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# Selections from the Poems of PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Edited by A. Hamilton Thompson, M.A., F.S.A.

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# PREFACE

THE incomparable beauty and abundance of Shelley's poetry make the task of selection from it, and especially from the longer poems and odes, one of unusual difficulty. The passages included in this volume are, so far as possible, complete in themselves, and it is hoped that they will provide the student with some idea of the great variety and scope of the poet's work and form an introduction to more thorough study. The notes are intended to supply a commentary upon the circumstances of the various poems and to link the selections, which are arranged chronologically, together; while they offer an explanation of the more difficult passages and illustrate the literary and other allusions of which Shelley's verse is full. The editor desires to thank his wife for aid and advice in the task of selection, as in the companion volume *Selections from Keats*.

A. H. T.

SOUTH PLACe
GRBTTON, NORTHANTS
*July* 1915

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# PRINCIPAL DATES IN THE LIFE OF SHELLEY

1792 4 August. Born at Field place, Warnham, Sussex.

1804 Entered Eton.

1810 Entered University college, Oxford. *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire* and *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson* (early and valueless works) published.

1811 Publication of *St Irvyne* and *The Necessity of Atheism*. Shelley sent down from Oxford. Marriage to Harriet Westbrook at Edinburgh.

1812 Visit to Ireland and *Address to the Irish People*. Residence at Lynmouth, Devon, and Tanyrallt, Merionethshire.

1813 *Queen Mob* printed.

1814 Estrangement of Shelley and Harriet. Elopement to France with Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (July) and return to England (September).

1815 Residence at Bishopsgate, Surrey (autumn).

1816 Publication of *Alastor*. Residence in Switzerland (May-September). Death of Harriet Shelley (December). Shelley married to Mary Godwin (30 December).

1817 Residence at Great Marlow, Bucks.

1818 Publication of *Laon and Cythna*, re-issued as *The Revolt of Islam*. Departure from England (12 March) and beginning of travels in Italy (see pp. 125, 128-9, 140 below). Bagni di Lucca, Este, Naples.

1819 Publication of *Rosalind and Helen*, etc., and *The Cenci*. Naples, Rome, Leghorn, Florence. Death of William Shelley at Rome, 7 June, aged three. Birth of Percy Florence Shelley at Florence, 12 November.

1820 Publication of *Prometheus Unbound*, etc. Residence at Pisa and in the neighbourhood.

1821 Publication of *Epipsychidion*. *Adonais* published at Pisa. Visit to Byron at Ravenna (August).

1822 Publication of *Hellas*. Removal from Pisa to Casa Magni, Lerici, on the gulf of Spezzia (April-May), a house shared by the Shelleys and Edward Elliker Williams and his wife. Arrival of Leigh Hunt at Leghorn (2 July), to collaborate with Byron and Shelley in a periodical. Departure of Shelley and Williams from Leghorn on a yachting excursion (4 July). Their yacht lost in a storm, and Shelley's body, recovered on 19 July, cremated in the presence of Byron, Hunt, and Edward John Trelawny. His heart buried hi the cemetery at Rome near the pyramid of Caius Cestius, close to Keats's grave.

# INTRODUCTION

SHELLEY, of all the great romantic poets of the beginning of the nineteenth century, was the most spontaneous. Byron was equally fluent; but Byron's highest achievements do not reach Shelley's level, and his fluency was attended by a self-consciousness from which Shelley was entirely free. While the genius of Byron was swift in growth, it is possible none the less to trace its gradual ascent from his juvenile pieces to the brilliant rhetoric of the third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold* and the unflagging wit of *Don Juan.* On the other hand, Shelley's poetry attained maturity without warning. The early poems which have been disinterred and re-published with the masterpieces of the last six years of his life are of no intrinsic value. Their medley of sentimental lyrics in appropriate metres and tragic ballads founded upon the German models which were fashionable at that date might have been composed by any impressionable young writer with a capacity for stringing rhymes together. *Queen Mab* expounds at some length the unorthodox views upon politics and religion which made Shelley notorious; but the poetic quality of this work, the outpourings of an ardent young philosopher and reformer whose verse is

entirely controlled by its didactic purpose, is at the opposite pole to the splendour of imagination which was manifested only three years later in *Alastor*. Of the fugitive pieces which have survived from the period between these two poems, the most critical years of Shelley's life, only one, the first poem printed in the present volume, gives promise of the unsurpassable lyrics of later years. The rest, with much variety of metre, are uncertain in tone; and the stanzas written in the churchyard at Lechlade in September 1815, while their phraseology has a calm beauty of its own, are mainly of interest because they express that preoccupation with death and its secrets which gave form to the immortal harmonies of *Adonais*.

The composition of *Alastor* followed closely upon that of the lines just mentioned. *Alastor* and *The Revolt of Islam* were written in the midst of typical English scenery, *Alastor* among the autumn woods on the verge of Windsor park, *The Revolt of Islam* in summer-time on the banks of the Thames. It is characteristic of Shelley that no two poems owe less to the immediate influence of their circumstances. The ill-fated poet of *Alastor*, in whom Shelley mirrored his own sense of personal forlomness and physical weakness, is borne on his mystic journey through gigantic caverns and scenes of disquieting vagueness and mingled terror and beauty to a final resting-place of unearthly calm, where the fetters of mortality drop gently from the released spirit. The narrative of *The Revolt of Islam*, proceeding through

a series of episodes whose figures and scenery alike have the slightest hold upon earth, embodies a philosophic dream of the revival of humanity, freed from the restraint in which it is held by law and custom. In either case the shapes of earth are to Shelley appearances, illusions which mask unseen realities. In the two famous poems written in Switzerland during the summer of 1816, the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* and the lines on *Mont Blanc*, he expressed his conception of the invisible and eternal forces which were nearer to his mind than the fleeting beauty which he saw with his outward eyes. The spirit of Beauty

> visiting
> This various world with as inconstant wing
> As summer winds that creep from flower to flower

was the object of his tireless pursuit, the reality which hid its loveliness within the manifold forms of visible nature, just as the thought of Palma, 'the visioned lady,' engrossed the mind of Browning's Sordello as he passed through the marshes of Mincio, until her

> shape divine
> Quivered i' the farthest rainbow-vapour, glanced
> Athwart the flying herons.

Above the change and decay, the ceaseless alternation of birth and death in the Alpine valleys, Mont Blanc, 'still, snowy, and serene,' is the habitation of

> the secret Strength of things
> Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
> Of Heaven is as a law.

This devotion to the unseen and unattainable as the only true reality could not exist without a keen sensibility to the tangible and transitory forms in which Shelley's ideals clothed themselves. The pathetic consciousness, however, that such forms were not enduring, that the invisible power dwelt in them but for a time and then departed to take up its abode elsewhere, was the cause of the restlessness of Shelley's life and the instability which from a human point of view distinguished his mundane relations. This consciousness also marks the difference which separates him from Wordsworth and Keats. He shared with Keats the perception of lovely form and colour and expressed it with magic utterance, but concrete beauty was not lovely to him, as it was to Keats, for its own sake. Where Keats gave a value to every detail of his landscapes, dwelling with particular emphasis upon each manifestation of earthly beauty which he saw, Shelley reduced his detail to a mere silhouette against a background of supernatural radiance or to indistinctness in a pervading atmosphere of dazzling light. His thoughts, like Wordsworth's, were with the eternal power 'whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,' and his poetry is flooded with 'the light that never was on sea or land,' but he did not descend to the consecration of common objects with a divinity reflected from his ideal. To Wordsworth all nature was a manifestation of the unseen spirit of the universe, whom it hid from Shelley's eyes. While in the nature of things Shelley had to draw upon the concrete

for his imagery, he was perpetually endeavouring to escape from it and to live 'hidden in the light of thought/

His poetry, always face to face with ideas which to most men are unsubstantial and unreal, investing them with a reality which sets at nought the common estimates of life, is naturally to many of his readers a mist of beautiful music and colour in which sense, if it dwells at all, is obscured. The difficulty and obscurity of much of his verse are well known. If the .general drift of *Prometheus Unbound* is clear, its details lend themselves to many different interpretations. Even the general meaning of *Epipsychidion* and *The Triumph of Life* is hard to follow, so full are both poems of mystical imagination to which Shelley himself vouchsafed no "(complete key. During the six years in which the unbroken stream of his melody gained volume, it flowed further away from contact with the world of which he was a perplexed visitant. He entered that world during the storm and stress of the era of the French revolution. From his earliest years he found himself in opposition to the conventions of the class to which he belonged, and in harmony with speculations which threatened its existence. Liberty, equality, and the brotherhood of man were ideals which presented themselves to him as objects capable of attainment, and he set himself with fervour to denounce the existing order of things and assail the barriers which checked the free development of the human spirit. Animated by the theories of

William Godwin, whose acquaintance was to bring him at once the chief happiness of his life and an entail of constant anxiety, he attacked government and religion, kings and priests, with an enthusiasm which inverted all traditional estimates of character and conduct. He regarded the dissemination of his theories as a sacred mission. His pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism* procured his expulsion from Oxford and his estrangement from his family. But the religious scruples of Oxford and family ties belonged to the state of things which was the object of Shelley's detestation, and had no power to affect the jattitude which he had taken up. Francis Thompson, in his famous essay on *Shelley,* has insisted upon the childlike aspect of his character. It was with all the seriousness with which a child goes about its games of make-believe that Shelley engaged in the career of anarchist and atheist. Schemes which existed merely as theories in the minds of their projectors appeared to him to be practical measures which he was ready to carry out regardless of any obloquy he might incur. His admiration for Godwin brought him into close relations with the philosopher's complicated house. hold. In pursuance of theories which Godwin had advocated and in which he had experimented, Shelley, finding his marriage with Harriet Westbrook a disappointment and the society of his wife uncongenial, eloped with Godwin's daughter, and in so doing fell under Godwin's displeasure—a displeasure, however, which did not prevent Godwin from drawing, under an

assumed name which was intended to salve his easy conscience, upon the bounty of his son-in-law.

In this episode and its tragic consequences to the deserted Harriet, it is impossible to judge Shelley by the rules which we apply to the conduct of an ordinary man. He lived in a world of ideas in which the formulas of social duty were 'poisonous names with which our youth is fed,' and transgressions involving the condemnation of the world had the free opportunity of being hailed as virtues simply because the world condemned them. In such a case there is nothing more to be said. Shelley himself was impenitent. The pain which he himself derived from the incident was caused by the hard-heartedness of society, which, to his astonishment, instead of hailing him as *an* intellectual apostle and liberator, hugged its chains, regarded him as a moral outcast, and refused him the custody of his own children. His faith in his principles remained unshaken. Whatever our opinion of his conduct may be, there can be no doubt that in Mary Godwin he found not only a faithful and devoted wife, but one whose intelligence was singularly capable of comprehending his genius and understanding his character. How well she knew him and how deeply she loved him is shewn in her notes to his poems, which form the best of all commentaries upon his work.

While *Alastor,* the first of Shelley's greater poems, was written in a spirit of despondency and loneliness by a man conscious of weak health and the failure of his mission, *The Revolt of Islam* returned confidently and

jubilantly to hymn the downfall of existing society and the reign of equal humanity. While Shelley's religion is the negation of all recognised religious systems, it unconsciously borrows much from them, and its assault upon established dogmas consists for the most part of a frontal attack by which it attempts to demolish them wholesale by asserting their opposites. As in other religions, Shelley's ideals can be achieved only by the readiness of their professors to lay down their lives for them. The blood of Laon and Cythna is the seed of the eventual triumph of humanity; and these ardent souls, whose apostleship and martyrdom are recorded in *The Revolt of Islam*, have all the dogmatic fervour and heroic endurance of missionaries of the older faiths. From 1818 to 1820 Shelley's enthusiasm for his unorthodox creed reached its height. It /ound its most sublime expression in *Prometheus Unbound*, a poem set in dramatic form, in which he handled the myth of Prometheus with great freedom, and in splendid blank verse interspersed with lyrics of supreme beauty and concluding with a *feu de joie* of lyric melody prophesied the downfall of oppression and the liberation of man

> Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
> Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
> Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
> Over himself; just, gentle, wise.

Experience never forced upon Shelley the conviction that man himself was an insuperable barrier in the way of his own attainment of the perfection necessary for

this superiority to all law. He was too dazzled by the charm of the idea to be alive to the possible monotony of an order of existence in which everybody was equally good and self-controlled. Such imaginations, indeed, are pageants of the mind which 'the rack dislimns'; but their radiance, 'pinnacled dim in the intense inane/ was more than momentarily visible to Shelley. They assumed for him a definite shape, and in *Prometheus Unbound* even the most prejudiced and unsympathetic reader of his poetry sees something of their glory as he saw it with the unsuspicious eyes of the enthusiast.

To 1820, the }[r]car in which *Prometheus Unbound* was completed and published, belong the *Ode to Liberty*, that mighty and sustained anthem in which Shelley summoned up his choicest resources of melody and rhythm to do worship to the goddess of his idolatry, and the *Ode to Naples*. But although, in the wanderings of the Shelleys through Italy, his indignation was roused by the spectacle of a nation, once in the van of progress, delivered into the hands of a collection of petty tyrants or 'anarchs/ as, with his habit of reversing the ordinary signification of words and symbols, he chose to call them, the events of these years, with their forced inactivity and their long periods of reading and meditation, in solitude or the company of a very few intimate friends, drew him further away from the affairs of life into a spiritual seclusion. It was at this period that he devoted himself more closely than ever to the study of the literature of

the past, and particularly of Greece. The great poets of other countries, Shakespeare, Dante, and Calderon, were his familiar companions; but his special admiration was reserved for the Greek tragedians and Plato. The stanzas from the *Ode to Liberty*, printed on pp. 60-62 below, explain the veneration with which Shelley, like other poets of liberty, regarded Greece, the native soil of freedom, and the regret with which he idealised the age when

All the lesser tribes put on the pure Athenian fashion,
One Hellenic heart was from the mountains to the sea:
Sparta's bitter self grew sweet with high half-human passion,
And her dry thorns flushed aflower in strait Thermopylae.

In 1821 the outbreak of revolt against Turkish rule in Greece inspired the lyrical drama *Hellas*, which in stateliness of measure and lyric ardour is in no way behind *Prometheus Unbound* and looks forward with the same eager hope to the coming of a golden age. But closer and more exclusive communion with ancient poets and philosophers, and particularly the kinship to his own imaginings which he found in the Platonic dialogues and the myths contained in them, softened the somewhat hard dogmatism with which he preached his revolutionary doctrines by turning his attention more entirely to the world of ideas. In this, as we have seen, he had always lived, but with his attention distracted by the contrast between these visions and the phenomena of human life. This distraction is much less apparent after the end of 1819: the poems of the rest of his life, although they

not seldom reflect moods of despondency, are calmer and more measured in tone as regards the objects of his anger or scorn, while the rapture with which they contemplate the secrets of life and death is more constant and ethereal than ever.

Shelley's political fury reached its height in the fierce satires of 1819, *The Mask of Anarchy, Peter Bell the Third,* and *SweUfoot the Tyrant,* which probably will always be valued more highly by sym\patliisers with his heterodoxy than by lovers of pure poetry. In the same year was composed his great tragedy *The Cenci,* which proved his genius for dramatic writing and recalled, no less in the daring imaginativeness of its style than in its choice of a dark and painful subject, the plays with which the fascination of Italy enriched the Elizabethan drama. The work of 1819 culminated in the concluding lyrics of *Prometheus* and in the *Ode to the West Wind,* the first of the three great lyrics in which Shelley revealed the closeness of his intimacy with nature and personified her forces in verse of unexampled beauty. The other two, *The Cloud* and *To a Skylark,* were written in 1820, and all three were published in the volume which contained *Prometheus Unbound.*

The *Ode to the West Wind,* most perfect of the three in execution, is clouded by the melancholy stimulated by autumnal scenery and by the dejection of spirit commemorated in the stanzas written near Naples. The emphasis which Shelley lays, here and elsewhere, upon his own weakness in contact with 'the thorns of life/

must be distinguished from mere self-consciousness or effeminacy of spirit. Such qualities of their own nature make high poetic achievement impossible. Recognition of its own powers, the passion to use them for the general good of mankind, and the sense that humanity as a whole is inappreciative of its efforts, are on the other hand natural to genius and are the very antithesis of the self-assertion of lesser spirits and their pique at opposition and contradiction. Nothing, indeed, could be more ingenuously free from common self-consciousness than Shelley's description of himself in *Adonais* as 'a pardlike spirit, beautiful and swift': this is the natural expression of his knowledge of the beauty of the imagery with which his mind identifies itself, and his confession of inequality to grapple with the difficulties of life is counteracted by the strength with which his verse rises to meet his subject and clothe abstractions in words. In proportion as he feels the frailty of the body, the spirit which it veils gains strength to unite itself with the spirits of the winds and the clouds, and the *Ode to the West Wind* ends in a paean prophetic of victory. In *The Cloud*, unequalled among his lyrics for the splendour and speed of its breathless rhythm, he is intoxicated with buoyancy of spirit and moves high above earth, the master of an endless crowd of glittering fancies. And, as he listens to the skylark, its song translates itself into stanzas, each of which rises upwards through the first four lines to a sustained climax of golden melody in the last. The famous phrase of Matthew Arnold, whose appreciation

of Shelley's poetry was chilled by his distaste for the eccentricities of Shelley's life, dismissing the poet as 'a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain,' finds its contradiction in these three poems. Whatever may be the field which angels, effectual or ineffectual, choose for this operation, it is certain that no mortal spirit has ventured into the space between earth and the firmament with such tiiumphant effect.

