tear, slow travelling on its way,  
 Fills up the wrinkles of a silent laugh—  
 In that sweet mood of sad and humorous thought  
 A form within me rose, within me wrought  
 With such strong magic, that I cried aloud,

'Thou ancient Skiddaw by thy helm of cloud,  
 And by thy many-colour'd chasms deep,  
 And by their shadows that for ever sleep,  
 By yon small flaky mists that love to creep  
 Along the edges of those spots of light,  
 Those sunny islands on thy smooth green height,  
 And by yon shepherds with their sheep,  
 And dogs and boys, a gladsome crowd,  
 That rush even now with clamour loud  
 Sudden from forth thy topmost cloud,  
 And by this laugh, and by this tear,  
 I would, old Skiddaw, she were here!  
 A lady of sweet song is she,  
 Her soft blue eye was made for thee!  
 O ancient Skiddaw, by this tear,  
 I would, I would that she were here!'

Then ancient Skiddaw, stern and proud,  
 In sullen majesty replying,  
 Thus spake from out his helm of cloud  
 (His voice was like an echo dying!):—  
 'She dwells belike in scenes more fair,  
 And scorns a mount so bleak and bare.'

I only sigh'd when this I heard,  
 Such mournful thoughts within me stirr'd  
 That all my heart was faint and weak,  
     So sorely was I troubled!  
 No laughter wrinkled on my cheek,  
     But O the tears were doubled!  
 But ancient Skiddaw green and high  
 Heard and understood my sigh;  
 And now, in tones less stern and rude,  
 As if he wished to end the feud,  
 Spake he, the proud response renewing  
 (His voice was like a monarch wooing):—

‘Nay, but thou dost not know her might,  
     The pinions of her soul how strong!  
 But many a stranger in my height  
     Hath sung to me her magic song,  
         Sending forth his ecstasy  
         In her divinest melody,  
 And hence I know her soul is free,  
 She is where'er she wills to be,  
 Unfetter'd by mortality!

‘Now to the “haunted beach” can fly,  
     Beside the threshold scourged with waves,  
     Now where the maniac wildly raves,  
 “*Pale moon, thou spectre of the sky!*”  
 No wind that hurries o'er my height  
 Can travel with so swift a flight.  
     I too, methinks, might merit  
     The presence of her spirit!  
     To me too might belong

The honour of her song and witching melody,  
 Which most resembles me,  
 Soft, various, and sublime,  
 Exempt from wrongs of Time !'

Thus spake this mighty Mount, and I  
 Made answer, with a deep-drawn sigh :—  
 'Thou ancient Skiddaw, by this tear,  
 I would, I would that she were here !'

*November 1800.*

## LINES

WRITTEN IN COMMONPLACE BOOK OF MISS BARBOUR,  
 DAUGHTER OF THE MINISTER OF THE U.S.A.  
 TO ENGLAND.

CHILD of my muse ! in Barbour's gentle hand  
 Go cross the main : thou seek'st no foreign  
 land :

'Tis not the clod beneath our feet we name  
 Our country. Each heaven-sanctioned tie the same,  
 Laws, manners, language, faith, ancestral blood,  
 Domestic honour, awe of womanhood :—  
 With kindling pride thou wilt rejoice to see  
 Britain with elbow-room and doubly free !  
 Go seek thy countrymen ! and if one scar  
 Still linger of that fratricidal war,  
 Look to the maid who brings thee from afar ;  
 Be thou the olive-leaf and she the dove,  
 And say I greet thee with a brother's love !

S. T. COLERIDGE.

GROVE, HIGHGATE, *August 1829.*

## WHAT IS LIFE?

RESEMBLES life what once was deem'd of light,  
 Too ample in itself for human sight?  
 An absolute self—an element ungrounded—  
 All that we see, all colours of all shade  
 By encroach of darkness made?—  
 Is very life by consciousness unbounded?  
 And all the thoughts, pains, joys of mortal breath,  
 A war-embrace of wrestling life and death?

1805.

## PHANTOM

ALL look and likeness caught from earth,  
 All accident of kin and birth,  
 Had pass'd away. There was no trace  
 Of aught on that illumined face,  
 Upraised beneath the rifted stone,  
 But of one spirit all her own;  
 She, she herself, and only she,  
 Shone through her body visibly.

1804.

LOVE'S APPARITION AND  
EVANISHMENT

AN ALLEGORIC ROMANCE

LIKE a lone Arab, old and blind,  
 Some caravan had left behind,  
 Who sits beside a ruin'd well,  
 Where the shy sand-asps bask and swell;

And now he hangs his aged head aslant,  
 And listens for a human sound—in vain !  
 And now the aid, which Heaven alone can grant,  
 Upturns his eyeless face from Heaven to gain ;—  
 Even thus, in vacant mood, one sultry hour,  
 Resting my eye upon a drooping plant,  
 With brow low-bent, within my garden-bower,  
 I sate upon the couch of camomile ;  
 And—whether 'twas a transient sleep, perchance,  
 Flitted across the idle brain, the while  
 I watch'd the sickly calm with aimless scope,  
 In my own heart ; or that, indeed, a trance  
 Turn'd my eye inward—thee, O genial Hope,  
 Love's elder sister ! thee did I behold,  
 Drest as a bridesmaid, but all pale and cold,  
 With roseless cheek, all pale and cold and dim,  
     Lie lifeless at my feet !  
 And then came Love, a sylph in bridal trim,  
     And stood beside my seat ;  
 She bent, and kiss'd her sister's lips,  
     As she was wont to do ;—  
 Alas ! 'twas but a chilling breath  
 Woke just enough of life in death  
     To make Hope die anew.

## L'ENVOY

In vain we supplicate the Powers above ;  
 There is no resurrection for the Love  
 That, nursed in tenderest care, yet fades away  
 In the chill'd heart by gradual self-decay.

LINES COMPOSED IN A CONCERT-  
ROOM

○ GIVE me, from this heartless scene released,  
To hear our old musician, blind and grey,  
(Whom stretching from my nurse's arms I kissed,)  
His Scottish tunes and warlike marches play,  
By moonshine, on the balmy summer-night,  
The while I dance amid the tedded hay  
With merry maids, whose ringlets toss in light.

Or lies the purple evening on the bay  
Of the calm glossy lake, O let me hide  
Unheard, unseen, behind the alder-trees,  
For round their roots the fisher's boat is tied,  
On whose trim seat doth Edmund stretch at ease,  
And while the lazy boat sways to and fro,  
Breathes in his flute sad airs, so wild and slow,  
That his own cheek is wet with quiet tears.

But O, dear Anne! when midnight wind careers,  
And the gust pelting on the out-house shed  
Makes the cock shrilly in the rain-storm crow,  
To hear thee sing some ballad full of woe,  
Ballad of ship-wreck'd sailor floating dead,  
Whom his own true-love buried in the sands!  
Thee, gentle woman, for thy voice re-measures  
Whatever tones and melancholy pleasures  
The things of Nature utter; birds or trees,  
Or moan of ocean-gale in weedy caves,  
Or where the stiff grass mid the heath-plant waves,  
Murmur and music thin of sudden breeze.

LOVE, HOPE, AND PATIENCE IN  
EDUCATION

O'ER wayward childhood would'st thou hold firm  
rule,  
And sun thee in the light of happy faces ;  
Love, Hope, and Patience, these must be thy graces,  
And in thine own heart let them first keep school.  
For as old Atlas on his broad neck places  
Heaven's starry globe, and there sustains it ;—so  
Do these upbear the little world below  
Of Education,—Patience, Love, and Hope.  
Methinks, I see them group'd in seemly show,  
The straighten'd arms upraised, the palms aslope,  
And robes that touching as adown they flow,  
Distinctly blend, like snow emboss'd in snow.

O part them never ! If Hope prostrate lie,  
Love too will sink and die.  
But Love is subtle, and doth proof derive  
From her own life that Hope is yet alive ;  
And bending o'er, with soul-transfusing eyes,  
And the soft murmurs of the mother dove,  
Woos back the fleeting spirit, and half supplies ;—  
Thus Love repays to Hope what Hope first gave to  
Love.  
Yet haply there will come a weary day,  
When overtask'd at length  
Both Love and Hope beneath the load give way.

Then with a statue's smile, a statue's strength,  
 Stands the mute sister, Patience, nothing loth,  
 And both supporting does the work of both.

1829.

### SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Γνώθι σεαυτόν!—and is this the prime  
 And heaven-sprung adage of the olden time!—  
 Say, canst thou make thyself?—Learn first that trade;—  
 Haply thou mayst know what thyself had made.  
 What hast thou, Man, that thou dar'st call thine own?—  
 What is there in thee, Man, that can be known?—  
 Dark fluxion, all unfixable by thought,  
 A phantom dim of past and future wrought,  
 Vain sister of the worm,—life, death, soul, clod—  
 Ignore thyself, and strive to know thy God!

1832.

### EPITAPH

**S**TOP, Christian passer-by!—Stop, child of God,  
 And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod  
 A poet lies, or that which once seem'd he,—  
 O, lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C. ;  
 That he who many a year with toil of breath  
 Found death in life, may here find life in death!  
 Mercy for praise—to be forgiven for fame  
 He ask'd, and hoped, through Christ.

Do thou the same!

9th November 1833.

## THE HOMERIC HEXAMETER

DESCRIBED AND EXEMPLIFIED

**S**TRONGLY it bears us along in swelling and  
 limitless billows,  
 Nothing before and nothing behind but the sky and  
 the Ocean.

## THE OVIDIAN ELEGIAC METRE

DESCRIBED AND EXEMPLIFIED

**I**N the hexameter rises the fountain's silvery  
 column,  
 In the pentameter aye falling in melody back.

## FROM THE GERMAN

**K**NOW'ST thou the land where the pale citrons  
 grow,  
 The golden fruits in darker foliage glow?  
 Soft blows the Wind that breathes from that blue sky!  
 Still stands the myrtle and the laurel high!  
 Know'st thou it well, that land, beloved Friend?  
 Thither with thee, O thither would I wend.

## WESTPHALIAN SONG

WHEN thou to my true-love com'st  
 Greet her from me kindly ;  
 When she asks thee how I fare ?  
 Say, folks in Heaven fare finely.

When she asks, 'What! Is he sick?'  
 Say, dead!—and when for sorrow  
 She begins to sob and cry,  
 Say, I come to-morrow.

? 1799.

## TO MATILDA BETHAM

FROM A STRANGER

MATILDA! I have heard a sweet tune played  
 On a sweet instrument—thy Poesie—  
 Sent to my soul by Boughton's pleading voice  
 Where friendship's zealous wish inspirited,  
 Deepened and filled the subtle tones of *taste* ;  
 So have I heard a Nightingale's fine notes  
 Blend with the murmur of a hidden stream.  
 And the fair, wild offspring of thy genius,  
 Those wanderers from thy fancy had set forth  
 To seek their fortune in the motley worlds,  
 Have found a little home within my heart,  
 And brought me as the quit-rent of their lodging  
 Rosebuds, and fruit blossoms and pretty weeds,  
 And timorous laurel leaflets half disclosed,  
 Engarlanded with gadding woodbine tendrils!  
 A coronel which with undoubting hand  
 I twine around the brows of patriot Hope!