Two other poems of 1820 mark Shelley's growing detachment from his earlier preoccupation with the regeneration of mankind. *The Witch of Atlas* is a graceful freak of fancy, in which he indulged his sense of beauty and gave some expression to the humour of which his letters shew abundant traces. Humour was with Shelley a somewhat fitful quality, which his own actions frequently displayed in its unconscious form; but he was able to see the amusing side of incidents and persons, and, while his remarks on his friend Mr Gisborne's nose might have been made by so conscious a humourist as Charles Lamb, the blending of the playful with the serious in *The Witch of Atlas* and, with complete success, in the *Letter to Maria Gisborne*, is of the very essence of humour. *The Sensitive Plant*, on the other hand, with its rich store of shapes and colours of the highest beauty, declares in a parable his views upon the relation of the visible to the invisible world. These were afterwards summed up in the most famous lines of *Adonais*;

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.

The manifold shapes of the garden, the Lady who tended them through spring and summer, fade and die: the ideal 'love, and beauty, and delight' are immortal and changeless. Death is but an escape from the prison of the unreal into the unconfined life of the spirit, the permanent reality which is hidden by the delusive and ever-changing appearances of earth.

*Epipsychidion, Adonais,* and *Hellas,* all written in 1821, are all various in subject, but all give proof of that elevation of thought which Shelley had reached. It is characteristic of him that each of the three was instigated by compassion for the weak and oppressed. The first is an impassioned address, almost overladen with beauty of phrase and description, to the young and impulsive Emilia Viviani, in whom Shelley thought for a short while that he had discovered a true sister to his soul. The indignation which prompted *Adonais* was in some degree the offspring of his own brain. The idea that Keats had been killed by a review published three years before his death is not substantiated by anything that Keats himself wrote in his declining years, and it is evident that Byron, who alluded to the story with an incredulous levity in his own poetry, accepted it on Shelley's authority without believing it implicitly. The

facts, however, that Shelley's generous anger with the reviewer was the outcome of insufficient reflection, and that his estimate of Byron's grief for a young poet whom he did not appreciate was not justified by circumstances, do not detract from the poetical greatness of *Adonais*. Without *Lycidas* to precede it and point to the classical models of elegiac poetry, it probably would not have attained its perfection of form. Personal emotion, however, is far more prominent in it than in *Lycidas*, where Milton's regret for his friend supplies the enlivening under-current of feeling which warms and quickens the poem into life, but is not allowed to intrude too obviously upon the artistic setting of the poem. Shelley, on the other hand, uses the conventional traditions of the elegy as a vehicle for the expression of a grief which is passionate and personal. He presses into his service a host of reminiscences of the literature of the past which, even where they are deliberate borrowings and paraphrases, seem to have come into existence for the final purpose of adorning his lamentation. The personified Dreams, the bereaved Urania, are not abstractions of mythology, but the intimate associates of his spirit, described with as clear a vision as the band of shepherd-poets who come to pay their tribute to the dead Adonais. Their grief derives its form and volume from his own: they are living mourners, pictured with dramatic intensity of feeling. But, from the mourners and the death-chamber, from the mingling of the body with the earth, Shelley passes to that region of speculation where

his mind w.is most at home. Grief is merely the natural consequence of the decay of beauty which cannot last. Like 'Lycidas our sorrow,' Adonais is not dead. The body is become part of that which his verse made more lovely, but the spirit, like that of other 'inheritors of unfulfilled renown,' is united to the eternal and unchangeable. If *The Sensitive Plant* is the clearest, the concluding stanzas of *Adonais* are the most sublime expression of Shelley's philosophy of life and death. In sustained loftiness of thought, in richness of imaginative phrase, and in polish of style, *Adonais* is the culminating point of his poetry and has its place among the select company of poems which mark the highest achievement of English verse.

While *Hellas* breathes the old hatred of tyranny and slavery, the spirit of flat negation with which in his earlier poems Shelley met all that law and custom had made sacred is restrained by a more tranquil and philosophical view of human affairs. The chorus which forms part of the present volume (pp. 94, 95 below) is a remarkable example of the gentleness which Shelley's opinions had acquired. In their essence they had undergone no radical change. Kings and priests were as odious and inexplicable to him as ever; but, in the conviction that the systems and creeds which they represented were merely part of the changing fashion of the world, belonging to the phantoms which take concrete shape for a time and die away, he spoke with a larger tolerance of what he had condemned. No

Christian poet has written more reverently or feelingly of the transformation which the coming of Christ wrought in the world; while there are not a few who would be ready to arraign with Shelley the degradation of His teaching by its professors to serve base ends. Shelley was naturally enamoured of the high ideals wliich Christianity inculcates. Bewildered by the contrast between faith and practice, and unable to reconcile the distinction, he rushed to the opposite extreme of denouncing the social conditions under which such a contrast was possible. Confounding bad with good, he devoted his early energies to preaching the attainment of a millennium by the reversal of all that Christianity had sanctified. While his aims were unattainable in the region of practice and his frankness in advocating his means to them often repels, the loftiness and the essential purity of his thought cannot be mistaken, and his tribute to the light of 'the folding-star of Bethlehem' is a sign of the disinterestedness with which he welcomed all that made for the regeneration of mankind. In the sublime lyric chorus at the end of *Hellas* he pictured the renewal of Greece, far fairer than of old, perfected and purified, and the return of the golden age of the world, rising in vigorous youth out of the ruin of faiths and empires. His faith in human perfectibility, proof against disillusion, remained constant to the end: it grew in strength as his point of view widened, and in this great ode it found its most simple and spontaneous utterance.

There is a marked contrast between the magnificence

of Shelley's diction in his longer poems and such lyrics as the *Ode to the West Wind* and the simplicity of the shorter lyrics such as *The Indian Serenade* or 'One word is too often profaned,' His poetry is rich in such occasional pieces, in which the emotion of the heart takes form in words without effort. Nor has any other English poet sung to one clear harp in so many diverse tones. Arriving at maturity as it were in a moment, he found the entire resources of lyric poetry at his disposal. His verse, responsive to the influence of every mood, trembles and sighs with alternating despondency and hope. In the *Ode to the West Wind* it moves to stately music, wrapped in a garment of splendid imagery. In the lines *To a Skylark* it takes wing with its subject 'in profuse strains of unpremeditated art.' In *The Cloud,* as Ruskin said of the Rhone at Geneva, 'it races because it rejoices in racing, fain yet to return and stay.' If, in the very copiousness of his imagination, Shelley often repeated himself, using again and again phrases and images that had endeared themselves to him and were ever before his mind, the form in which he cast them was never the same. Alone among modern poets, Swinburne, his most ardent disciple, has surpassed him in variety of metre and music, but Swinburne used his forms with greater self-consciousness and was often too intent upon the perfection of his workmanship to remember the vital qualities which Shelley never forgot. Shelley's music —and this is true in varying degree of all the great

poets of his age—has its flaws and discords. Later poets, from Tennyson onwards, have been careful to avoid such jarring strains as the line 'Gods and men, we are all deluded thus* in the *Hymn of Pan,* or the sacrifice of phrase to rhyme in 'I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,' which mars the last stanza of *The Cloud* with a ludicrous image. But these are the negligences of a genius to which poetry is the natural and direct expression of emotion, heedless of the artificial considerations which would impede its freedom. Poetry to Shelley was the only possible clothing for thought which rejected the prose of every-day life as the unreal excrescence that hid the form of truth. In his *Defence of Poetry,* itself a poem written in clear and exquisite prose, he has left a record of the influence under which he himself wrote. 'A man cannot say "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our nature are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet,'

In the reduction to words of such visions as Shelley saw, those visions must naturally lose some of their primal splendour; but they were so constantly present to his genius that it walked among them undazzled and shared their brightness. Ten years after Shelley's spirit

> Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
> Whose sails were never to the tempest given,

had fled where the beacon-light of the soul of Adonais summoned it, the young Browning hailed him with the epithet 'Sun-treader.' In whatever medium Shelley chose to clothe the dreams that were the life of his thought, whether in the blank verse of *Alastor* and his dramatic poems, in the free couplets of *Julian and Maddalo,* in the Spenserian stanza of *The Revolt of Islam* and *Adonais,* the *terza rima* of *Prince Athanase* and *The Triumph of Life,* or in the innumerable lyric forms to which the emotion of the moment adapted itself, there gleams through each of these garments a transcendent radiance, the abiding substance beneath the shifting surface of his poetry

> Rainbow-hued through a misty pall
> Like the middle light of the waterfall.

## "THE COLD EARTH SLEPT BELOW,"

i.

THE cold earth slept below,
Above the cold sky shone;
And all around, with a chilling sound,
From caves of ice and fields of snow,
The breath of night like death did flow
Beneath the sinking moon.

II.

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

in.

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

IV.

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

## THE WANDERING POET

(from *Alastor).*

THERE was a Poet whose untimely tomb
No human hands with pious reverence reared,
But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds
Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid
Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness:—
A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden decked
With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,
The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:—
Gentle, and brave, and generous,—no lorn bard
Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:
He lived, he died, he sung, in solitude.
Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,
And virgins, as unknown he passed, have pined
And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.
The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,

And Silence, too enamoured of that voice,
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision, and bright silver dream,
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.
The fountains of divine philosophy
Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew. When early youth had passed, he left
His cold fireside and alienated home
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness
Has lured his fearless steps; and he has bought
With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,
His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps
He like her shadow has pursued, where'er
The red volcano overcanopies
Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice
With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes
On black bare pointed islets ever beat
With sluggish surge, or where the secret caves
Rugged and dark, winding among the springs
Of fire and poison, inaccessible
To avarice or pride, their starry domes
Of diamond and of gold expand above
Numberless and immeasurable halls,

Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines
Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.
Nor had that scene of ampler majesty
Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven
And the green earth, lost in his heart its claims
To love and wonder; he would linger long
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,
Until the doves and squirrels would partake
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,
And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
Her timid steps to gaze upon a form
More graceful than her own.
His wandering step,
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
The awful ruins of the days of old:
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx,
Dark Aethiopia in her desert hills
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,
Stupendous columns, and wild images
Of more than man, where marble daemons watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,

He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth, through the long burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades,
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

## SELECTIONS FROM *THE REVOLT OF ISLAM.*

### I. THE YOUTH OF CYTHNA.

AN orphan with my parents lived, whose eyes
Were lodestars of delight, which drew me home
When I might wander forth; nor did I prize
Aught human thing beneath Heaven's mighty dome
Beyond this child: so when sad hours were come,
And baffled hope like ice still clung to me,
Since kin were cold, and friends had now become
Heartless and false, I turned from all, to be,
Cythna, the only source of tears and smiles to thee.

What wert thou then? A child most infantine,
Yet wandering far beyond that innocent age
In all but its sweet looks and mien divine:
Even then, methought, with the world's tyrant rage
A patient warfare thy young heart did wage,

When those soft eyes of scarcely conscious thought
Some tale, or thine own fancies, would engage
To overflow with tears, or converse fraught
With passion o'er their depths its fleeting light had wrought.

She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness,
A power, that from its objects scarcely drew
One impulse of her being—in her lightness
Most like some radiant cloud of morning dew,
Which wanders through the waste air's pathless blue,
To nourish some far desert: she did seem
Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew,
Like the bright shade of some immortal dream
Which walks, when tempest sleeps, the wave of life's dark stream.

As mine own shadow was this child to me,
A second self, far dearer and more fair;
Which clothed in undissolving radiancy
All those steep paths which languor and despair
Of human things had made so dark and bare,
But which I trod alone—nor, till bereft
Of friends, and overcome by lonely care,
Knew I what solace for that loss was left,
Though by a bitter wound my trusting heart was cleft.

Once she was dear, now she was all I had
To love in human life—this playmate sweet,
This child of twelve years old—so she was made
My sole associate, and her willing feet

Wandered with mine where earth and ocean meet,
Beyond the aereal mountains whose vast cells
The unreposing billows ever beat,
Through forests wide and old, and lawny dells
Where boughs of incense droop over the emerald wells.

And warm and light I felt her clasping hand
When twined in mine: she followed where I went,
Through the lone paths of our immortal land.
It had no waste but some memorial lent
Which strung me to my toil—some monument
Vital with mind: then, Cythna by my side,
Until the bright and beaming day were spent,
Would rest, with looks entreating to abide,
Too earnest and too sweet ever to be denied.

## II. THE ENTRY INTO THE GOLDEN CITY.

LIFTING the thunder of their acclamation,
Towards the City then the multitude,
And I among them, went in joy—a nation
Made free by love;—a mighty brotherhood
Linked by a jealous interchange of good;
A glorious pageant, more magnificent
Than kingly slaves arrayed in gold and blood,
When they return from carnage, and are sent
In triumph bright beneath the populous battlement.

Afar, the city-walls were thronged on high,
And myriads on each giddy turret clung,

And to each spire far lessening in the sky
Bright pennons on the idle winds were hung;
As we approached, a shout of joyance sprung
At once from all the crowd, as if the vast
And peopled Earth its boundless skies among
The sudden clamour of delight had cast,
When from before its face some general wreck had passed.

Our armies through the City's hundred gates
Were poured, like brooks which to the rocky lair
Of some deep lake, whose silence them awaits,
Throng from the mountains when the storms are there:
And, as we passed through the calm sunny air
A thousand flower-enwoven crowns were shed,
The token flowers of truth and freedom fair,
And fairest hands bound them on many a head,
Those angels of love's heaven, that over all was spread.

## III. CYTHNA TO LAON.

THIS is the winter of the world;—and here
We die, even as the winds of Autumn fade.
Expiring in the frore and foggy air.—
Behold ! Spring comes, though we must pass, who made
The promise of its birth,—even as the shade
Which from our death, as from a mountain, flings
The future, a broad sunrise; thus arrayed

As with the plumes of overshadowing wings,
From its dark gulf of chains, Earth like an eagle springs.

0 dearest love! we shall be dead and cold
Before this morn may on the world arise;
Wouldst thou the glory of its dawn behold?
Alas! gaze not on me, but turn thine eyes
On thine own heart—it is a paradise
Which everlasting Spring has made its own,
And while drear Winter fills the naked skies,
Sweet streams of sunny thought, and flowers fresh-blown,
Are there, and weave their sounds and odours into one.

In their own hearts the earnest of the hope
Which made them great, the good will ever find;
And though some envious shades may interlope
Between the effect and it, One comes behind,
Who aye the future to the past will bind—
Necessity, whose sightless strength for ever
Evil with evil, good with good must wind
In bands of union, which no power may sever:
They must bring forth their kind, and be divided never.

The good and mighty of departed ages
Are in their graves, the innocent and free,
Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages,
Who leave the vesture of their majesty
To adorn and clothe this naked world;—and we

Are like to them—such perish, but they leave
All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,
Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive,
To be a rule and law to ages that survive.

So be the turf heaped over our remains
Even in our happy youth, and that strange lot.
Whatever it be, when in these mingling veins
The blood is still, be ours; let sense and thought
Pass from our being, or be numbered not
Among the things that are; let those who come
Behind, for whom our steadfast will has bought
A calm inheritance, a glorious doom,
Insult with careless tread our undivided tomb.

Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love,
Our happiness, and all that we have been,
Immortally must live, and burn and move,
When we shall be no more;—the world has seen
A type of peace; and—as some most serene
And lovely spot to a poor maniac's eye,
After long years, some sweet and moving scene
Of youthful hope, returning suddenly,
Quells his long madness—thus man shall remember thee.

And Calumny meanwhile shall feed on us,
As worms devour the dead, and near the throne
And at the altar, most accepted thus
Shall sneers and curses be;—what we have done
None shall dare vouch, though it be truly known;

That record shall remain, when they must pass
Who built their pride on its oblivion;
And fame, in human hope which sculptured was,
Survive the perished scrolls of unenduring brass.

## IV. PARTING AT SUNSET.

SHE saw me not—she heard me not—alone
Upon the mountain's dizzy brink she stood;
She spake not, breathed not, moved not—there was thrown
Over her look the shadow of a mood
Which only clothes the heart in solitude,
A thought of voiceless depth;—she stood alone,
Above, the Heavens were spread;—below, the flood
Was murmuring in its caves;—the wind had blown
Her hair apart, through which her eyes and forehead shone.

A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains;
Before its blue and moveless depth were flying
Gray mists poured forth from the unresting fountains
Of darkness in the North:—the day was dying:—
Sudden, the sun shone forth, its beams were lying
Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see,
And on the shattered vapours, which defying
The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly
In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

It was a stream of living beams, whose bank
On either side by the cloud's cleft was made;
And where its chasms that flood of glory drank,
Its waves gushed forth like fire, and as if swayed
By some mute tempest, rolled on *her*; the shade
Of her bright image floated on the river
Of liquid light, which then did end and fade—
Her radiant shape upon its verge did shiver;
Aloft, her flowing hair like strings of flame did quiver.

I stood beside her, but she saw me not—
She looked upon the sea, and skies, and earth;
Rapture, and love, and admiration wrought
A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth,
Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth
From common joy; which with the speechless feeling
That led her there united, and shot forth
From her far eyes a light of deep revealing,
All but her dearest self from my regard concealing.

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath
Was now heard there;—her dark and intricate eyes
Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,
Absorbed the glories of the burning skies,
Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstasies,
Burst from her looks and gestures;—and a light
Of liquid tenderness, like love, did rise
From her whole frame, an atmosphere which quite
Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright.

She would have clasped me to her glowing frame;
Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed
On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame
Which now the cold winds stole;—she would have laid
Upon my languid heart her dearest head;
I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet;
Her eyes mingling with mine, might soon have fed
My soul with their own joy.—One moment yet
I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet I

Never but once to meet on Earth again 1
She heard me as I fled—her eager tone
Sunk on my heart, and almost wove a chain
Around my will to link it with her own,
So that my stern resolve was almost gone.
"I cannot reach thee ! whither dost thou fly?
My steps are faint—Come back, thou dearest one—
Return, ah me ! return !"—The wind passed by
On which those accents died, faint, far, and lingeringly.

## "THAT TIME IS DEAD FOR EVER."

### I.

THAT time is dead for ever, child 1
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever 1
We look on the past
And stare aghast

At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast,
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled
To death on life's dark river.

II.

The stream we gazed on then rolled by;
Its waves are unreturning;
But we yet stand
In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

## OZYMANDIAS.

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert___Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair !"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

## THE DELL BY THE LAKE OF COMO

(from *Rosalind and Helen).*

IN silence then they took the way
Beneath the forest's solitude.
It was a vast and antique wood,
Through which they took their way;
And the gray shades of evening
O'er that green wilderness did fling
Still deeper solitude.
Pursuing still the path that wound
The vast and knotted trees around
Through which slow shades were wandering,
To a deep lawny dell they came,
To a stone seat beside a spring,
O'er which the columned wood did frame
A roofless temple, like the fane
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,
Man's early race once knelt beneath
The overhanging deity.
O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,
The pale snake, that with eager breath
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake,
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,

When he floats on that dark and lucid flood
In the light of his own loveliness;
And the birds that in the fountain dip
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship
Above and round him wheel and hover.
The fitful wind is heard to stir
One solitary leaf on high;
The chirping of the grasshopper
Fills every pause. There is emotion
In all that dwells at noontide here:
Then, through the intricate wild wood,
A maze of life and light and motion
Is woven. But there is stillness now:
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now:
The snake is in his cave asleep;
The birds are on the branches dreaming:
Only the shadows creep:
Only the glow-worm is gleaming:
Only the owls and the nightingales
Wake in this dell when daylight fails,
And gray shades gather in the woods:
And the owls have all fled far away
In a merrier glen to hoot and play,
For the moon is veiled and sleeping now.
The accustomed nightingale still broods
On her accustomed bough,
But she is mute; for her false mate
Has fled and left her desolate.

## EVENING NEAR VENICE

(from *Julian and Maddalo).*

*I* RODE one evening with Count Maddalo
Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow
Of Adria towards Venice: a bare strand
Of hillocks, heaped with ever-shifting sand,
Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds,
Such as from earth's embrace the salt ooze breeds,
Is this; an uninhabited sea-side,
Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,
Abandons; and no other object breaks
The waste, but one dwarf tree and some few stakes
Broken and unrepaired, and the tide makes
A narrow space of level sand thereon,
Where 'twas our wont to ride while day went down.
This ride was my delight. I love all waste
And solitary places; where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore
More barren than its billows; and yet more
Than all, with a remembered friend I love
To ride as then I rode;—for the winds drove
The living spray along the sunny air
Into our faces; the blue heavens were bare,
Stripped to their depths by the awakening north;
And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth

Harmonising with solitude, and sent
Into our hearts aereal merriment.
So, as we rode, we talked; and the swift thought,
Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,
But flew from brain to brain,—such glee was ours,
Charged with light memories of remembered hours,
None slow enough for sadness: till we came
Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame.
The day had been cheerful but cold, and now
The sun was sinking, and the wind also.
Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be
Talk interrupted with such raillery
As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn
The thoughts it would extinguish:—'twas forlorn,
Yet pleasing, such as once, so poets tell,
The devils held within the dales of Hell
Concerning God, freewill and destiny:
Of all that earth has been or yet may be,
All that vain men imagine or believe,
Or hope can paint or suffering may achieve,
We descanted, and I (for ever still
Is it not wise to make the best of ill?)
Argued against despondency, but pride
Made my companion take the darker side.
The sense that he was greater than his kind
Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind
By gazing on its own exceeding light.
Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight
Over the horizon of the mountains;—Oh,

How beautiful is sunset, when the glow
Of Heaven descends upon a land like thee,
Thou Paradise of exiles, Italy !
Thy mountains, seas and vineyards and the towers
Of cities they encircle !—it was ours
To stand on thee, beholding it; and then,
Just where we had dismounted, the Count's men
Were waiting for us with the gondola.—
As those who pause on some delightful way
Though bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood
Looking upon the evening and the flood
Which lay between the city and the shore
Paved with the image of the sky.. . the hoar
And aery Alps towards the North appeared
Through mist, an heaven-sustaining bulwark reared
Between the East and West; and half the sky
Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry,
Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew
Down the steep West into a wondrous hue
Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent
Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent
Among the many-folded hills: they were
Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,
As seen from Lido thro' the harbour piles,
The likeness of a clump of peaked isles—
And then, as if the Earth and Sea had been
Dissolved into one lake of fire, were,*seen
Those mountains towering as from waves of flame
Around the vaporous sun, from which there came

The inmost purple spirit of light, and made
Their very peaks transparent. "Ere it fade,"
Said my companion, "I will show you soon
A better station"—so, o'er the lagune
We glided, and from that funereal bark
I leaned, and saw the city, and could mark
How from their many isles, in evening's gleam,
Its temples and its palaces did seem
Like fabrics of enchantment piled to Heaven.
I was about to speak, when—"We are even
Now at the point I meant," said Maddalo,
And bade the gondolieri cease to row.
"Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well
If you hear not a deep and heavy bell."
I looked and saw between us and the sun
A building on an island; such a one
As age to age might add, for uses vile,
A windowless, deformed and dreary pile;
And on the top an open tower, where hung
A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung;
We could just hear its hoarse and iron tongue:
The broad sun sunk behind it, and it tolled
In strong and black relief.—"What we behold
Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower,"
Said Maddalo, "and ever at this hour
Those who may crbss the water hear that bell,
Which calls the maniacs each one from his cell
To vespers."—"As much skill as need to pray
In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they

To their stern maker," I replied. "0 ho !
You talk as in years past," said Maddalo.
" Tis strange men change not. You were ever still
Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,
A wolf for the meek lambs—if you can't swim
Beware of Providence." I looked on him,
But the gay smile had faded in his eye.
"And such,"—he cried, "is our mortality,
And this must be the emblem and the sign
Of what should be eternal and divine !—
And like that black and dreary bell, the soul,
Hung in a heaven-illumined tower, must toll
Our thoughts and our desires to meet below
Round the rent heart and pray—as madmen do
For what? they know not,—till the night of death,
As sunset that strange vision, severeth
Our memory from itself, and us from all
We sought and yet were baffled." I recall
The sense of what he said, although I mar
The force of his expressions. The broad star
Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill,
And the black bell became invisible,
And the red tower looked gray, and all between
The churches, ships and palaces were seen
Huddled in gloom;—into the purple sea
The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.
We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola
Conveyed me to my lodging by the way.

## THE PAST.

I.

WILT thou forget the happy hours
Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,
Heaping over their corpses cold
Blossoms and leaves, instead of mould?
Blossoms which were the joys that fell,
And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

II.

Forget the dead, the past? Oh, yet
There are ghosts that may take revenge for it !
Memories that make the heart a tomb,
Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
And with ghastly whispers tell
That joy, once lost, is pain.

## LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS.

MANY a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of Misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on—
Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,

With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track;
Whilst above the sunless sky,
Black with clouds, hangs heavily,
And behind the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
Till the ship has almost drank
Death from the o'er-brimming deep,
And sinks down, down, like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity,—
And the dim low line before
Of a dark and distant shore
Still recedes, as ever still
Longing with divided will,
But no power to seek or shun,
He is ever drifted on
O'er the unreposing wave
To the haven of the grave.
What, if there no friends will greet;
What, if there no heart will meet
His with love's impatient beat;
Wander wheresoe'er he may,
Can he dream before that day
To find refuge from distress
In friendship's smile, in love's caress?
Then 'twill wreak him little woe
Whether such there be or no:

Senseless is the breast, and cold,
Which relenting love would fold;
Bloodless are the veins and chill
Which the pulse of pain did fill;
Every little living nerve,
That from bitter words did swerve
Round the tortured lips and brow,
Are like sapless leaflets now
Frozen upon December's bough.

On the beach of a northern sea
Which tempests shake eternally,
As once the wretch there lay to sleep,
Lies a solitary heap,
One white skull and seven dry bones,
On the margin of the stones,
Where a few gray rushes stand,
Boundaries of the sea and land:
Nor is heard one voice of wail
But the sea-mews, as they sail
O'er the billows of the gale;
Or the whirlwind up and down
Howling, like a slaughtered town,
When a king in glory rides
Through the pomp of fratricides:
Those unburied bones around
There is many a mournful sound;
There is no lament for him,
Like a sunless vapour, dim,

Who once clothed with life and thought
What now moves nor murmurs not.

Ay, many flowering islands lie
In the waters of wide Agony:
To such a one this morn was led
My bark, by soft winds piloted:
'Mid the mountains Euganean
I stood listening to the paean
With which the legioned rooks did hail
The sun's uprise majestical;
Gathering round with wings all hoar,
Through the dewy mist they soar
Like gray shades, till the eastern heaven
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,
Flecked with fire and azure, lie
In the unfathomable sky,
So their plumes of purple grain,
Starred with drops of golden rain,
Gleam above the sunlight woods,
As in silent multitudes
On the morning's fitful gale
Through the broken mist they sail,
And the vapours cloven and gleaming
Follow, down the dark steep streaming,
Till all is bright, and clear, and still,
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy,

Bounded by the vaporous air,
Islanded by cities fair;
Underneath Day's azure eyes
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,
A peopled labyrinth of walls,
Amphitrite's destined halls,
Which her hoary sire now paves
With his blue and beaming waves.
Lo ! the sun upsprings behind,
Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined
On the level quivering line
Of the waters crystalline;
And before that chasm of light,
As within a furnace bright,
Column, tower, and dome, and spire,
Shine like obelisks of fire,
Pointing with inconstant motion
From the altar of dark ocean
To the sapphire-tinted skies;
As the flames of sacrifice
From the marble shrines did rise,
As to pierce the dome of gold
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City, thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his queen;
Now is come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey,
If the power that raised thee here

Hallow so thy watery bier
A less drear ruin then than now,
With thy conquest-branded brow
Stooping to the slave of slaves
From thy throne, among the waves
Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew
Flies, as once before it flew,
O'er thine isles depopulate,
And all is in its ancient state,
Save where many a palace gate,
With green sea-flowers overgrown
Like a rock of Ocean's own,
Topples o'er the abandoned sea
As the tides change sullenly.
The fisher on his watery way,
Wandering at the close of day,
Will spread his sail and seize his oar
Till he pass the gloomy shore,
Lest thy dead should, from their sleep
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
Lead a rapid masque of death
O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold
Quivering through aereal gold,
As I now behold them here,
Would imagine not they were
Sepulchres, where human forms,
Like pollution-nourished worms,

To the corpse of greatness cling,
Murdered, and now mouldering:
But if Freedom should awake
In her omnipotence, and shake
From the Celtic Anarch's hold
All the keys of dungeons cold,
Where a hundred cities lie
Chained like thee, ingloriously,
Thou and all thy sister band
Might adorn this sunny land,
Twining memories of old time
With new virtues more sublime;
If not, perish thou and they !—
Clouds which stain truth's rising day
By her sun consumed away—
Earth can spare ye: while like flowers,
In the waste of years and hours,
From your dust new nations spring
With more kindly blossoming.

Perish—let there only be
Floating o'er thy hearthless sea
As the garment of thy sky
Clothes the world immortally,
One remembrance, more sublime
Than the tattered pall of time,
Which scarce hides thy visage wan;—
That a tempest-cleaving Swan
Of the songs of Albion,

Driven from his ancestral streams
By the might of evil dreams,
Found a nest in thee; and Ocean
Welcomed him with such emotion
That its joy grew his, and sprung
From his lips like music flung
O'er a mighty thunder-fit,
Chastening terror:—what though yet
Poesy's unfailing River,
Which through Albion winds forever,
Lashing with melodious wave
Many a sacred Poet's grave,
Mourn its latest nursling fled?
What though thou with all thy dead
Scarce can for this fame repay
Aught thine own? oh, rather say
Though thy sins and slaveries foul
Overcloud a sunlike soul?
As the ghost of Homer clings
Round Scamander's wasting springs;
As divinest Shakespeare's might
Fills Avon and the world with light
Like omniscient power, which he
Imaged 'mid mortality;
As the love from Petrarch's urn
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
A quenchless lamp by which the heart
Sees things unearthly;—so thou art,
Mighty spirit—so shall be
The City that did refuge thee.

Lo, the sun floats up the sky
Like thought-winged Liberty,
Till the universal light
Seems to level plain and height;
From the sea a mist has spread,
And the beams of morn lie dead
On the towers of Venice now,
Like its glory long ago.
By the skirts of that gray cloud
Many-domed Padua proud
Stands, a peopled solitude,
'Mid the harvest-shining plain,
Where the peasant heaps his grain
In the garner of his foe,
And the milk-white oxen slow
With the purple vintage strain,
Heaped upon the creaking wain,
That the brutal Celt may swill
Drunken sleep with savage will;
And the sickle to the sword
Lies unchanged, though many a lord,
Like a weed whose shade is poison,
Overgrows this region's foison,
Sheaves of whom are ripe to come
To destruction's harvest-home:
Men must reap the things they sow,
Force from force must ever flow,
Or worse; but 'tis a bitter woe
That love or reason cannot change
The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.

Padua, thou within whose walls
Those mute guests at festivals,
Son and Mother, Death and Sin,
Played at dice for Ezzelin,
Till Death cried, "I win 1 I win !"
And Sin cursed to lose the wager,
But Death promised, to assuage her,
That he would petition for
Her to be made Vice-Emperor,
When the destined years were o'er,
Over all between the Po
And the eastern Alpine snow,
Under the mighty Austrian.
Sin smiled so as Sin only can,
And since that time, ay, long before,
Both have ruled from shore to shore,—
That incestuous pair, who follow
Tyrants as the sun the swallow,
As Repentance follows Crime,
And as changes follow Time.

In thine halls the lamp of learning,
Padua, now no more is burning;
Like a meteor, whose wild way
Is lost over the grave of day,
It gleams betrayed and to betray:
Once remotest nations came
To adore that sacred flame,
When it lit not many a hearth

On this cold and gloomy earth:
Now new fires from antique light
Spring beneath the wide world's might;
But their spark lies dead in thee,
Trampled out by Tyranny.
As the Norway woodman quells,
In the depth of piny dells,
One light flame among the brakes,
Which the boundless forest shakes,
And its mighty trunks are torn
By the fire thus lowly born:
The spark beneath his feet is dead,
He starts to see the flames it fed
Howling through the darkened sky
With a myriad tongues victoriously,
And sinks down in fear: so thou,
O Tyranny, beholdest now
Light around thee, and thou hearest
The loud flames ascend, and fearest:
Grovel on the earth; ay, hide
In the dust thy purple pride !

Noon descends around me now:
Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist,
Like a vaporous amethyst,
Or an air-dissolvfed star
Mingling light and fragrance, far
From the curved horizon's bound

To the point of Heaven's profound,
Fills the overflowing sky;
And the plains that silent lie
Underneath; the leaves unsodden
Where the infant Frost has trodden
With his morning-winged feet,
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
And the red and golden vines,
Piercing with their trellisecl lines
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
The dun and bladed grass no less,
Pointing from this hoary tower
In the windless air; the flower
Glimmering at my feet; the line
Of the olive-sandalled Apennine
In the south dimly islanded;
And the Alps, whose snows are spread
High between the clouds and sun;
And of living things each one;
And my spirit, which so long
Darkened this swift stream of song,—
Interpenetrated lie
By the glory of the sky:
Be it love, light, harmony,
Odour, or the soul of all
Which from Heaven like dew doth fall
Or the mind which feeds this verse
Peopling the lone universe.
Noon descends, and after noon

Autumn's evening meets me soon,
Leading the infantine moon,
And that one star, which to her
Almost seems to minister
Half the crimson light she brings
From the sunset's radiant springs:
And the soft dreams of the morn
(Which like winged winds had borne
To that silent isle, which lies
Mid remembered agonies,
The frail bark of this lone being)
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
And its ancient pilot, Pain,
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be
In the sea of Life and Agony:
Other spirits float and flee
O'er that gulf: even now, perhaps,
On some rock the wild wave wraps,
With folded wings they waiting sit
For my bark, to pilot it
To some calm and blooming cove,
Where for me and those I love
May a windless bower be built,
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,
In a dell mid lawny hills,
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
And soft sunshine, and the sound

Of old forests echoing round,
And the light and smell divine
Of all flowers that breathe and shine:
We may live so happy there,
That the Spirits of the Air,
Envying us, may even entice
To our healing Paradise
The polluting multitude;
But their rage would be subdued
By that clime divine and calm,
And the winds whose wings rain balm
On the uplifted soul, and leaves
Under which the bright sea heaves;
While each breathless interval
In their whisperings musical
The inspired soul supplies
With its own deep melodies,
And the love which heals all strife
Circling, like the breath of life,
All things in that sweet abode
With its own mild brotherhood:
They, not it, would change; and soon
Every sprite beneath the rnoon
Would repent its envy vain,
And the earth grow young again.

## STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES.

### I.

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might,
The breath of the moist earth is light
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.

### II.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple seaweeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone,—
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet 1 did any heart now share in my emotion.

III.

Alas ! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;—
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

IV.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

V.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament—for I am one

Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

## SELECTIONS FROM *PROMETHEUS UNBOUND*

### i. "THOSE SUBTLE AND FAIR-SPIRITS WHOSE HOMES ARE THE DIM CAVES OF HUMAN THOUGHT."

*First Spirit.*

ON a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn,
Gathering round me, onward boine,
There was mingled many a cry—
Freedom ! Hope ! Death ! Victory 1
Till they faded through the sky;
And one sound, above, around,
One sound beneath, around, above,
Was moving; 'twas the soul of Love;
'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
Which begins and ends in thee.

*Second Spirit.*

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
Which rocked beneath, immovably;
And the triumphant storm did flee,
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between, with many a captive cloud,
A shapeless, dark, and rapid crowd,
Each by lightning riven in half;
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh:
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
And spread beneath, a hell of death,
O'er the white waters. I alit
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh
Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

*Third Spirit,*

*I* sate beside a sage's bed,
And his lamp was burning red
Near the book where he had fed,
When a Dream with plumes of flame
To his pillow hovering came,
And I knew it was the same
Which had kindled long ago
Pity, eloquence, and woe;
And the world awhile below
Wore the shade its lustre made.

*It* has borne me here as fleet
As Desire's lightning feet:
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

*Fourth Spirit.*

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aereal kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality !
One of these awakened me,
And I sped to succour thee.

ii. SONG OF SPIRITS,

To the deep, to the deep,
Down, down 1
Through the shade of sleep,
Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life;

Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down I

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down !
As the fawn draws the hound,
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper;
Death, despair; love, sorrow;
Time, both; to-day, to-morrow;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,
Down, down 1

Through the gray, void abysm,
Down, down 1
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern-crags wear not
The radiance of Heaven,
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is One pervading, One alone,
Down, down I

In the depth of the deep,
Down, down !
Like veiled lightning asleep,
Like the spark nursed in embers,
The last look Love remembers,

Like a diamond, which shines
On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasured but for thee alone.
Down, down!

We have bound thee, we guide thee;
Down, down!
With the bright form beside thee;
Resist not the weakness,
Such strength is in meekness
That the Eternal, the Immortal,
Must unloose through life's portal
The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne
By that alone.

## III. THE TRANSFORMATION OF ASIA.

*Panthea.* How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee;
I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change
Is working in the elements, which suffer
Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell
That on the day when the clear hyaline
Was cloven at thine uprise, and thou didst stand
Within a veined shell, which floated on
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
Among the Ægean isles, and by the shores
Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,

Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves
And all that dwells within them; till grief cast
Eclipse upon the soul from which it came:
Such art thou now; nor is it I alone,
Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love
Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not
The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List! *[Music.*

*Asia.* Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his
Whose echoes they are: yet all love is sweet,
Given or returned. Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
It makes the reptile equal to the God:
They who inspire it most are fortunate,
As I am now; but those who feel it most
Are happier still, after long sufferings,
As I shall soon become.

*Panthea.* List ! Spirits speak.

*Voice in the Air, singing.*

Life of Life ! thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them;
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire; then screen them
In those looks, where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light I thy limbs are burning
Through the vest which seems to hide them;
As the radiant lines of morning
Through the clouds ere they divide them;
And this atmosphere divincst
Shrouds thee whereso'er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,
But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever !

Lamp of Earth ! where'er thou movest,
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,
And the souls of whom thou lovest
Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailingl

*Asia.*

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside a helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise:

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted Heaven while the stars were awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed:
You might hear, by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her ae'ry footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier-bands;
If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore, in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,—

In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris, &
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest Creature from earliest Spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of Summertide,
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died I

## THE CLOUD.

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills and the crags and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,

Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of Heaven above,
With wings folded I rest on mine aery nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbed maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,

When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and spin,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march,
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,

I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

## TO A SKYLARK.

HAIL to thee, blithe Spirit !
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

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,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aereal hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged thieves:

Sounds of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was,
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal
Or triumphant chant,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
  Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
  What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
  Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
  Never came near thee:
Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
  Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
  Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
  And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
  With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
  Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things bora
  Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
  Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
  That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness
  That thy brain must know;
Such harmonious madness
  From my lips would flow
The world should listen then—as I am listening now.

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF GREECE

(from the *Ode to Liberty).*

THE nodding promontories, and blue isles,
  And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves
Of Greece basked glorious in the open smiles
  Of favouring Heaven: from their enchanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.
    On the unapprehensive wild
    The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
  And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
    Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
  Like aught which is which wraps what is to be, ii

Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein
Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless child,
Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain
Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Aegean main

Athens arose: a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry: the ocean floors
Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
Its portals are inhabited
By thunder-zonM winds, each head
Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,—
A divine work ! Athens, diviner yet,
Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will
Of man, as on a mount of diamond set;
For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill
Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal dead
In marble immortality, that hill
Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
Immovably unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it cannot pass away !
The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
With an earth-awakening blast
Through the caverns of the past:
(Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:)
A winged sound of joy, and love, and wonder,

Which soars where Expectation never flew,
Rending the veil of space and time asunder !
One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;
One Sun illumines Heaven; one Spirit vast
With life and love makes chaos ever new,
As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

## ARETHUSA.

### I.

ARETHUSA arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains,—
From cloud and from crag,
With many a jag,
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks,
With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams;
Her steps paved with green
The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams;
And gliding and springing
She went, ever singing
In murmurs as soft as sleep;
The Earth seemed to love her,
And Heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.

II.

Then Alpheus bold,
On his glacier cold,
With his trident the mountains strook;
And opened a chasm
In the rocks—with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook.
And the black south wind
It unsealed behind
The urns of the silent snow,
And earthquake and thunder
Did rend in sunder
The bars of the springs below.
And the beard and the hair
Of the River-god were
Seen through the torrent's sweep,
As he followed the light
Of the fleet nymph's flight
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

III.

"Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!
And bid the deep hide me,
For he grasps me now by the hair!"
The loud Ocean heard,
To its blue depth stirred,
And divided at her prayer;
And under the water
The Earth's white daughter

Fled like a sunny beam;
Behind her descended
Her billows, unblended
With the brackish Dorian stream:—
Like a gloomy stain
On the emerald main,
Alpheus rushed behind,—
As an eagle pursuing
A dove to its ruin
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

IV.

Under the bowers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearled thrones;
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones;
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams
Weave a network of coloured light;
And under the caves,
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night:—
Outspeeding the shark,
And the sword-fish dark,
Under the Ocean's foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain clifts
They passed to their Dorian home.

V.

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning basks,
Like friends once parted
Grown single-hearted,
They ply their watery tasks.
At sunrise they leap
From their cradles steep
In the cave of the shelving hill;
At noontide they flow
Through the woods below,
And the meadows of asphodel;
And at night they sleep
In the rocking deep
Beneath the Ortygian shore;—
Like spirits that lie
In the azure sky
When they love but live no more.

## HYMN OF PAN.

I.

From the forests and highlands
We come, we come;
From the river-girt islands,
Where loud waves are dumb
Listening to my sweet pipings.

The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
The bees on the bells of thyme,
The birds on the myrtle bushes,
The cicale above in the lime,
And the lizards below in the grass,
Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,
Listening to my sweet pipings.

ii.

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
And all dark Tempe lay
In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing
The light of the dying day,
Speeded by my sweet pipings.
The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
And the Nymphs of the woods and the waves,
To the edge of the moist river-lawns,
And the brink of the dewy caves,
And all that did then attend and follow,
Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,
With envy of my sweet pipings.

in.

I sang of the dancing stars,
I sang of the daedal Earth,
And of Heaven, and the giant wars,
And Love, and Death, and Birth,—
And then 1 changed my pipings,—

Singing how down the vale of Maenalus
I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed.
Gods and men, we are all deluded thus !
It breaks in our bosom and then we bleed.
All wept, as I think both ye now would,
If envy or age had not frozen your blood,
At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

## "A FAR EDEN OF THE PURPLE EAST"

(from *Ep ipsychidion).*

THE hour is come:—the destined star has risen
Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set
The sentinels—but true Love never yet
Was thus constrained: it overleaps all fence:
Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath,
Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,
Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
Of arms: more strength has Love than he or they;
For it can burst his charnel, and make free
The limbs in chains, the heart in agony.
The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,
A ship is floating in the harbour now,
A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow;

There is a path on the sea's azure floor,
No keel has ever ploughed that path before;
The halcyons brood around the foamless isles;
The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles;
The merry mariners are bold and free:
Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me?
Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest
Is a far Eden of the purple East;
And we between her wings will sit, while Night,
And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,
Our ministers, along the boundless Sea,
Treading each other's heels, unheededly.
It is an isle under Ionian skies,
Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,
And, for the harbours are not safe and good,
This land would have remained a solitude
But for some pastoral people native there,
Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air
Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,—
Simple and spirited, innocent and bold.
The blue Aegean girds this chosen home,
With ever-changing sound and light and foam,
Kissing the sifted sands and caverns hoar;
And all the winds wandering along the shore
Undulate with the undulating tide:
There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide;
And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
As clear as elemental diamond,
Or serene morning air; and far beyond,

The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer
(Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year)
Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls
Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls
Illumining, with sound that never fails
Accompany the noonday nightingales;
And all the place is peopled with sweet airs;
The light clear element which the isle wears
Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,
And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;
And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,
And dart their arrowy odour through the brain
Till you might faint with that delicious pain.
And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,
With that deep music is in unison:
Which is a soul within the soul—they seem
Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—
It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,
Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;
Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,
Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air.
It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,
Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light
Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they
Sail onward far upon their fatal way:
The winged storms, chanting their thunder-psalm
To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,

From which its fields and woods ever renew
Their green and golden immortality.
And from the sea there rise, and from the sky
There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,
Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,
Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,
Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride
Glowing at once with love and loveliness,
Blushes and trembles at its own excess:
Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile
Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen,
O'er the gray rocks, blue waves, and forests green,
Filling their bare and void interstices.—
But the chief marvel of the wilderness
Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
None of the rustic island-people know:
Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height
It overtops the woods; but, for delight,
Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime
Had been invented, in the world's young prime,
Reared it, a wonder of that simple time,
An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,
But, as it were, Titanic; in the heart
Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown
Out of the mountains, from the living stone,

Lifting itself in caverns light and high:
For all the antique and learned imagery
Has been erased, and in the place of it
The ivy and the wild-vine interknit
The volumes of their many-twining stems;
Parasite flowers illume with dewy gems
The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky
Peeps through their winter woof of tracery
With moonlight patches, or star atoms keen,
Or fragments of the day's intense serene;—
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers
And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
To sleep in one another's arms, and dream
Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we
Read in their smiles, and call reality.

## ADONAIS.

### AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS.

Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν Ἕῳος·
νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις Ἔσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.—PLATO.

### I.

I WEEP for Adonais—he is dead!
O, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years

To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow: say: "With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!"

II.

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

m.

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

IV.

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

V.

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

VI.

But now thy youngest, dearest one has perished—
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,

And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew !
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals, nipped before they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

VII.

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.—Come away 1
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting chainel-roof ! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not ! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII.

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

IX.

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

X.

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

XI.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;
Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,

Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak,
And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

XII.

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

XIII.

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

XIV.

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

XV.

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

XVI.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?

To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear,
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais; wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

XVII.

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

XVIII.

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

XIX.

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

XX.

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

XXI,

Alas ! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me !
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene

The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year *wake year to* sorrow.

XXII.

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

XXIII.

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

XXIV.

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

XXV.

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

XXVI.

" Stay yet awhile ! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive,

With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais ! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art !
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart !

XXVII.

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

XXVIII.

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

XXIX.

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

XXX.

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

XXXI.

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,

Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness.
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way.
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey,

XXXII.

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

XXXIII.

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

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own,
As in the accents of an unknown land
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured : "Who art thou?"[1]
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh ! that it should be so !

XXXV.

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

XXXVI.

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh I
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown:
It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone

Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

### XXXVII.

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

### XXXVIII.

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

**XXXIX.**

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

XL.

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

XLI.

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan I

Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair.

XLII.

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

XLIII.

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

XLIV.

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

XLV.

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

XLVI.

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.

"Thou art become as one of us," they cry,
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid a Heaven of Song.
Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng! "

XLVII.

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

XLVIII.

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

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

*I.*

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

LI.

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each; and, if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,

Break it not thou ! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LIT.

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

LIII.

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

LIV.

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

LV.

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

# THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY

(from *Hellas).*

WORLDS on worlds are rolling ever
From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river
Sparkling, bursting, borne away.
But they are still immortal
Who, through birth's orient portal
And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
Clothe their unceasing flight
In the brief dust and light
Gathered around their chariots as they go;
New shapes they still may weave,
New gods, new laws receive,
Bright or dim are they as the robes they last
On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A power from the unknown God,
A Promethean conqueror, came;
Like a triumphal path he trod
The thorns of death and shame.
A mortal shape to him
Was like the vapour dim
Which the orient planet animates with light;
Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,
Like bloodhounds mild and tame,

Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight;
The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set:
While, blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon.
The cross leads generations on.