The Almighty having first composed a man,  
Set him to music, framing woman for him,  
And fitted each to each, and made them one !  
And 'tis my faith, that there's a natural bond  
Between the female mind and measured sound,  
Nor do I know a sweeter Hope than this,  
That this sweet Hope by judgment reprov'd,  
That our own Britain, our dear Mother Isle,  
May boast one maid, a poetess *indeed*  
Great as the impassioned Lesbian, in sweet song,  
And O, of holier mind and happier fate.  
Matilda ! I dare twine thy vernal wreath  
And the brows of patriot Hope but thou  
Be wise ! be bold ! fulfil my auspices !  
Tho' sweet thy measures, stern must be thy thought,  
Patient thy study, watchful thy mild eye.  
Poetic feelings, like the stretching boughs  
Of mighty oaks, pay homage to the gales,  
Toss in the strong winds, drive before the gust,  
Themselves one giddy storm of fluttering leaves  
Yet, all the while self-limited, remain  
Equally near the fixed and solid trunk  
Of Truth and Nature in the howling storm,  
As in the calm that stills the aspen grove.  
Be bold, meek woman ! but be wisely bold.  
Fly, ostrich-like, firm land beneath thy feet,  
Yet hurried onward by thy wings of fancy,  
Swift as the whirlwind, singing in their quills.  
Look round thee ! Look within thee ! think and feel  
What nobler meed, Matilda, canst thou win,  
Than tears of gladness in a Boughton's eyes,  
And exultation even in strangers' hearts ?

## THE GOOD GREAT MAN

HOW seldom, friend, a good great man inherits  
 Honour or wealth with all his worth and pains.  
 It sounds like stories from the land of spirits  
 If any man obtain that which he merits,  
 Or any merit that which he obtains.

## REPLY TO THE ABOVE

For shame, dear friend, renounce this canting strain ;  
 What would'st thou have a good great man obtain ?  
 Place, titles, salary, a gilded chain,  
 Or throne of corpses which his sword had slain ?  
 Greatness and goodness are not means but ends.  
 Hath he not always treasures, always friends,  
 The good great man ? three treasures ; LOVE and  
 LIGHT,  
 And CALM THOUGHTS, regular as infant's breath ;  
 And three firm friends more sure than day and night,  
 HIMSELF, his MAKER, and the ANGEL DEATH.

1802.

## SEPARATION

ASWORDED man whose trade is blood,  
 In grief in anger and in fear,  
 Thro' jungle, swamp, and torrent flood,  
 I seek the wealth you hold so dear !

The dazzling charm of outward form,  
 The power of gold, the pride of birth,  
 Have taken Woman's heart by storm—  
 Usurped the place of inward worth.

Is not true Love of higher price  
 Than outward form though fair to see,  
 Wealth's glittering fairy-dome of ice,  
 Or echo of proud ancestry ?

O ! Asra, Asra ! couldst thou see  
 Into the bottom of my heart,  
 There's such a mine of love for thee,  
 As almost might supply desert !

This Separation is, alas !  
 Too great a punishment to bear.  
 O ! take my life, or let me pass  
 That life, that happy life with her.

The perils erst with steadfast eye,  
 Encountered, now I shrink to see—  
 Oh ! I have heart enough to die—  
 Not half enough to part from Thee !

1805.

A THOUGHT SUGGESTED BY A VIEW  
 OF SADDLEBACK IN CUMBERLAND

ON stern Blencartha's perilous height  
 The winds are tyrannous and strong,  
 And flashing forth unsteady light  
 From stern Blencartha's skyey height,  
 As loud the torrents throng.

Beneath the moon in gentle weather  
 They bind the earth and sky together.  
 But oh! the sky and all its forms, how quiet!  
 The things that seek the earth, how full of noise and riot.

1806.

### INSCRIPTION FOR A TIMEPIECE

**N**OW! it is gone. Our brief hours travel post,  
 Each with its thought or deed, its Why or How.  
 But know, each parting hour gives up a ghost  
 To dwell within thee,—an eternal now.

1830.

### THE BUTTERFLY

**T**HE Butterfly the ancient Grecians made  
 The soul's fair emblem and its only name  
 But of the soul, escaped the slavish trade  
 Of earthly life! For in this mortal frame  
 Ours is the reptile's lot, much toil, much blame,  
 Manifold motions, making little speed,  
 And to deform and kill the things whereon we feed.

1815.

### LIMBO

THE SOLE TRUE SOMETHING—THIS, IN LIMBO'S DEN

**I**T frightens Ghosts as here Ghosts frighten men  
 Thence cross'd unseized—and shall some fated  
 hour  
 Be pulverised by Demogorgon's power,  
 And given as poison to annihilate Souls?—  
 Even now it shrinks them—they shrink in as moles

(Nature's mute monks, live mandrakes of the ground),  
Creep back from light, then listen for its sound ;  
See but to dread, and dread they know not why—  
The natural alien of their negative eye.

'Tis a strange place, this Limbo ! not a place  
Yet name it so, where time and weary space  
Fettered from flight, with nightmare sense of fleeing  
Strive for their last crepuscular half being :—  
Lank Space, and scytheless Time with branny hands  
Barren and soundless as the measuring sands.  
Not marked by flit of Shades, unmeaning they  
As moonlight on the dial of the day !  
But that is lovely—looks like human Time.  
An old man with a steady look sublime,  
That stops his earthly task to watch the skies ;  
But he is blind—a statue hath such eyes ;  
Yet having moonward turned his face by chance,  
Gazes the orb with moonlike countenance ;  
With scant white hairs, with foretop bold and high,  
He gazes still ; his eyeless face all eye ;  
As 'twere an organ full of silent sight,  
His whole face seemeth to rejoice in light ;  
Lip touching lip, all moveless, bust and limb,  
He seems to gaze at that which seems to gaze on him !  
No such sweet sights doth Limbo den immure,  
Wall'd round, and made a spirit-jail secure,  
By the mere horror of blank Naught-at-all,  
Whose circumambience doth these ghosts enthrall.  
A lurid thought is growthless, dull privation,  
Yet that is but a Purgatory curse ;  
Hell knows a fear far worse,  
A fear—a future state ; 'tis positive negation.

## ON DONNE'S POETRY

WITH Donne, whose muse on dromedary trots,  
 Wreathe iron pokers into true-love knots.  
 Rhyme's sturdy cripple, fancy's maze and clue,  
 Wit's forge and fire-blast, meaning's press and screw.

1818.

## OFT I SAW HIM STRAY

AND oft I saw him stray,  
 The bells of foxglove in his hand—  
 and ever

And anon he to his ear would hold a blade  
 Of that stiff grass that 'mong the heathflower grows  
 Which made a subtle kind of melody,  
 Most like the apparition of a breeze,  
 Singing with its thin voice in shadowy worlds.

## LOVE A SWORD

THOUGH veiled in spires of myrtle-wreath,  
 Love is a sword which cuts its sheath,  
 And through the clefts itself has made  
 We spy the flashes of the blade.

But through the clefts itself has made  
 We likewise see Love's flashing blade,  
 By rust consumed, or snapt in twain ;  
 And only hilt and stump remain.

1825.

## THE IMPROVISATORE

VERSE—ANSWER ONLY

**Y**ES, yes! that boon life's richest treat  
 He had, or fancied that he had;  
 Say, 'twas but in his own conceit—  
     The fancy made him glad!  
 Crown of his cup and garnish of his dish,  
 The boon prefigured in his earliest wish  
 The fair fulfilment of his poesy,  
 When his young heart first yearned for sympathy.

But e'en the meteor offspring of the brain  
     Unnourished wane;  
 Faith asks her daily bread,  
 And Fancy must be fed!  
 Now so it chanced—from wet or dry,  
 It boots not how—I know not why—  
 She missed her wonted food; and quickly  
 Poor Fancy staggered and grew sickly.  
 Then came a restless state, 'twixt yea and nay,  
 His faith was fixed, his heart all ebb and flow;  
 Or like a bark, in some half-sheltered bay,  
 Above its anchor driving to and fro.  
 That boon, which but to have possess'd  
 In a *belief*, gave life a zest—  
 Uncertain both what it had been  
 And if by error lost or luck;  
 And what it was; an evergreen  
 Which some insidious blight had struck,  
 Or annual flower, which, past its blow,

No vernal spell shall e'er revive ;  
Uncertain, and afraid to know,  
Doubts toss'd him to and fro,  
Hope keeping Love, Love Hope alive,  
Like babes bewildered in a snow  
That clung and huddled from the cold  
In hollow tree or ruined fold.

Those sparkling colours, once his boast,  
    Fading, one by one away,  
Thin and hueless as a ghost,  
Poor Fancy on her sick-bed lay :  
Ill at distance, worse when near,  
Telling her dreams to jealous Fear !  
Where was it then, the social sprite,  
That crowned the poet's cup and deck'd his dish ?  
Poor shadow cast from an unsteady wish,  
Itself a substance by no other right  
But that it intercepted Reason's light,  
It dimm'd his eye, it darken'd on his brow,  
A peevish mood, a tedious time, I trow !  
Thank Heaven ! 'tis not so now.  
O ! bliss of blissful hours,  
The boon of Heaven's decreeing,  
While yet in Eden's bowers  
Dwelt the first husband and his sinless mate !  
The one sweet plant, which, piteous Heaven  
    agreeing,  
They bore with them through Eden's closing gate !  
Of life's gay summer-tide the sovereign rose !  
Late autumn's amaranth, that more fragrant blows,  
When passion's flowers all fall or fade ;  
If this were ever his, in outward being,

Or but his own true love's projected shade,  
Now that at length by certain proof he knows,  
That whether real or a magic show,  
Whate'er it was, it is no longer so ;  
Though heart be lonesome, hope laid low,  
Yet, lady ! deem him not unblest !  
The certainty that struck Hope dead,  
Hath left Contentment in her stead ;  
And that is next to Best !

1827.

## NOTES

Page 1. *Dedication*.—This Dedication appeared in the edition 'Poems, 1797,' with the heading, 'To the Rev. George Coleridge, etc.' In a note in the *Poetical and Dramatic Works*, 1877-80, appears the following: 'In a copy of the 1797 edition, now in the possession of Mr. Frederick Locker-Lampson, Coleridge has written underneath this Dedication as follows: "N.B.—If this volume should ever be delivered according to its direction, *i.e.* to Posterity, let it be known that the Rev. George Coleridge was displeased, and thought his character endangered by this Dedication."—*S. T. Coleridge.*' To which Canon Ainger adds, 'Coleridge would seem to have intended dedicating the 1797 volume to Bowles' (*Letters*, i. 46, November 14, 1796).

Page 2, line 2. *Chance-started friendships*.—John Hucks, who had been with Coleridge in the tour in North Wales of 1794, makes a reference to this somewhat unfortunate allusion in his *Poems* published in 1798:

'Deem not the friendships of your earlier days  
False tho' chance-started; haply yet untried  
They are judged hardly.'

P. 2, l. 8. *False and fair-foliaged as the manchineel*.—Coleridge used this simile several times throughout his works; to such an extent indeed as to call forth the protests of Charles Lamb, in his letter to the former of September 1797. 'If you don't write to me now, as I told Lloyd, I shall get angry and call you hard names—Manchineel, and I don't know what else.'

P. 4. *Songs of the Pixies*.—There is a suggestion in the first stanza of that exquisite lyric in the *Merchant of Venice*:

'Tell me where is fancy bred.'

P. 8. *Genevieve*.—Written, as this was, in early youth, it

first appeared in the *Cambridge Intelligencer* for November 1, 1794. Dykes Campbell says that 'there was a tradition in Christ's Hospital that *Genevieve* was addressed to the daughter of Coleridge's school nurse.' For the head boys to be in love with their nurse's daughter was an institution of long standing.

P. 9. *To a beautiful spring*.—To the Otter and to Ottery.

P. 9, ll. 13, 14. *The elfin tribe . . . breast*.—Cf. Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* and Shenstone's *Schoolmistress*, to which Coleridge has evidently been indebted for suggestions.

P. 10, l. 5. *On an Autumnal Evening* was first printed in the volume of 1796, with the title, *Written in Early Youth: the time, an Autumnal Evening*. Coleridge severely condemned this poem, and saw a number of faults in it after he had read Rogers's poem on the *Pleasures of Memory*. He also professed to have taken many of his ideas from the Greek Epigrams. Coleridge unquestionably was influenced as regards some of the imagery of this piece by Michael Bruce's noble poem of *Loch Leven*.