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

## TO NIGHT.

**i.**

SWIFTLY walk o'er the western wave,
Spirit of Night !
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone daylight,

Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight 1

II.

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long-sought 1

in.

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

IV.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
"Wouldst thou me?"
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
"Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?"—And I replied,
" No, not thee 1"

*V.*

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon—
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night-
Swift be thine, approaching flight,
Come soon, soon !

## TIME.

UNFATHOMABLE Sea ! whose waves are years,
Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
Are brackish with the salt of human tears !
Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow
Claspest the limits of mortality,
And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore;
Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm
Who shall put forth on thee,
Unfathomable Sea?

## SONG.

### I.

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight !
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night?
Many a weary night and day
Tis since thou art fled away.

### II.

How shall ever one like me
Win thee back again?
With the joyous and the free
Thou wilt scoff at pain.
Spirit false ! thou hast forgot
All but those who need thee not.

### in.

As a lizard with the shade
Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismayed;
Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee, that thou art not near
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

IV.

Let me set my mournful ditty
To a merry measure;
Thou wilt never come for pity,
Thou wilt come for pleasure;
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay,

V.

I love all that thou lovest,
Spirit of Delight !
The fresh Earth in new leaves dressed,
And the starry night;
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born.

VI.

I love snow, and all the forms
Of the radiant frost;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
Everything almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery,

VII.

I love tranquil solitude,
And such society
As is quiet, wise, and good;
Between thee and me
What difference? but thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

VIII.

I love Love—though he has wings,
And like light can flee;
But above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life ! Oh, come,
Make once more my heart thy home.

## MUTABILITY.

I.

THE flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow dies;
All that we wish to stay
Tempts and then flies.
What is this world's delight?
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright.

II.

Virtue, how frail it is 1
Friendship how rare !
Love, how it sells poor bliss
For proud despair !
But we, though soon they fall,
Survive their joy, and all
Which ours we call.

III.

Whilst skies are blue and bright,
Whilst flowers are gay,
Whilst eyes that change ere night
Make glad the day;
Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
Dream thou—and from thy sleep
Then wake to weep.

## A LAMENT.

I.

O WORLD ! O life I O time !
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime,
No more—Oh, never more 1

n.

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, autumn, and winter hoar
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—Oh, never more 1

## TO ——

### I.

ONE word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it;
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

### II.

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not,—
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

## TO ——

I.

WHEN passion's trance is overpast,
If tenderness and truth could last,
Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep
Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,
I should not weep, I should not weep I

II

It were enough to feel, to see,
Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,
And dream the rest—and burn, and be
The secret food of fires unseen,
Couldst thou but be as thou hast been.

III.

After the slumber of the year
The woodland violets reappear;
All things revive in field or grove,
And sky and sea, but two, which move
And form all others, life and love.

## LINES.

### I.

WHEN the lamp is shattered,
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scattered,
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

### II.

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute:—
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

### III.

When hearts have once mingled,
Love first leaves the well-built nest;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possessed.
O Love ! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

IV.

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

## TO JANE: THE INVITATION.

BEST and brightest, come away!
Fairer far than this fair Day,
Which, like thee to those in sorrow,
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough Year just awake
In its cradle on the brake.
The brightest hour of unborn Spring,
Through the winter wandering,
Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn
To hoar February born.
Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
It kissed the forehead of the Earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free,

And waked to music all their fountains,
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
And like a prophetess of May
Strewed flowers upon the barren way,
Making the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.

Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs—
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonizes heart to heart.
I leave this notice on my door
For each accustomed visitor:—
"I am gone into the fields
To take what this sweet hour yields;—
Reflection, you may come to-morrow,
Sit by the fireside with Sorrow.—
You with the unpaid bill, Despair,—
You, tiresome verse-reciter, Care,—
I will pay you in the grave,—
Death will listen to your stave.
Expectation too, be off !
To-day is for itself enough.
Hope, in pity mock not Woe
With smiles, nor follow where I go;

Long having lived on thy sweet food,
At length I find one moment's good
After long pain—with all your love,
This you never told me of."

Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake ! arise ! and come away !
To the wild woods and the plains,
And the pools where winter rains
Image all their roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green and ivy dun
Round stems that never kiss the sun:
Where the lawns and pastures be,
And the sandhills of the sea;—
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers, and violets,
Which yet join not scent to hue,
Crown the pale year weak and new;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dun and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one
In the universal sun.

## TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION.

### I.

Now the last day of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead,
Rise, Memory, and write its praise !
Up,—to thy wonted work ! come, trace
The epitaph of glory fled,—
For now the Earth has changed its face,
A frown is on the Heaven's brow,

### n.

We wandered to the Pine Forest
That skirts the Ocean's foam,
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.
The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the bosom of the deep
The smile of Heaven lay;
It seemed as if the hour were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which scattered from above the sun
A light of Paradise.

III.

We paused amid the pines that stood
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
As serpents interlaced,
And soothed by every azure breath,
That under Heaven is blown,
To harmonies and hues beneath,
As tender as its own ;
Now all the tree-tops lay asleep,
Like green waves on the sea,
As still as in the silent deep
The ocean woods may be.

IV.

How calm it was !—the silence there
By such a chain was bound
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound
The inviolable quietness;
The breath of peace we drew
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.
There seemed, from the remotest seat
Of the white mountain waste,
To the soft flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced,—
A spirit interfused around,

A thrilling, silent life,—
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal nature's strife;
And still I felt the centre of
The magic circle there
Was one fair form that thrilled with love
The lifeless atmosphere.

V.

We paused beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough,—
Each seemed as 'twere a little sky
Gulfed in a world below;
A firmament of purple light
Which in the dark earth lay,
More boundless than the depth of night,
And purer than the day—
In which the lovely forests grew
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shape and hue
Than any spreading there.
There lay the glade and neighbouring lawn,
And through the dark green wood
The white sun twinkling like the dawn
Out of a speckled cloud.
Sweet views, which in our world above
Can never well be seen,
Were imaged by the water's love
Of that fair forest green.

And all was interfused beneath
With an Elysian glow,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A softer day below.
Like one beloved, the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast
Its every leaf and lineament
With more than truth expressed;
Until an envious wind crept by,
Like an unwelcome thought,
Which from the mind's too faithful eye
Blots one dear image out.
Though thou art ever fair and kind,
The forests ever gieen,
Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind
Than calm in waters seen.

## WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE.

ARIEL to Miranda:—Take
This slave of Music, for the sake
Of him who is the slave of thee,
And teach it all the harmony
In which thou canst, and only thou,
Make the delighted spirit glow,
Till joy denies itself again,
And, too intense, is turned to pain ;

For by permission and command
Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,
Poor Ariel sends this silent token
Of more than ever can be spoken;
Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who
From life to life must still pursue
Your happiness;—for thus alone
Can Ariel ever find his own.
From Prospero's enchanted cell.
As the mighty verses tell,
To the throne of Naples he
Lit you o'er the trackless sea,
Flitting on, your prow before,
Like a living meteor.
When you die, the silent Moon,
In her interlunar swoon,
Is not sadder in her cell
Than deserted Ariel.
When you live again on earth,
Like an unseen star of birth,
Ariel guides you o'er the sea
Of life from your nativity.
Many changes have been run
Since Ferdinand and you begun
Your course of love, and Ariel still
Has tracked your steps, and served your will;
Now, in humbler, happier lot,
This is all remembered not;
And now, alas ! the poor sprite is

Imprisoned, for some fault of his,
In a body like a grave;—
From you he only dares to crave,
For his service and his sorrow,
A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought,
To echo all harmonious thought,
Felled a tree, while on the steep
The woods were in their winter sleep,
Rocked in that repose divine
On the wind-swept Apennine;
And dreaming, some of Autumn past,
And some of Spring approaching fast,
And some of April buds and showers,
And some of songs in July bowers,
And all of love; and so this tree,—
O that such our death may be !—
Died in sleep, and felt no pain,
To live in happier form again:
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,
The artist wrought this loved Guitar,
And taught it justly to reply,
To all who question skilfully,
In language gentle as thine own;
Whispering in enamoured tone
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
And summer woods in sylvan cells;
For it had learned all harmonies

Of the plains and of the skies,
Of the forests and the mountains,
And the many-voiced fountains;
The clearest echoes of the hills,
The softest notes of falling rills,
The melodies of birds and bees,
The murmuring of summer seas,
And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
And airs of evening; and it knew
That seldom-heard mysterious sound,
Which, driven on its diurnal round,
As it floats through boundless day,
Our world enkindles on its way.—
All this it knows, but will not tell
To those who cannot question well
The Spirit that inhabits it;
It talks according to the wit
Of its companions; and no more
Is heard than has been felt before,
By those who tempt it to betray
These secrets of an elder day:
But, sweetly as its answers will
Flatter hands of perfect skill,
It keeps its highest, holiest tone
For our beloved Jane alone.

## ARCHY'S SONG IN *CHARLES THE FIRST*.

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

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

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

## A DIRGE.

ROUGH wind, that meanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
Bare woods, whose branches strain,
Deep caves and dreary main,—
Wail, for the world's wrong.

# NOTES

## "THE COLD EARTH SLEPT BELOW,"

Written in Nov. 1815, the date given at the head of the poem on its first appearance in Leigh Hunt's *Literary Pocket-book*, 1823. First collected by Mrs Shelley in *Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 1824. At the time of its composition, Shelley was living at Bishopsgate, on the borders of Surrey and Berkshire, close to the eastern edge of Windsor Great Park.

## THE WANDERING POET.

*Alastor or The Spirit of Solitude* was written at Bishopsgate in the later part of 1815 and was published with a few other short poems in March 1816. The preface is dated 14 December 1815. The title is a Greek word (dXdcrrwp), which signifies primarily an avenging spirit, but is also applied to the person whom such a spirit pursues. In the present case, a poet, deeply impressed by the beauty of the whole universe, is represented as wandering restlessly in search of an ideal being with which he can share his satisfaction. No single being is sufficient to answer his demands, and "blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave." He is the victim of his excessive sensitiveness to beauty, and the solitude to which he is condemned in consequence is his doom. "Among those," wrote Shelley, " who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly

makes itself felt." He distinguishes emphatically between this class, with its unsatisfied capacity for sympathy, and the purely selfish class, which is incapable of love for humanity. The motto of the poem, taken from the *Confessions* of St Augustine, is "Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare," i.e., "I did not love as yet, and I was in love with love; I was searching for something to love in love with love."

The interest of the poem, as Mrs Shelley points out in her note upon it, is autobiographical. The victim of solitude is Shelley himself: he was recovering from a tendency to consumption which had been pronounced fatal, and his life seemed to be closing without the satisfaction of those longings which his sense of the unbounded joy of life awakened in him. "The poem ought to be considered didactic rather than narrative: it was the outpouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death." Written m blank verse of a peculiar melodiousness and fluency, with stately passages and turns of phrase which betray the sedulous study of Milton, it contains a series of pictures in which Shelley gave free rein to his passion for describing scenery of a supernatural and gigantic type, full of huge and vague forms, lit by contrasts of unearthly brilliance of colour and deep shadow, and relieved by quieter scenes of lonely woodland.

5. mouldering leaves] In *Ode to the West Wind* (see p. 48) Shelley compares the dead leaves blown before the autumn wind to "ghosts from an enchanter fleeing." The image of autumn leaves was constantly present to his mind: it recurs, e.g., many times in *The Kevolt of Islam.* Sensibility to this particular aspect of nature received caustic comment, five years before the date of *Alastor,* from one of the heroines of Miss Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811). When the impulsive Marianne Dashwood was calling up the picture of their old home in Sussex ia autumn and her sensations at seeing the

leaves falling and driven by the wind, the less sentimental Elinor coldly replied, "It is not every one...who has your passion for dead leaves" (ch. xvi).

7. cypress] An emblem of sorrow, traditionally sacred to Pluto and used at funerals.

20. ambient] Surrounding.

22. divine philosophy] Milton uses the same phrase, *Comus,* 476.

32-45. The pictures contained in these lines are characteristic of Shelley's love of the marvellous. Their scenery is the visionary scenery of *The Arabian Nights.* Such narratives as William Beckford's *Vathek,* written in 1781 or 1782, an Oriental romance dealing freely with the supernatural and mysterious, were a symptom of the early days of the romantic movement; and Shelley had attempted the romance of mystery and terror in his early novels, *Zastrozzi* and *St Iruyne.* The passion for scenery and incident which transcend experience remained with him, and supplied imagery through which his philosophy found rich and striking expression.

36. bitumen lakes] Lakes of pitch or asphalt.

41. avarice or pride] These passions are contrasted with the disinterested search for knowledge and the humility of the poet.

44. Frequent with crystal column] Abounding in crystal columns, i.e., with crystal columns at frequent intervals. The literal meaning of "frequent" is "numerous, abundant."

52. his bloodless food] Vegetarianism was one of the articles of Shelley's creed.

60. Balbec] The ruins of Ba'albek, the ancient Heliopolis, are in Syria, 40 miles N.N.W. of Damascus.

63. Memphis and Thebes] The ancient capital cities of Lower and Upper Egypt respectively. Memphis is on the left bank of the Nile about ten miles above Cairo. Thebes, near the modern Luxor, is some 300 miles south of Cairo. The catalogue of Egyptian wonders in 11. 62-71, is suggested by the remains of these cities—the pyramids and sphinx near Memphis,

the temple of Karnak at Thebes, the colossal statues of Rameses, Memnon, etc. The sonnet *Ozymandias of Egypt* (see p. 14) is another instance of the attraction which Eastern wonders exercised upon Shelley.

whatsoe'er of strange] What strange things soever. The construction is Miltonic, like "all of great," etc., in 1. 23 above.

66. Aethiopia] Used here with special reference to Egypt.

68. wild images] Keats, *Hyperion*, 11, 372 sqq., describes the appearance of Hyperion among the fallen Titans:

> a vast shade
> In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
> Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
> To one who travels from the dusking East.

70. The Zodiac's brazen mystery] The signs of the zodiac wrought in brass.

77. vacant] Open to receive impressions, as a blank sheet of paper is ready to receive writing.

## SELECTIONS FROM *THE REVOLT OF ISLAM.*

*The Revolt of Islam*, originally published under the title of *Loon and Cythna* at the end of 1817, and under its present name early in 1818, was composed by Shelley during his residence at Great Marlow in 1817, "in his boat, as it floated under the beech-groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the neighbouring country." The poem is written in Spenserian stanza, with the exception of the ode recited by Laone in canto V (11. 2182-2271), and consists of twelve cantos, with a dedication to Mary, Shelley's second wife. Its subject is a prophetic vision of the triumph of liberty, through suffering and death, over the massed forces of tyranny and custom. In the first canto the poet, despondent at the failure of "the last hope of trampled France," which expired at the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, witnesses, as dawn breaks over the sea, a combat between an eagle, symbolical of tyranny, and a snake, the emblem of democracy, in which the snake is worsted.

A woman, typical of humanity at large, receives and cherishes the wounded snake, and, explaining to the poet the meaning of this constantly recurring combat, guides him in a magic boat to the Temple of the Spirit. Here, among the spirits of the great departed, seated upon thrones in a vast hall, he sees the arrival of the two martyrs of liberty, Laon and Cythna, and hears from the lips of Laon the narrative which fills cantos ii-xn. The tale is of a boy and girl, brought up together, who cherish ideals of the regeneration of humanity. Separated by force, she is borne into captivity, while Laon is chained to the top of a column overlooking the sea. From this imprisonment he is delivered by an old man, who tells him of the magic influence which an unknown maiden, till lately a captive, has worked in the Golden City, the capital of tyranny, and of the host which has gathered on behalf of freedom in the plain outside its walls. Laon, bidden to take his part in leading this host to a bloodless victory, goes to the camp and quells by his eloquence the discord which has been sown by treachery in the army. Wounded in the struggle between the divided hosts, he unites them and leads them into the city, where, with the maiden, who calls herself Laone, he takes part in a great feast of federation. The triumph, however, is short-lived: the dethroned tyrant regains power by a general massacre, from which Laon is rescued by the mysterious maiden, mounted on horseback. He now recognises her as his lost Cythna, and in their retreat she tells him her story. Meanwhile, the slaughter in the city is followed by famine and pestilence. The followers of the old religions which the revolt has shaken call for victims to appease the wrath of Heaven and end the plague. A price is set on the heads of the two fugitives, and a great pyre prepared for their death, with a brazen network above it and a pit full of reptiles beneath. Amid the general panic, in which the surviving friends of liberty are borne to the furnaces lighted throughout the city, Laon gives himself up, begging the life of Cythna. She, however, joins him on the funeral pyre, and together, feeling no pain, they leave their bodies, and are conveyed in a boat to the Temple of

the Spirit, along a river like that on which the Poet in *Alastor* made his last journey.