P. 13, l. 10, ff. *No more your Skylarks . . . delight*.—Cf. Shelley's *Skylark*:

‘ The pale purple even  
 Melts around thy flight ;  
 Like a star of heaven  
 In the broad daylight  
 Thou art unseen but yet I hear thy shrill delight.’

P. 18. *To the Nightingale*.—It is an interesting critical study to compare Coleridge's two poems on the Nightingale, the one before us and the other on page 151, beginning 'No cloud, no relique of the sunken day.' They are both exquisitely true to nature. Dykes Campbell says that the former contains one superlatively good line, that which describes the night watchmen, who infested the streets a century ago, whom the poet styles 'those hoarse unfeathered Nightingales of time.'

P. 19, l. 24. *Long sequacious notes*.—This line, with the two preceding ones and the succeeding one, were deleted by Coleridge in 1803, but, says Dykes Campbell, were restored in *Sibylline Leaves* (1817). This phrase and the next two lines are an exact translation of a couplet of Simonides,

P. 20, l. 17. *At once the soul of each*, ff.—Cf. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epistle I, Section ix. ll. 1-22.

P. 21, ff. *Reflections*.—This beautiful poem manifests throughout a likeness, more of sentiment than of expression, however, with that striking passage in Thomson's *Seasons*—'Summer,' ll. 367-423.

P. 22, l. 24. *Howard's eye*.—Coleridge had always a great admiration of Howard, yet he spoke bitterly of what he called 'traders in philanthropy.' Cf. *Table-Talk*, August 14, 1833.

P. 23, l. 24. *Bristow's bard, the wondrous boy*.—Cf. the *Monody on the Death of Chatterton*, p. 14, also the revised version, p. 267.

P. 24, l. 3, ff. *With indignant grief*.—Cf. Campbell, *Pleasures of Hope*, ll. 357-393, as indicative of the widespread sympathy which prevailed with Poland's struggle for freedom.

P. 34. *Glycine's Song and Hunting Song*.—Placed among 'Early Poems' because both are believed to be translations, the suggestions of which were received in his early travels.

Pp. 36, 37. *Moriens Superstiti and Morienti Superstes*.—Both of these are taken, as Dykes Campbell says, from the *Commonplace Book*.

P. 39. *The Rime of the Ancient Marinere* first appeared anonymously in the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), the title being somewhat unnecessarily archaic, *The Rime of the Ancient Marinere*. To show the amusing fallibility of the contemporary criticism of almost any great work, the fact is well known that *The Ancient Mariner* was very unfavourably received by the critics of 1798, Southey, in the *Critical Review*, calling it 'a Dutch attempt at German sublimity,' a statement which Lamb severely condemned. Dykes Campbell adds: 'Even to Wordsworth's eyes *The Ancient Mariner* had grave defects, and he freely attributed the failure of the volume to what he considered the not altogether undeserved unpopularity of his friend's ballad. The report doubtless reached Coleridge, who naturally desired that his Jonah should be thrown overboard; but Wordsworth contented himself with printing a 'patronising "note" in the second edition (1800) of the *Lyrical Ballads*,'—in which he claims the credit of the poem's retention in the book.

Coleridge makes the following reference to *The Ancient Mariner* in his *Table Talk* under date May 31, 1830: 'Mrs. Barbauld once told me that she admired *The Ancient Mariner* very much, but that there were two faults in it,—it was improbable, and had no moral. As for the improbability, I owned that that might admit some question; but as to the want of a moral, I told her that in my judgment the poem had too much; and that the only or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader, as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination. It ought to have had no more moral than the *Arabian Nights'* tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well, and throwing the shells aside, and lo, a genie starts up, and says he *must* kill the aforesaid merchant, *because* one of the date shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genie's son.'

Coleridge at one time re-christened his poem *A Poet's Reverie*, regarding which Lamb said that it was as bad as Bottom the Weaver's declaration that he is not a lion, but only the scenical representation of a lion.

P. 53, ll. 18-23. Cf. similarity of thought here to Burns's song, 'My love is like a red, red rose.'

P. 94, l. 9. *France, an Ode*.—This Ode first appeared in the *Morning Post*, April 16, 1798, under the title *The Recantation*. To it, at this time, an editorial note was prefaced in which the editor, presumably Wentworth, says: 'The following excellent Ode will be in unison with the feelings of every friend to Liberty and foe to Oppression, of all who, admiring the French Revolution, detest and deplore the conduct of France to Switzerland.'

P. 98, l. 1. *Fears in Solitude*.—The poem was first published in the Quarto of 1798 with the date appended to it, 'Nether Stowey, April 20, 1798.' The following note appeared in an autograph copy of the poem examined by Professor Dowden: 'Written in April 1798, during the alarm of the invasion; the scene, the hill near Stowey.' In Dykes Campbell's edition the following footnote appears with reference to this matter: 'This MS. is not dated, but is initialled "S. T. C.," and at the foot this note, "N.B.—The above is perhaps not poetry—but rather a sort of middle thing between Poetry and

Oratory—*Sermoni propria*. Some parts are, I am conscious, too tame even for animated prose.”

P. 105, l. 7. *The mansion of my friend*.—The friend mentioned here is Thomas Poole.

P. 105, l. 9. *Lowly cottage*.—‘The lowly cottage is lowlier than ever: it is a public-house with the sign “Coleridge Cottage.” A memorial tablet is about to be affixed (October 1892).’ (Dykes Campbell.)

P. 105. *Fire, famine, and slaughter*.—This ‘War Eclogue,’ as it is called, first appeared in the *Morning Post*, January 8, 1798.

P. 108. *Love*.—In the form in which it now appears the poem first saw the light in the first volume of the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). This is one of the two poems, the other being *The Ancient Mariner*, which Coleridge said could not be imitated—‘They may be excelled, they are not imitable.’