*The Revolt of Islam,* in verse of sustained eloquence, full of Shelley's characteristic wealth of transcendental imagination, embodies his dreams of a regenerate world, in which the political and religious conventions of the past are superseded by a reign of perfect liberty, equality and fraternity, founded upon a religion of mutual kindness and brotherly love. At a time when the promise of the French Revolution had disappointed English sympathisers, and the old monarchies had re-arisen upon the ruins of the Napoleonic empire, Shelley expresses his conviction that the principle of liberty is destined to an ultimate success, which must be achieved through continual conflict and the martyrdom of its apostles. While he rejected Christianity with the other systems of the past, he applied the lessons of its success to his prophecy of the victory of his own tenacious beliefs.

## I. THE YOUTH OF CYTHNA.

From *The Revolt of Islam,* canto II, stt. xxi-xxvi (11. 847-900). Laon is telling the story of his youth "in Argolis, beside the echoing sea," a land where tyranny and superstition had sway, and "darkness had descended on every heart." His wanderings among the ruins of the past roused in him the spirit of revolt against the present state of things, and he dedicated himself to the service of freedom. His attempt to waken sympathy in others was unsuccessful, and the friend whom he trusted proved a traitor. In his disappointment, he found consolation in the writers from whose works he "drew words which were weapons," and in the society of the orphan Cythna, his foster-sister.

12. its sweet looks] The opening lines of the canto speak of

> The starlight smile of children, the sweet looks
> Of women.

"Youth's starlight smile " occurs again in *Rosalind and Helen,* 480.

19. The employment of the eleven-syllabled line with a weak ending in rhymed stanzas was a favourite device of Shelley's, which was shared by Byron and other poets of the same period. In this canto of *The Revolt of Islam* it is used in thirteen out of forty-nine stanzas. It adds great variety and lightness to the rhythm of pieces in which it occurs.

20. its objects] The objects of earth. Cytlma moved upon the earth, but was not of it.

36. a bitter wound] The falseness of his chosen friend, of whom he says in st. xviii:

And that this friend was false, may now be said
Calmly—that he like other men could weep
Tears which are lies, and could betray and spread
Snares for that guileless heart which for his own had bled.

42. the aereal mountains] Shelley's chosen scenery is the offspring of his imagination. Mountains overhanging the sea, with their bases penetrated by deep caverns, were a favourite scene with him. Cf. *Alastor,* 11. 352-7:

lo! the ethereal cliffs
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone
Among the stars like sunlight, and around
Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves
Bursting and eddying irresistibly
Rage and resound for ever.

45. boughs of incense] I.e., fragrant boughs.

48. our immortal land] Greece, the memorials of whose great past incited Laon to his task of awaking the nation to liberty.

51. Vital with mind] The phrase means more than "alive with memory." Such monuments of history seem to be endowed with the active principle of thought, and to possess a personality of their own.

## II. THE ENTRY INTO THE GOLDEN CITY.

From *The Revolt of Islam,* canto v, stt. xiv-xvi (ll. 1837-63). These resounding lines, alive with movement, describe the triumphant march of the reconciled hosts, the army of liberty and the traitors who had sought to destroy it, into the Golden City.

5. a jealous interchange of good] I.e., the brotherhood of the army was cemented by a common rivalry between its members, each striving to be foremost in doing good to his neighbour.

7. kingly slaves] Slaves to the tyranny of custom, in the guise of kings. Shelley regarded all who are bound by custom or convention as in a state of servitude.

8. are sent] The Greek word πομπή (*pompḗ*), Latin *pompa,* meaning "a procession," from which the English "pomp" is derived, is literally " a sending." Hence comes the idea contained in this phrase.

9. the populous battlement] The battlemented wall crowded with spectators.

13. pennons] Flags.

19. hundred gates] The Egyptian Thebes was called Hecatompylos, i.e., the hundred-gated, a name which was also borne by the capital of Parthia.

20. lair] Resting-place: literally, a place where one lies down. Shelley uses the word in a similar context in *Prince Athanase,* i, 106, where Athanase's hidden grief is compared to a subterranean river:

> Soon its exhausted waters will have found
> A lair of rest beneath thy spirit pure,
> O Athanase.

## III. CYTHNA TO LAON.

From *The Revolt of Islam,* canto ix, stt. **xxv-xxxi** (ll. 3685-3747). These stanzas of prophecy occur near the end of Cythna's relation of her captivity to Laon, while they are in their refuge from the revived reign of oppression.

**3. frore]** Frozen. Cf. "the frore air" in *Rosalind and Helen,* 1309.

19-27. The stanza may be paraphrased thus. The mind is its own kingdom, and the good will always feel in their own hearts the assurance of the hope which has made them great. Although hindrances may come between their hope and its realisation, these are mere shadows. Necessity must eventually unite the future with the past—blind necessity, which inevitably brings evil results out of evil, good out of good. The force of necessity is irresistible: like results are the necessary outcome of like causes, and one cannot be divided from the other.

45. Insult] Trample on.

56, 57. near the throne And at the altar] Shelley regarded monarchy and the priesthood as the guiding principles of tyranny and foes to liberty and freedom of thought.

## IV. PARTING AT SUNSET.

From *The Revolt of Islam,* canto xi, stt. i-vii (11, 4225-87). Laon is about to leave Cythna and surrender himself to the persecutors. The scene is the mountain, where in a "marble ruin," Laon and Cythna, carried by the "black Tartarian horse of giant frame," have found refuge. See canto vi, st. xxiii (11. 2533-41):

A rocky hill which overhung the Ocean:—
From that lone ruin, when the steed that panted
Paused, might be heard the murmur of the motion
Of waters, as in spots for ever haunted
By the choicest winds of Heaven, which are enchanted
To music, by the wand of Solitude,
That wizard wild, and the far tents implanted
Upon the plain, be seen by those who stood
Thence marking the dark shore of Ocean's curved flood.

10-27. The magnificent pageant of cloud and colour in these stanzas, described in mass rather than in detail, is characteristic of Shelley's prevailing method of description.

46. **glowing]** **I.e.,** with the ardour absorbed from "the glories of the burning skies"—the "light of liquid tenderness" described in the previous stanza.

55. Never but **once]** The last meeting was on the funeral pyre. See canto xII, st. xv (11. 4576-84):

She won them, though unwilling, her to bind
Near me, among the snakes. When there had fled
One soft reproach that was most thrilling kind,
She smiled on me, and nothing then we said,
But each upon the other's countenance fed
Looks of insatiate love; the mighty veil
Which doth divide the living and the dead
Was almost rent, the world grew dim and pale,—
All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.

## "THAT TIME IS DEAD FOR EVER."

Collected by Mrs Shelley in *Posthumous Poems,* 1824. The date given there is Nov. 5th, 1817.

## OZYMANDIAS.

This sonnet was printed in *The Examiner* for Jan. 1818, and published with *Rosalind and Helen* in 1819.

7, 8. The passions impressed in lifeless stone survive the hand of the sculptor which imitated them, and the heart **of** the man which was their source.

## THE DELL BY THE LAKE OF COMO.

*Rosalind and Helen* was begun at Mariow in 1817, and was abandoned by Shelley. At Mrs Shelley's request, it was completed at Bagni di Lucca in the summer of 1818. *Rosalind and Helen, a modern eclogue; with other poems* was published in the spring of 1819. Shelley's preface, written at Naples, 20 Dec. 1818, begins thus: "The story of *Rosalind and Helen* is,

undoubtedly, not an attempt in the highest style of poetry. It is in no degree calculated to excite profound meditation; and, if by interesting the affections and amusing the imagination, it awakens a certain ideal melancholy favourable to the reception of more important impressions, it will produce in the reader all that the writer experienced in the composition. I resigned myself, as I wrote, to the impulse of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story; and this impulse determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it."

The poem is a mixture of dialogue and narrative. Two friends who have been parted in youth meet on the shore of the lake of Como. Rosalind, like the rest of the world, has been horrified by the lawless union of Helen with Lionel, one of those poets and prophets of revolution who were Shelley's heroes. Tragically disappointed of marriage with her early lover, Rosalind married an avaricious and cruel man whom she does not love, and by the provisions of his will has been separated from her children. Helen has seen Lionel die, but her little son is with her, and speaks in the earlier part of the poem. As evening falls, the two friends go to the retreat described in this passage, the haunted scene of a fearful tragedy, and tell each other their stories. After this meeting, they never part again. Rosalind's daughter, as years go by, is restored to her, and marries Helen's son; and Rosalind, dying, is buried according to her wish on an alp above Chiavenna, where "a pyramid of lasting ice" was raised to her memory.

The extract given here illustrates Shelley's power of description—a magic gift, depending on no close observation of local details, but on the workings of a vivid imagination always in touch with the mysterious and marvellous suggestions of nature. The passage is influenced by Coleridge's *Christabel*, which, after a long existence in manuscript, had been published in 1816. Its atmosphere is "the wizard twilight Coleridge knew," and the remarkably varied metre, combining a great number of different

rhythmic movements (see especially 11. 38-49), and the interlaced rhymes, have their origin in *Christabel,* a prolific source of inspiration to poets,

5. evening] A trisyllable.

7. solitude] Notice the repetition of the rhyme from 1. 2, and of "way" in 11. i, 4. A similar repetition may be noticed in 11. 36, 37, 48. These designed recurrences of the same word emphasise the atmosphere of the scene, as the repeated tolling of a bell strikes and holds the attention. So Coleridge, *Christabel,* 11. 14, 15:

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.

II lawny] A lawn or laund is strictly a clearing or glade in a forest, and is hence used for any open space of grass. In the present case the epithet seems simply to mean "grassy."

13. columned] The tree-trunks are likened to the columns of a temple.

17. The overhanging deity] The firmament, "this majestical roof fretted with golden fire." Pope, *Essay on Man,* in, 155-6, describes the woodland worship of primaeval religion:

In the same temple, the resounding wood,
Ail vocal beings hymn'd their equal God.

24. dark and lucid flood] Dark, because of the shadow cast upon it by the forest-trees; lucid, because the water is clear and unpolluted.

30. One solitary leaf] This recalls " the one red leaf, the last of its clan" in *Christabel,* 49. Here, however, the idea is that the foliage is so thick that the noontide breeze is hardly heard through it, as it stirs the topmost leaves.

31. The chirping ot the grasshopper] A familiar sound at noontide in hot countries. Plato, who lays the scene of his dialogue *Phaedrus* beneath a plane-tree by the Ilissus, makes Socrates refer to the grasshoppers as "the prophets of the Muses, the singers over-head" *(Phaedrus,* 262 D).

35. motion] The rhyme echoes "emotion" in 1. 32: cf. note on 1. 7 above. Swinburne *(Essays and Studies,* p. 185)

defends rhymes of this type. "The license, if license it be, of perfection in the echo of a rhyme is forbidden only, and wrongly, by English critics."

40. The regular iambic rhythm of the preceding lines, describing the quiet of the forest at evening, is succeeded by a new dactylic movement (11. 40-3), in which the signs of waking life are given. In 1. 43 this movement gradually ceases, and the earlier rhythm is restored in 1. 44. The flight of the owls (1. 45) introduces an anapaestic movement, which lasts till 1. 47, a return to the iambic measure being made in 1. 48.

48. The accustomed nightingale] Later in *Rosalind and Helen* (11. 1104-10) there is a beautiful description of a nightingale's song:

> soon her strain
> The nightingale began; now loud,
> Climbing in circles the windless sky,
> Now dying music; suddenly
> 'Tis scattered in a thousand notes,
> And now to the hushed ear it floats
> Like field smells known in infancy,
> Then failing, soothes the air again.

## EVENING NEAR VENICE.

From *Julian and Maddalo*, 1-140. Shelley travelled from Bagni di Lucca to Venice towards the end of August 1818, by way of Florence and Padua. On the afternoon following his arrival, Byron, says Shelley, "took me in his gondola across the laguna to a long sandy island, which defends Venice from the Adriatic. When we disembarked, we found his horses waiting for us, and we rode along the sands of the sea, talking." Byron lent Shelley a villa which he rented near Este, on the southern slopes of the Euganean hills. In this villa, known as I Capuccini, Shelley and his family lived for two months from the beginning of September 1818. The house commanded a wide view over the plain of Lombardy, while near at hand, across

"a slight ravine, with a road in its depth," were the ruins of the castle of Este. From the hall-door a pergola led "to a summer-house at the end of the garden, which Shelley made his study, and in which he began the *Prometheus;* and here also, as he mentions in a letter, he wrote *Julian and Maddalo* " (Mrs Shelley). The poem was published for the first time in *Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley,* 1824. Its foundation rests upon conversations between Shelley (Julian) and Byron (Maddalo): its setting is their sunset ride upon the Lido. Julian, the idealist, is, in the words of Shelley's preface, "passionately attached to those philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own mind." Maddalo answers his arguments with half-serious banter, and promises to refute them by taking him to visit a maniac whose melancholy, expressed in disjointed reflections, is due to his complete conquest by painful memories. Their argument is almost forgotten in the sadness which his words produce in both the friends:

> The colours of his mind seemed yet unworn;
> For the wild language of his grief was high,
> Such as in measure were called poetry;
> And I remember one remark which then
> Maddalo made. He said: "Most wretched men
> Are cradled into poetry by wrong,
> They learn in suffering what they teach in song."

Julian, however, feels that, were he not obliged to leave Venice, he might win the madman "from his dark estate." When he returns, years afterwards, Maddalo is no longer in Venice: his daughter, in whom Shelley drew a prophetic but unfulfilled picture of Byron's natural child, Allegra, grown to woman's estate, tells the wanderer the sequel of the maniac's story. The details of the tragedy are not revealed to "the cold world," but a few obscure hints are vouchsafed to the reader's imagination.

The metre of *Julian and Maddalo* is the enjambed or overlapping couplet of ten-syllabled lines, used with the utmost flexibility and fluency. Selection from the 617 lines, full of beauties such as the lines quoted above, is difficult; but the

opening of the poem is its most sustained passage, and the picture of sunset from the Lido is unsurpassed even by Shelley.

2. the bank of land] The Lido (i.e., bank), properly the Lido di Malamocco, between the lagoons and the Adriatic. Cf, Byron, *Marino Faliero,* IV, i:

> A knell was sounding as distinct and clear,
> Though low and far, as e'er the Adrian wave
> Rose o'er the city's murmur in the night,
> Dashing against the outward Lido's bulwark.

5. amphibious] Having two lives, able to exist both on land and in water, as explained in 1. 6.

14, 15. all waste And solitary places] Cf. *Alastor,* 78, 79 (11. 29, 30, p. 3 above), where Shelley's love for such scenery is expressed with relation to the imaginary poet whose character is drawn there. Ruskin, *Stones of Venice,* vol. n, ch. i, eloquently describes the solitude of the lagoons amid which the city rose, as they appear in their less frequented parts after nightfall, "pathless, comfortless, infirm, lost in dark languor and fearful silence, except where the salt runlets plash into the tideless pools, or the sea-birds flit from their margins with a questioning cry."

24. the awakening north] The rising north wind.

26. Harmonising] The stress is laid slightly on the first and third syllables. Shelley's metre is susceptible to the least variation of sound, and lines like this are typical of the delicacy of his music. Cf. note on L 82 (p. 148 below).

40. so poeta tell] See Milton, *Par. Lost, II,* 557 sqq.

46. descanted] Talked (literally "sung") freely. Shelley says "descanted *of":* the proper construction is "descanted *upon."*

46, 47. Shelley declares his own optimism under cover of Julian's in the introduction to the poem: "Without concealing the evil in the world, he is for ever speculating how good may be made superior."

48-52. This noble estimate of Byron's character may be compared with the character of Maddalo in the introduction, "He is a person of the most consummate genius.. ..But it is

his weakness to be proud: he derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects that surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men; and, instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength. His ambition preys upon itself, for want of objects which it can consider worthy of exertion. I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentered and impatient feelings which consume him; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no human being can be more gentle, patient, and unassuming than Maddalo. He is cheerful, frank, and witty. His more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication; men arc held by it as by a spell. He has travelled much; and there is an inexpressible charm in his relations of his adventures in different countries."