P. 112. *The Ballad of the Dark Ladie*.—This exquisite fragment was first published in *Poems*, 1834, being, as Dykes Campbell says, the ballad to which *Love* was originally intended to be the introduction.

P. 114. *Lewti*.—This poem, which is described as a ‘Circassian Love Chant,’ was first printed in the *Morning Post*, April 13, 1798, the poem being signed ‘Nicias Erythræus.’ ‘Lewti’ was not included in the *Lyrical Ballads* of that year, and the fact that it was originally intended to be included might never have been known if Southey had not bound up the sheet cancelled from the *Ballads* in his copy now in the British Museum. On August 14, 1800, Lamb wrote: ‘I do affirm that “Lewti” is a very beautiful poem. I was in earnest when I praised it. It describes a silly species of one not the wisest of passions. Therefore it cannot deeply affect a disenthralled mind. But such imagery, such novelty, such delicacy, and such versification never got into an *Anthology* before.’

P. 117. *The Picture* was published originally in the *Morning Post*, September 6, 1802.

P. 128, l. 1. *The Keepsake* also appeared for the first time in the *Morning Post* of September 17, 1802, over the signature ΕΣΤΗΣΕ. In all likelihood, as Dykes Campbell remarks,

the Emmeline of the poem was Dorothy Wordsworth, for 'Emmeline' was Wordsworth's poetical name for his sister. This poem has sometimes been styled 'Forget-me-not.'

P. 129. *To a Young Lady*.—The young lady to whom this beautiful poem is addressed was Miss Lavinia Poole (afterwards Mrs. Draper), who was a cousin of Thomas Poole.

P. 135. *Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni*.—The fact is certainly noteworthy that this very vivid picture of the surroundings of Mont Blanc should have been written by one who never saw the scene or the circumstances he describes with such power. For this concealment of fact he was taken to task by De Quincey.

P. 159. *The Three Graves*.—Parts I. and II. of this painful poem were published by Mr. Dykes Campbell in his edition of Coleridge, and in the notes he adds: 'I do not know whether Parts V. and VI. were ever written. . . . The scenery as well as the period of *The Three Graves* is that of Stowey and Alfoxden.

P. 171, l. 1. *Dejection*.—First printed in the *Morning Post*, October 4, 1802 (Wordsworth's wedding-day), with the signature ΕΣΤΗΣΕ; but in a still earlier form 'William' stood for 'Edmund,' thus showing that it was addressed to Wordsworth by name. It was again revised, and 'Lady' was substituted for 'Edmund.' The poem, however, was not improved by this revision. It became emasculated.

P. 176. *Ode to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*.—This poem first appeared in the *Morning Post*, December 24, 1799, her Grace having written a poem on the Passage over Mount Gothard in the same journal three days previous (24th). Lamb had his joke over some of the lines. On August 14, 1800, he wrote: 'By-the-bye, where did you pick up that scandalous piece of private history about the Angel and the Duchess of Devonshire. If it is a fiction of your own, why truly it was a very modest one for you.'

P. 179. *Ode to Tranquillity* first appeared in the *Morning Post* on December 4, 1801, with no signature, and with two additional stanzas, which were never reprinted by Coleridge.

P. 182. *A Christmas Carol*.—First printed in the *Morning Post* of December 25, 1799. It was probably suggested by certain lines in Ottfried's metrical paraphrase of the Gospel of

Luke, which Mr Dykes Campbell gives in his admirable edition of the poet, and which begins :

‘ She gave with joy her virgin breast.  
 She hid it not, she bared the breast,  
 Which suckled that divinest babe,’ etc.

On this subject Coleridge said, ‘ This paraphrase, written about the time of Charlemagne, is by no means deficient in occasional passages of considerable poetic merit.’

P. 199. *Constancy* first appeared in the edition of Coleridge’s *Poetical Works* of 1828, but Dykes Campbell considers that the poem must have been written in Malta, whither the poet proceeded in 1804 as the guest and private secretary of the Governor, Sir A. J. Ball.

P. 214. *The Garden of Boccaccio* appeared for the first time in the *Keepsake* for 1829, there being a fine illustration by Stothard.

P. 226. *Alice Du Clos*.—Unquestionably this piece was written in Coleridge’s later years. It has characteristics which point infallibly to such a conclusion.

P. 251. *Limbo*.—The poem as it stands is composed of two fragments, *Moles* and *Limbo*, which first appeared in the 1834 edition of the *Poetical Works*.

P. 254. *The Improvisatore* was first printed in the *Amulet* for 1828. The prose setting is omitted because, although good in its way, it is decidedly inferior to the poetry.

## GLOSSARY

*The numbers refer to the line and page of the text  
wherein the word explained occurs*

- Alcæus* (sub.), a Greek lyrical poet, flourishing *circa* 600 B.C., whence the term *Alcaic* verse is derived, 112, 27
- Aonian* (sub.), pertaining to Aonia, in Greece: the Aonian Mount = Helicon, 146, 12. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, B. I. l. 15
- Arboreous* (adj.), composed of trees (Lat. *arbor*), 3, 10
- Atlas*, one of the giants who warred against Jupiter and who was condemned to carry the weight of the earth, 244, 13
- Basined* (verb), placed like a basin, 25, 24
- Bassoon* (sub.), a musical wind instrument, 40, 20
- Bedight* (verb), adorned, 4, 11. Cf. Sylvester's *Du Bartas' Creation*, Part I. Third Day, Second Week, lines 771, 772:  
' Even of that mighty God whose sacred might  
Made Heaven and Earth (and them so brave bedight) '
- Cenotaph* (sub.), a sepulchral monument to the memory of one who lies in another place, 18, 7
- Cottaged* (adj.), studded with cottages, 14, 1
- Dryad* (sub.), a nymph of the woods, 118, 15. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, B. IX. l. 387:  
' —like a wood-nymph light,  
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train '
- Dulcimer* (sub.), a musical instrument resembling a flat box, with sounding-board and bridges, on which wires are strung, which are struck by the player, who holds a small piece of wood in each hand for the purpose, 190, 13