57. exiles] Both Shelley and Byron were voluntary exiles from England.

63. way] Such words as "gondola" actually have no rhyme for their last syllable, and are traditionally allowed a quasi-rhyme of this sort. Cf. *The Revolt of Islam*, xi, st. xxiv (11.4437-40):

> The boon I pray
> Is this—that Cythna shall be convoyed there—
> Nay, start not at the name—America!
> And then to you this night Laon will I betray.

67. Paved with the image of the sky] The sky was reflected in the surface of the wet sand and mud. Meredith *(Beauchamp's Career,* ch. viii) says of this very scene at sunset: "meanwhile the sun lay like a golden altar-platter on mud-banks made bare by the ebb, and curled in drowsy yellow links and along the currents." At the beginning of ch. ix of the same novel there is a magnificent description of the view of the Alps at dawn from the sea outside the Lido, which should be compared for its appreciation of light and colour with the passage which follows here.

77. Euganean hills] See introductory note to the present passage.

78. the harbour piles] "The clusters of piles set to mark the deep-water channels, which undulate far away in spotty chains like the studded backs of huge "sea-snakes" (Ruskin).

84. The inmost purple spirit of light] Shelley absorbs himself in the light and colour of his description until details are lost. So Meredith, in the passage alluded to in the note on 1. 67 above, merges the picture of the Alps at dawn in an atmosphere of live colour: "Colour was steadfast on the massive front ranks: it wavered in the remoteness, and was quick and dim as though it fell on beating wings; but there too divine colour seized and shaped forth solid forms, and thence away to others in uttermost distances where the incredible flickering gleam of new heights arose, that soared, or stretched their white uncertain curves in sky like wings traversing infinity."

87. lagune] An Italianised spelling of "lagoon" *(laguna).*

88. funereal bark] The gondola, thus described on account of its black colouring. Shelley came from Padua to Venice in a gondola, and enjoyed this method of conveyance. "These gondolas are the most beautiful and convenient boats in the world. They are finely carpeted and furnished with black, and painted black."

90. their many isles] The traditional hundred isles on which Venice was built. The exact number is said to be 117.

92. fabrics of enchantment] Byron, *Child* Havoid,* iv, st. xviii (11. 155-6), calls Venice

a fairy city of the heart
Rising like water-columns from the sea.

Cf. the description of Venice in *Lines written among the Euganean Hills,* 94 sqq. (p. 26 above).

95. gondolier!] Plural of the Italian *gondoliere.*

104. An additional line is added to the couplet to produce the effect, by a third sonorous rhyme, of the heavy reverberation of the bell.

107. the madhouse] On the island of San Servolo, near the Lido.

116. a perilous infidel] Shelley in his preface describes Julian as "a complete infidel," adding that "in spite of his heterodox opinions," he "is conjectured by his friends to possess some good qualities."

117. if you can't swim] I.e., Providence, the object of your scoffs, will not save you from drowning if you cannot swim.

124. toll] Shelley gives the word a transitive sense, as it appears loosely to govern "our thoughts and our desires": i.e., the soul must ring for our thoughts and desires to meet below round the rent heart. The nobility and beauty of the image atone for the somewhat fluent and straggling construction of the sentence in which it is expressed.

130. were baffled] I.e., were *baffled* in seeking.

135. red] I.e., with the sunset.

## THE PAST.

First published in the volume of *Posthumous Poems,* 1824.

## LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS.

This poem was written at Este (see introductory note to *Evening near Venice,* p. 128 above) in October 1818, and was published in the same volume with *Rosalind and Helen* in 1819.

i, 2. The couplets employed in this poem are varied with the greatest art to suit the sense and to keep pace with the movement required. The base of the metre is a seven-syllabled line, consisting of three trochaic feet, i.e., with the accent on the first syllable of each, and an extra syllable; but this alternates freely with an eight-syllabled line of four iambic feet, i.e., with the accent on the second syllable of each, which is used for the slower and graver movements. The trochaic and

iambic feet are further varied by feet of three syllables, with the accent on the first or the last according to the general character of the line, or are replaced by spondees, i.e., two-syllabled feet in which each syllable is of equal value. All these variations may be noticed in the first three lines, after which comes a series of rapid seven-syllabled lines which reproduce in sound the haste of the headlong voyage described, the image of the restless hurry of man's life. This movement is broken in 1. 16 by a succession of heavily accentuated syllables, to express the gradual sinking of the wrecked bark, and is then continued through the parallel description of the dreamer's voyage in nightmare.

18. Weltering] Rolling heavily.

37. relenting love] Relenting from its neglect of the dead man in his lifetime.

43. Are] The grammar is not strictly correct: the auxiliary is attracted into the number of "leaflets."

59. fratricides] Men whom the king has employed to slay their own brethren. Cf. *The Revolt of Islam*, canto vi, st. xv:

> Sorrow and shame, to see with their own kind
> Our human brethren mix, like beasts of blood,
> To mutual ruin armed by one behind
> Who sits and scoffs!

70, 71. For the weak syllable at the end of each line of this couplet see note on *The Youth of Cythna*, 1. 19 (p. 122 above).

91. "We see before us the wide flat plains of Lombardy, in which we see the sun and moon rise and set, and the evening star, and all the golden magnificence of autumnal clouds" (Shelley to Peacock, 5 Oct. 1818).

95, Venice] See note on *Evening near Venice*, 1, 92 (p. 132 above). Shelley says of Venice, in the letter to Peacock quoted above: "The approach to it over the laguna, with its domes and turrets glittering in a long line over the blue waves, is one of the finest architectural delusions in the world. It seems to have—and literally it has—its foundations in the sea."

97. Amphitrite] The sea, personified as the wife of

Poseidon, "Her hoary sire" (L 98) is Nereus, who was supposed to dwell in the depths of the Aegean sea: his dominion over the Mediterranean is extended here to include the Adriatic.

104. that chasm of light] Cf. *Parting at Sunset,* 11. 19 sqq. (p. 12 above).

113. the dome of gold] The temple of Apollo at Delphi.

116. Venice, founded on the islands of a remote lagoon of the Adriatic, became the chief sea-power of medieval Europe, and obtained the title of "Queen of the Adriatic,"

117. a darker day] The Venetian republic was extinguished in 1797, when Venice became part of the Holy Roman empire. In 1805 she was transferred to France by the peace of Pressburg, but, after Napoleon's fall and the dissolution of his Italian kingdom, she was restored to Austria, and remained Austrian until 1866.

121. A less drear ruin] Cf. Byron, *Child,Harold,* iv, 115-7;

> Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,
> Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes.
> From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

See also the note on the above passage in the Pitt Press edition of *Childe Harold,* p. 242. Observe the contrast between Byron's energetic rhetoric and Shelley's highly imaginative treatment of the same idea.

123. the slave of slaves] The term *servus servorum Dei* was applied by the popes to themselves as a formal expression of humility in the preambles of their bulls. Here, however, "slave of slaves" simply means "most wretched of all wretches," and is used in bitter contempt of the imperial power of which Venice had become a subject.

127. depopulate] Unpeopled,

152. the Celtic Anarch] The Austrian emperor. Shelley with his republican enthusiasms, regarded monarchy as foreign to all true principles of government, and therefore as a form of anarchy. Cf. *Ode to Liberty,* 1. 175, where Napoleon is called "the Anarch of thine own (i.e., Liberty's) bewildered powers,"

"Celtic" means in this place "northern barbarian": cf. 1. 223 below. The despotic rule of Austria in her nominal kingdom of Lombardy and Venetia, created in 1815, is described in *Camb. Mod. Hist,* x, 105-6: "even in the matter of trade, this province, destined to so brilliant a future and so full of latent force, was treated as a conquered territory." Shelley writes (8 Oct. 1818): "Venice, which was once a tyrant, is now the next worst thing, a slave."

168. thy hearthless sea] The sea, on which the hearths of Venice were founded, would in this case engulf her and leave no traces of her habitation.

174. a tempest-cleaving Swan] Byron. Cf. this passage with *Evening near Venice,* 11. 48-52, and see note on pp. 130-1 above. Byron's residence in Venice lasted from November 1816 to 1819, when he moved to Ravenna.

180. That its joy grew his] Shelley probably alludes particularly to *Childe Harold,* canto iv, stt. clxxix—clxxxiv, the passage beginning "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll I" The third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold* had been published in 1818, the year to which this poem belongs. In a letter to Peacock from Naples (22 Dec. 1818) Shelley speaks with disapproval of the tone of mind in which *Childe Harold* was written. "The spirit in which it is written is, if insane, the most wicked and mischievous insanity that ever was given forth——But that he is a great poet, I think the address to Ocean proves."

192. thy sins and slaveries foul] "I had no conception of the excess to which.. .all the inexpressible brutalities which degrade human nature, could be carried, until I had passed a few days at Venice" (Shelley to Peacock, 8 Oct. 1818).

195. Scamander] One of the rivers of the plain of Troy, celebrated by Homer in the *Iliad.*

198, 199. Shakespeare's command of human emotion and passion was an earthly image of divine omniscience.

200. Petrarch's urn] The Italian poet, Francesco Petrarca (1304-74), whose *Rime,* a book of sonnets interspersed with lyric

odes, celebrates his love for Laura, died and was buried at Arqua del Monte, in the Euganean hills. See Byron, *Childe Harold*, iv, stt. **xxx,** xxxi, and notes in the Pitt Press edition of that poem, pp. 245-6.

215. Many-domed Padua] Padua lies to the north-east of the Euganean hills. Shelley had passed through it on his way to Venice in August 1818, when he travelled from Padua to Venice in a gondola. Padua, the mythical origin of which was attributed to the Trojan prince Antenor, was famous as the seat of a great university, founded in 1222 in consequence of the resort of teachers and scholars to the place, the neighbourhood of which on the mainland to Venice made it of considerable importance. It also became famous after 1231 as the place of burial of St Anthony of Padua, a native of Lisbon, who was attracted into Italy by the fame of St Francis of Assisi and made Padua his chief head-quarters. The church of Sant' Antonio, which was begun in 1232 and contains his shrine, is vaulted with seven domes; and the domes of Santa Giustina and the cathedral also justify the epithet "many-domed."

216. a peopled solitude] A solitary city in the vast expanse of plain which surrounds it.

220. milk-white oxen] Shelley, writing to Peacock from Ferrara on 8 Nov. 1818, remarks upon the "long teams of milk-white or dove-coloured oxen, of immense size and exquisite beauty," which he observed ploughing or drawing carts between Este and Ferrara.

223. the brutal Gelt] See note on 1. 152 above.

225, 226. The sickle is still used peacefully in the corn-fields, not turned to a sword for the destruction of the tyrant.

228. foison] Abundance, plenty.

235. the slave's revenge] The unreasoning excesses into which a nation, taking its revenge on its oppressors, is tempted were illustrated vividly by the events of the French Revolution. Byron *(Childe Harold,* in, st. Ixxxi) remarks the "too much wrath, which follows o'er-grown fears," and (ibid, iv, st. xcvii) says:

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime,

236-55. The allusions in this passage may be explained as follows. Eccelino da Romano, the chief lieutenant of the emperor Frederick II and supporter of the Ghibelline cause in North Italy, seized Padua in 1237 and held it for about twenty years. The cruelties of his tyranny in the cities which he held for his master, the "Celtic Anarch" of those days, have given him a terrible notoriety, allusions to which occur plentifully in Browning's *Bordello.* Dante *(Paradiso,* ix, 29, 30), alluding to his mother's dream that she gave birth to a fiery torch, which burned up the whole march of Treviso, calls him "a brand which wrought great havoc in the country-side." He became lord of Verona, Padua, Vicenza, Treviso, Feltre, Trent, and Brescia, and so of almost half of Lombardy. In 1256 the cardinal legate Filippo Fontana raised a crusade against him and took Padua. Eccelino, then engaged in besieging Mantua, is said to have returned to Verona and burned or mutilated 12,000 Paduan captives whom he had with him. He was taken prisoner at Cassano in September 1259 and died in the castle of Soncino on 7 October. His fall and the extermination of his family are allegorised by Shelley as the triumph of Death over Sin for the time being. The compensation promised to Sin by Death is the establishment of the Austrian kingdom of Lombardy and Venetia in 1815. In the meantime, the Paduan republic gave place in 1318 to the rule of the family of Carrara, which came to an end in 1405, when Padua was annexed to the dominions of Venice. After the extinction of the Venetian republic in 1797, Padua underwent the same changes of rule as Venice.

238. Son and Mother] Shelley was thinking of the speech of Sin to Satan in Milton, *Par. Lost,* n, 746-814. The game at dice may have been a reminiscence of the game between Death and Life-in-Death on the skeleton ship in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner,* part in.

244. Vice-Emperor] Sin is given the position under

Austrian rule which belonged to Eccelino under the emperors of the house of Hohenstaufen.

256, 257. John Chetwode Eustace, author of *A Classical Tour through Italy,* found in 1802 six hundred students in the university, "a number which, thinly scattered over the benches, is barely sufficient to show the deserted state of the once crowded schools of Padua," at one time reputed to contain 18,000 students. He speaks favourably, however, of the learning of the professors. After 1815, however, the attempt to Austrianise North Italy led to a deterioration in the quality of the teaching of the universities: see Prof. Segre in *Camb. Mod. Hist,* x, 106.

261. remotest nations] The students of Padua, in its most flourishing days, were divided, as was the common custom of medieval universities, into nations or associations of people from the same countries or neighbourhoods. L. Volkmann, *Padua,* 1904, pp. 46, 47, enumerates twelve such divisions of the Italian students or *citramontani,* while the other or ultramontane nations (i.e., from the other side of the Alps) were the German, Bohemian, Polish, Hungarian, Proven9al, Spanish, Burgundian, English and Scottish. The German nation included Swiss, Danes, and Livonians, with other members of small nationalities. Shelley, of course, uses the word "nations" in its ordinary, not in this special sense.

297. morning-winged feet] Cf. "thought-wingedLiberty," 1. 207 above; "tempest-winged Error," *Ode to Liberty,* L 138.

303. this hoary tower] The ruins of the castle of Este, "whose dark massive wall gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevices owls and bats flitted forth at night, as the crescent moon sunk behind the black and heavy battlements" (Mrs Shelley).

306. olive-sandalled] With their feet covered with olive woods.

315-9. Shelley endeavours to find a name for the secret force which seems to "interpenetrate" and bring everything in the noonday landscape into harmony, dropping like dew from "the glory of the sky." In *Prometheus Unbound,* act iv, 370sqq.,

in answer to the song of the Moon, which feels the warmth of Love transmitted to its "cold bare bosom" from the Earth, tire Earth says:

It interpenetrates my granite mass,
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers, etc.

329. that silent isle] See 11. 68 sqq. above. Shelley gradually returns to the image with which he began the poem.

331. The frail bark of this lone being] The self-pity which is so prominent in *Alastor* recurs again and again in Shelley's poetry. Mrs Shelley, in her note to *Alastor*, says that physical suffering inclined him "rather to brood over the thoughts and emotions of his own soul than to glance abroad."

344. a windless bower] This idea of a paradise aloof from earthly care and trouble is developed again in *Epipsychidion*. See *A Far Eden of the Purple East*, pp. 67-71 above.

346. lawny hills] Wooded hills with grassy clearings or lawns.

363. their whisperings] The whisperings of the winds and leaves.

370. They, not it] I.e., the "polluting multitude," not the "clime divine and calm."

371. sprite] Spirit, intelligence.

## STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES.

Written in December 1818: first published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. The Shelleys left Este on 7 Nov. 1818, and, travelling through Ferrara, Bologna, Rimini, Fano, Foligno and Spoleto, arrived in Rome on the 2oth. In December they left Rome for Naples, where they stayed until 26 Feb. 1819, when they returned to Rome. Shelley's letters to Peacock from Naples, detailing his excursions at some length, shew his full enjoyment of the place: "the scenery which surrounds this city is more delightful than any within the immediate reach of civilized man." His health, however, was bad, and he speaks

of his sudden attack of pain while descending Vesuvius, and of the painful remedies prescribed by the doctor who attended him somewhat later. "Constant and poignant physical suffering," says Mrs Shelley, "exhausted him; and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness, and often greatly enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples, and our excursions on its sunny sea, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts, shadowed by illness, became gloomy,—and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses, which he hid from fear of wounding me, poured forth morbid but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness."