- Ebon* (adj.), or ebony, a kind of black wood almost as hard and heavy as stone; also, dark-coloured, as black as ebony, 7, 7
- Eftsoons* (adv.), soon afterwards, forthwith, 39, 12. Cf. Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, B. II. xii. 70. 'Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound'
- Entempesting* (verb), arousing to fury, 192, 16
- Firstling* (adj.), earliest, callow, 3, 15
- Flamy* (adj.), flaming; producing an effect akin to the colour of fire, 11, 52
- Gnome* (sub.), a species of spirit which is reported to preside over the inner parts of the earth and its treasures, 118, 24
- Halcyon* (adj.), calm, peaceful, 13, 26; also (sub.), the kingfisher. Cf. Herrick's *Hesperides*, 'The Temple,' 'the halcyon's curious nest'
- Henbane* (sub.), a genus of plants having a five-toothed calyx. A deadly poison, 146, 19
- Jargoning* (sub.), chattering, 53, 12
- Joyance* (sub.), merriment, 10, 20. Cf. Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, B. II. xii. 18:
- 'And hanging down his heavy countenance  
She cheerful, fresh and full of joyance glad'
- Ken* (sub.), knowledge, 6, 10. *Scottice*, 'I dinna ken' (I don't know). Cf. *Cymbeline*, III. 6, 6: 'Thou wast within a ken'
- Limber* (adj.), pliant, flexible, supple, 87, 7
- Loon* (sub.), a low fellow, a stupid fellow, a rascal, 39, 11. Old Dutch, *loen*, a lout
- Lorn*, lost, despairing, 9, 18. Cf. *The World and the Child*: 'Body and soul, I am but lorn'
- Lucent* (adj.), shining bright, 7, 10. Cf. Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes*: 'Lucent sirups, tinct with cinnamon'
- Lychnis* (sub.), a genus of plants of the order of Caryophyllaceæ. They are perennial for the most part, 120, 9
- Madrigal* (sub.), a short poem expressing a tender or graceful thought; also a piece of music for the voice in five or six parts, 4, 2

*Manchineel* (sub.), a tree indigenous to the West Indies, remarkable for the poisonous qualities of its sap. It bears a fruit resembling a crab apple, 2, 8

*Mast* (sub.), the fruit of the oak, beech, and chestnut, on which swine feed, 27, 3. Cf. Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, IV. iii. 422. Cf. Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Chap. I.

*Merlin* (sub.), the great magician and prophet of the Court of Arthur, 187, 13. Cf. Tennyson, *Merlin and Vivien*, and Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*

*Naiad* (sub.), a water-nymph presiding over springs and rivers, 120, 31. Cf. Scott, *Lady of the Lake*, Canto I. s. 18 :

‘ And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace  
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace ’

*Oread* (sub.), a mountain-nymph, 118, 15. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, B. IX. l. 387 :

‘ —like a wood-nymph light,  
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train ’

*Otway* (1652–1685), a dramatist, whose life was very unhappy, author of *The Orphans* and *Venice Preserved*, 175, 11

*Pæan* (sub.), a song of triumph ; any joyous song, 95, 24

*Philomela* (sub.), the nightingale, 152, 24

*Pierian* (adj.), pertaining or relating to the Muses ; so called from Mount Pierus in Thessaly ; the haunt of the Muses, 9, 4. Cf. Milton's *Latin Poems*, ‘ Mansus,’ l. 2

*Rood* (sub.), Rod : the Holy Rood, the Cross, 58, 10. Cf. Shakespeare, *Richard III.*, III. ii. 77 : ‘ By the Holy Rood ’

*Stole* (sub.), a robe reaching to the feet, usually either white or black, 7, 23. Cf. Shakespeare, *Lover's Complaint*, l. 297 : ‘ There my white stole of chastity I daffed ’

*Sunny-tinctured* (adj.), browned by the sun, 6, 1

*Swound* (sub.), swoon, 41, 22

*Tressy* (adj.), falling like tresses of hair, 114, 18

*Verd'rous* (adj.), clothed with verdure, 26

MONODY ON THE DEATH OF  
CHATTERTON

[LATEST VERSION\*—1829]

O WHAT a wonder seems the fear of death,  
Seeing how gladly we all sink to sleep,  
Babes, Children, Youths, and Men,  
Night, following night for threescore years and ten !  
But doubly strange, where life is but a breath  
To sigh and pant with, up Want's rugged steep.

Away, Grim Phantom ! Scorpion King, away !  
Reserve thy terrors and thy stings display  
For coward Wealth and Guilt in robes of State !  
Lo ! by the grave I stand of one, for whom  
A prodigal Nature and a niggard Doom  
(*That* all bestowing, *this* withholding all)  
Made each chance knell from distant spire or dome  
Sound like a seeking Mother's anxious call,  
Return, poor Child ! Home, weary truant, home !

Thee, Chatterton ! these unblest stones protect  
From want, and the bleak freezings of neglect.  
Too long before the vexing Storm-blast driven  
Here hast thou found repose ! beneath this sod !  
Thou ! O vain word ! *thou* dwell'st not with the clod !  
Amid the shining Host of the Forgiven  
Thou at the throne of mercy and thy God  
The triumph of redeeming Love dost hymn  
(Believe it, O my Soul !) to harps of Seraphim.

Yet oft, perforce ('tis suffering Nature's call),  
I weep that heaven-born Genius *so* shall fall ;

---

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And oft, in Fancy's saddest hour, my soul  
 Averted shudders at the poisoned bowl.  
 Now groans my sickening heart, as still I view  
     Thy corse of livid hue ;  
 Now indignation checks the feeble sigh,  
 Or flashes through the tear that glistens in mine eye !

Is this the land of song-ennobled line ?  
 Is this the land, where Genius ne'er in vain  
     Poured forth his lofty strain ?  
 Ah me ! yet Spenser, gentlest bard divine,  
 Beneath chill Disappointment's shade,  
 His weary limbs in lonely anguish lay'd.  
     And o'er her darling dead  
     Pity hopeless hung her head,  
 While 'mid the pelting of that merciless storm,  
 Sunk to the cold earth Otway's famished form !

Sublime of thought, and confident of fame,  
 From vales where Avon<sup>1</sup> winds the Minstrel came.  
     Light-hearted youth ! aye, as he hastes along,  
     He meditates the future song,  
 How dauntless Ælla fray'd the Dacyan foe ;  
     And while the numbers flowing strong  
     In eddies whirl, in surges throng,  
 Exulting in the spirits' genial throe  
 In tides of power his life-blood seems to flow.

And now his cheeks with deeper ardours flame,  
 His eyes have glorious meanings, that declare  
 More than the light of outward day shines there,  
 A holier triumph and a sterner aim !  
 Wings grow within him ; and he soars above  
 Or Bard's or Minstrel's lay of war or love.  
 Friend to the friendless, to the sufferer health,  
 He hears the widow's prayer, the good man's praise ;  
 To scenes of bliss transmutes his fancied wealth,  
 And young and old shall now see happy days.

---

<sup>1</sup> Avon, a river near Bristol, the birthplace of Chatterton.

On many a waste he bids trim gardens rise,  
 Gives the blue sky to many a prisoner's eyes ;  
 And now in wrath he grasps the patriot steel,  
 And her own iron rod he makes Oppression feel.

Sweet Flower of Hope ! free Nature's genial child !  
 That didst so fair disclose thy early bloom,  
 Filling the wide air with a rich perfume !  
 For thee in vain all heavenly aspects smil'd ;  
 From the hard world brief respite could they win—  
 The frost nipp'd sharp without, the canker prey'd within !  
 Ah ! where are fled the charms of vernal Grace,  
 And Joy's wild gleams that lightened o'er thy face ?  
 Youth of tumultuous soul, and haggard eye !  
 Thy wasted form, thy hurried steps I view,  
 On thy wan forehead starts the lethal dew,  
 And oh ! the anguish of that shuddering sigh !

Such were the struggles of the gloomy hour,  
 When Care, of withered brow,  
 Prepared the poison's death-cold power :  
 Already to thy lips was raised the bowl,  
 When near thee stood Affection meek  
 (Her bosom bare, and wildly pale her cheek)  
 Thy sullen gaze she bade thee roll  
 On scenes that well might melt thy soul ;  
 Thy native cot she flashed upon thy view,  
 Thy native cot, where still, at close of day,  
 Peace smiling sate, and listened to thy lay ;  
 Thy sister's shrieks she bade thee hear,  
 And mark thy mother's thrilling tear ;  
 See, see her breast's convulsive throe,  
 Her silent agony of woe !  
 Ah ! dash the poisoned chalice from thy hand !

And thou hadst dashed it, at her soft command,  
 But that Despair and Indignation rose,  
 And told again the story of thy woes ;  
 Told the keen insult of the unfeeling heart,

The dread dependence on the low-born mind ;  
 Told every pang, with which thy soul must smart,  
 Neglect, and grinning Scorn, and Want combined !  
 Recoiling quick, thou badest the friend of pain  
 Roll the black tide of Death through every freezing vein !

Ye woods ! that wave o'er Avon's rocky steep,  
 To Fancy's ear sweet is your murmuring deep !  
 For here she loves the cypress wreath to weave ;  
 Watching, with wistful eye, the saddening tints of eve.  
 Here, far from men, amid this pathless grove,  
 In solemn thought the Minstrel went to rove,  
 Like star-beam on the slow sequestered tide  
 Lone-glittering, through the high tree branching wide.  
 And here, in Inspiration's eager hour,  
 When most the big soul feels the mastering power,  
     These wilds, these caverns roaming o'er,  
     Round which the screaming sea-gulls soar,  
 With wild unequal steps he passed along,  
 Oft pouring on the winds a broken song :  
 Anon, upon some rough rock's fearful brow  
 Would pause abrupt—and gaze upon the waves below.

Poor Chatterton ! *he* sorrows for thy fate  
 Who would have praised and loved thee, ere too late.  
 Poor Chatterton ! farewell ! of darkest hues  
 This chaplet cast I on thy unshaped tomb ;  
 But dare no longer on the sad theme muse,  
 Lest kindred woes persuade a kindred doom :  
 For oh ! big gall-drops, shook from Folly's wing,  
 Have blackened the fair promise of my spring ;  
 And the stern Fate transpierced with viewless dart  
 The last pale Hope that shivered at my heart !

Hence, gloomy thoughts ! no more my soul shall dwell  
 On joys that were ! no more endure to weigh  
 The shame and anguish of the evil day,  
 Wisely forgetful ! O'er the ocean swell  
 Sublime of Hope I seek the cottaged dell

Where Virtue calm with careless step may stray ;  
 And, dancing to the moonlight roundelay,  
 The wizard Passions weave a holy spell !

O Chatterton ! that thou wert yet alive !  
 Sure thou would'st spread the canvas to the gale,  
 And love with us the tinkling team to drive  
 O'er peaceful Freedom's undivided dale ;  
 And we, at sober eve, would round thee throng,  
 Hanging, enraptured, on thy stately song,  
 And greet with smiles the young-eyed Poesy  
 All deftly masked as hoar Antiquity.

Alas, vain Phantasies ! the fleeting brood  
 Of Woe self-solaced in her dreamy mood !  
 Yet will I love to follow the sweet dream,  
 Where Susquehannah pours his untamed stream ;  
 And on some hill, whose forest-frowning side  
 Waves o'er the murmurs of his calmer tide,  
 Will raise a solemn Cenotaph to thee,  
 Sweet Harper of time-shrouded Minstrelsy !  
 And there, soothed sadly by the dirgeful wind,  
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1790-1829.

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