5. The breath of the moist earth] The earth is represented as breathing round the plants which come to life in it. The phrase seems to have puzzled Mrs Shelley and other early editors: the line was omitted from the text in *Posthumous Poems*, and "air" was substituted for "earth" in the edition of 1839.

10, ii. Of his excursion by boat to Baiae, Shelley writes to Peacock: "there was not a cloud in the sky, nor a wave upon the sea, which was so translucent that you could see the hollow caverns clothed with the glaucous sea-moss, and the leaves and branches of those delicate weeds that pave the unequal bottom of the water" (22 Dec. 1818). Cf. *Prometheus Unbound*, n, i, 43-5:

erewhile I slept
Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean
Within dim bowers of green and purple moss.

57-45. The meaning is: "There are some who might lament my death, although now they shew little sympathy for me, just as I shall lament the going of this sweet day, although now my despairing heart, grown old too soon, insults it with a complaint unsuited to its beauty." He goes on to draw a contrast between his own passing and that of the day. "They might lament me; for, though men love me not, yet they might regret me. But this day, on the other hand, when the sun sets on its stainless glory, though its actual present joy is passed, will

leave no regret; for the joy which it has given will remain an abiding part of memory,"

Mrs Shelley, in pathetic words, blamed herself for her possible obtuseness to the sensitiveness of such moods as are revealed in this poem, but laid the chief blame upon her husband's physical sufferings and the solitude in which they lived at Naples. "Shelley never liked society in numbers,—it harassed and wearied him; but neither did he like loneliness, and usually, when alone, sheltered himself against memory and reflection in a book. But, with one or two whom he loved, he gave way to wild and joyous spirits, or in more serious conversation expounded his opinions with vivacity and eloquence." The rest of the passage is a lament for the prejudice which made even those of his contemporaries who admired him unready to have intercourse with him. "But no man was ever more enthusiastically loved—more looked up to, as one superior to his fellows in intellectual endowments and moral worth, by the few who knew him well, and had sufficient nobleness of soul to appreciate his superiority,"

## SELECTIONS FROM *PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.*

*Prometheus Unbound*, as already noted (p. 129 above) was begun at Este in the autumn of 1818. It was at Rome, in March and April 1819, that the second and third acts of the drama were composed. "This Poem," Shelley writes, "was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama." He describes the Baths of Caracalla at length on 33 March 1819, in a letter to Thomas Love Peacock, in phrases which illustrate the magic effect of the scene in which it was

written upon the poetry of *Prometheus.* The third act, which concludes the action of the drama, was finished early in April. On 7 June, Shelley's little son William died in Rome, and two days later the Shelieys left for Leghorn. Here they stayed until the end of September. After they had removed to Florence, Shelley, towards the end of 1819, added the fourth act, "a sort of hymn of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophecies with regard to Prometheus." *Prometheus Unbound, a lyrical drama in four acts, with other poems,* was published in the summer of 1820.

"It is a drama," wrote Shelley to Peacock (6 April 1819), " with characters and mechanism of a kind yet unattempted; and I think the execution is better than any of my former attempts." Writing to Charles Oilier, his publisher (15 Oct. 1819), he calls *Prometheus* "the most perfect of my productions." The action is, of course, founded upon the myth of the earth-born Titan Prometheus, who, according to the Aeschylean version of the legend, had assisted Zeus in his war against the Titans, but had championed mortals against the oppression of Zeus. For his services to mortals he was condemned, after previous sufferings on a rock in Scythia and afterwards in Caucasus, to be chained to a cliff on mount Caucasus, with an eagle perpetually devouring his liver. The story formed a trilogy of plays by Aeschylus, of which only one, the *Prometheus Vinctus,* now remains. The concluding drama of the trilogy dealt with the freeing of the captive. Prometheus was supposed to know a secret which boded evil to Zeus, and the price of his disclosure of it was his reconciliation with Zeus. The secret was that a son born of the union of Zeus with Thetis would wreck his father's power. Thetis was therefore married to Peleus, and Heracles was sent by Zeus to deliver Prometheus.

This version of the legend did not appeal to Shelley's revolutionary spirit. "I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind." This *denouement,* in his view, ruined "the moral interest of the fable." Instead, therefore, of saving the throne of the Jupiter

of the poem by a compact with Prometheus, he assumed the union of Jupiter with Thetis. "Prometheus defies the power of his enemy, and endures centuries of torture; till the hour arrives when Jove, blind to the real event, but darkly guessing that some great good to himself will follow, espouses Thetis. At the moment, the Primal Power of the world drives him from his usurped throne, and Strength, in the person of Hercules, liberates Humanity, typified in Prometheus, from the tortures generated by evil done or suffered" (Mrs Shelley). The triumph of humanity over oppression is consummated by the re-union of Prometheus with his bride Asia, daughter of Oceanus, the personification of nature, who, as the hour of deliverance approaches, "resumes the beauty of her prime." In the last act, Shelley "idealizes the forms of creation—such as we know them, instead of such as they appeared to the Greeks. Maternal Earth, the mighty parent, is superseded by the Spirit of the Earth, the guide of our planet through the realms of sky; while his fair and weaker companion and attendant, the Spirit of the Moon, receives bliss from the annihilation of Evil in the superior sphere."

The difficulty of the poem is the interweaving of metaphysical speculation with the action. Mrs Shelley said: "It requires a mind as subtle and penetrating as his own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout the poem. They elude the ordinary reader by their abstraction and delicacy of distinction, but they are far from vague." Shelley's intention of coordinating his "philosophical views of Mind and Nature" in "prose metaphysical essays on the nature of Man, which would have served to explain much of what is obscure in his poetry," was never fulfilled. The selections given here illustrate chiefly the lyrical side of the drama, which is incomparably beautiful.

## I. "THOSE SUBTLE AND FAIR SPIRITS, ETC."

From act I, 11. 694-751. The spirits are the guardian-spirits "of heaven-oppressed mortality," who inhabit the "world-surrounding aether" of human thought. They are summoned by the Earth to cheer the captive Prometheus, tortured by the Furies. The ocean nymphs, Panthea and lone, the sisters of Asia, watch their arrival (11. 664-71).

*Panthea.* Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,
Like -flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
Thronging in the blue airl
*lone.* And see! more come,
Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,
That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
And hark! is it the music of the pines?
Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?
*Panthea.* 'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

After the spirits have sung their opening chorus, lone (11. 692-3) cries

More yet come, one by one: the air around them
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

The songs of the first four spirits then follow, Each from some different quarter bears earnest of "the prophecy that begins and ends in" Prometheus—the destruction of Ruin and Tyranny by the power of Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace. The first spirit cornes from a battlefield where men are fighting for liberty, the second from a storm at sea, in which a man has sacrificed his life to save an enemy, the third from the bed-side of a dreaming philosopher, the fourth from the lips of a dreaming poet.

33-7. The "Dream with plumes of flame" is apparently the dream of liberty and of an ideal condition of things, which has been most powerful to kindle pity for humanity, eloquence in the dreamers who have imagined it, and woe in the methods attempted for its realisation.

45. a love-adept] One who is initiated in the mysteries of love.

49. The line is an echo of Milton, *Comus,* 207-9:

calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire.
And airy tongues, that syllable men's names
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.

54i 55- Shelley's theory of poetic creation, expressed in these lines, is further explained by Mrs Shelley in her note on *Prometheus Unbound.* "More popular poets clothe the ideal with familiar and sensible imagery. Shelley loved to idealize the real—to gift the mechanism of the material universe with a soul and a voice, and to bestow such also on the most delicate and abstract emotions and thoughts of the mind. Sophocles was his great master in this species of imagery."

## II. SONG OF SPIRITS.

From act n, sc. iii, 11. 54-98. The spirits are those of the under-world, who conduct Asia and Panthea, the children of Ocean, into the presence of their master Demogorgon in his subterranean cavern.

14. As a weak moth the taper] I.e., as the taper draws a weak moth. The subject and object are inverted.

16. Time, both] I.e., as both death and love are subject to time.

17. the spirit of the stone] The magnet.

21. no prism] I.e., not transparent.

26. One] The awful spirit Demogorgon, numbered by Milton with the spirits surrounding the throne of Chaos and old Night *(Par. Lost,* II, 963-5):

and by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon.

Spenser, *F. Q.i.i,* 37, speaks of "Great Gorgon, Prince of darknesse and dead night," and (ibid, i, v, 22) makes Duessa address Night as "begot in Daemogorgon's hall." Shelley makes Demogorgon

the child of Jupiter and the "Primal Power of the World," the author of creation and the depository of its secrets. From his cave, Panthea says,

> the oracular vapour is hurled up
> Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
> And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
> That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drink
> To deep intoxication; and uplift,
> Like Maenads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe!
> The voice which is contagion to the world.

Drawn into his presence by the beckoning and calling spirits, Asia and Panthea learn from his oracular lips that the promised hour of deliverance is at hand; and it is he who in act in is chosen to drag his sire Jupiter from his throne into the abyss.

39. the bright form besido thee] Panthea. The words are addressed to Asia.

42. the Eternal, the Immortal] Demogorgon, who (m, i, 52), when Jupiter demands his name, answers "Eternity. Demand no direr name." It is by meek obedience to the call of the spirits that Asia alone can work out the deliverance of Prometheus: her appearance before Demogorgon and her questionings are the signal for the unloosing of the doom of which he is the minister to Jupiter.

### III. THE TRANSFORMATION OF ASIA.

From act II, sc. v, 11. 16-110. Asia's question in n, iv, 128, "Whenshall the destined hour arrive," is answered by Demogorgon with the single word "Behold 1" The chariots of the Hours appear: Demogorgon ascends upon his fatal mission to Olympus, and Asia and Panthea are carried upward in "an ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire" by a Spirit with "dove-like eyes of hope," who sings to them the magnificent lyric beginning "My coursers are fed with the lightning." The car "pauses within a Cloud on the top of a snowy Mountain," and here, while sunrise is delayed and "Apollo is held in heaven by wonder," a light emanating

from Asia fills the cloud. Asia, as has been pointed out in the introductory note, p. 144 above, is a personification of nature, and her transformation is the result of the reign of Love and Liberty which is beginning, and the end of the reign of tyranny during which she has been an exile.

6. the clear hyaline] The clear glass-like sea. *Hyalos* (flaXoj) is the Greek word for glass. The phrase is practically repeated in "the crystal sea" (1. 9).

7. thine uprise] Asia is numbered by Hesiod *(Theogonia*, 1- 359) among the daughters of Oceanus and Tethys. Shelley applies to her birth from the sea, near the coasts of the continent which bore her name, the circumstances of the fabled birth of Aphrodite near the island of Cythera. The description recalls Botticelli's picture of the birth of Venus, in the Ufiizi gallery at Florence: the painter represents Venus standing within "a dainty-lipped shell" (Walter Pater), while "an emblematical figure of the wind blows hard across the grey water" and moves it forward.

15. grief] Asia, the personification of nature, beloved of Prometheus, the deliverer of the world from thraldom, was overcome by grief at his defeat, and her beneficent activity was suspended.

25-32. This passage is Shakespearean, both in the melody of the verse and in its clear enunciation of the truths of life.

35. Shelley had used "dwindle" as a rhyme to "kindle" only some fifty lines earlier, in the song of the Spirit who had brought Asia and Panthea from the cavern of Demogorgon (n, iii, 169, 171). The voice in the air, which sings this lyric, is probably intended to be that of the same Spirit, whose work of conveying Asia to the scene of her regeneration is accomplished.

47. it] I.e., "that liquid splendour" in the next line.

82. Harmonizing] See note on *Evening near Venice.* 1. 26 (p. 130 above).

86, 87. Childhood is likened to an ocean with clear, untroubled depths, peopled by the shadowy visions of a child's fancy.

89-92. Shelley was still thinking of " the Deep's uutrampled

35- Jag] Jagged edge. Cf. *Arethusa,* 1. 5.

51. woof] Cf. *The Lady of the Garden, 1.* 43 (p. 152 above). "Woof" is a favourite word with Shelley: cf. *A Far Eden of the Purple East,* 1. in (p. 71 above).

71. The sphere-fire] The radiance of the sun.

81. my own cenotaph] A cenotaph (literally an empty tomb) is a monument to the dead without a grave below. The cloudless sky is here called by an overbold metaphor the cenotaph of the cloud.

## TO A SKYLARK.

Written in the spring of 1820, and published with *Prometheus Unbound.* Mrs Shelley says: "In the Spring we spent a week or two near Leghorn... .It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering among the lanes whose myrtle-hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems." Just as in *The Cloud* Shelley gives lifelike form to his subject, following it through its manifold changes of fair weather and storm, so here, while recording the thoughts which the lark's song awakens, he reproduces in words the melody itself, clothing it in a stanza which corresponds, in its first four lines, to the *crescendo* of the bird's song, and in the prolonged last line to the "rain of melody" which is its climax.

22. that silver sphere] The moon. The moon-beams are likened to arrows because Cynthia, the goddess of the moon, was also Diana, the huntress.

35. The construction is somewhat involved. "The drops that fall from rainbow clouds are not so bright as the rain of melody that showers from thy presence" is the direct sense, but the words "to see" complicate the comparison, as the rain of melody is invisible.

36-40. Cf. the last stanza of *Ode to the West Wind,* which contains the same idea of the influence of poetry upon the world,

66. Chorus Hymeneal] Wedding chorus.

82. death] Shelley's thoughts on death are epitomised in the concluding stanzas of *The Sensitive Plant:* see introductory note to *The Lady of the Garden,* p. 151 above. All things in life are mere semblances, and death, with the rest, is an illusion: the realities are eternal and intangible.

too. thou scorner of the ground] The poet, whatever his gifts of melody and learning may be, feels himself tied to the prose of life.

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF GREECE.

The *Ode to Liberty,* in nineteen stanzas of fifteen lines each, was written early in 1820 and published with *Prometheus Unbound.* The three stanzas selected are the fourth, fifth and sixth. The immediate occasion of the ode was the Spanish revolution of Jan.-March 1820, which affirmed the liberal principles of the constitution of 1812. The motto of the poem

Yet, Freedom, yet, thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind,

is taken from *Childe Harold,* iv, st. xcviii.

2. dividuous] Separated. The coast-line of Greece is indented by innumerable gulfs and bays.

5. Cf. Gray, *Progress of Poesy,* n, 3:

Where each old poetic Mountain
Inspiration breath'd around;
Ev'ry shade and hallow'd fountain
Murmur'd deep a hollow sound.

Both Gray and Shelley were thinking primarily of the cave of Delphi.

6. the unapprehensive wild] The corn, vine and olive grew wild in a land which as yet was a wilderness, growing such produce without any idea of the use to which it might be turned.

8. yet] As yet.

9. See note on *The Lady of the Garden,* 1. 8 (p, 152 above).

10. ii, Cf. Shelley's phrase "antenatal tomb" for the chrysalis of the butterfly, p. 152 above.

13. Parian stone] Marble quarried from mount Marpessa in the island of Paros. The marble from which the great sculptors of Greece carved their statuary lay unhewn in the quarry.

15. lidless] I e., never closed.

16. Athens] It is characteristic of Shelley that in this beautiful stanza he should enlarge upon "the cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces" of the dream-built sunset city to which he likens Athens, rather than give a definite picture of Athens herself.

20. pavilions it] Covers it as with a tent. Cf. Psalm xviii, II. The same idea of a tent-like covering occurs in *The Cloud*, 11. 51, 55: see above, pp. 54, 55.

22. each head] The winds are personified as figures issuing from the gates of the cloud-city, with overshadowing wings of cloud and girdles of thunder, and their heads lit with garlands of sun-rays.

23. cloudy wings] The deep shadow of wings is referred to by Shelley in a striking passage of *Prometheus Unbound (i*, 523-4), where the winged Furies overshadow and darken the twilight of the wings of Panthea:

> their shadows make
> The space within my plumes more dark than night.

25. its crest of columns] The columned buildings of the Acropolis, the hill referred to in 11. 29, 30.

26. a mount of diamond] The will of man, strong and enduring as the diamond, is the figurative Acropolis on which the buildings of Athens are set. Throughout this passage, the phenomenal aspect of things, as they are seen and pass away, is contrasted with the eternal realities of the mind. Athens was, but the will of which it was a symbol remains. The sculptures of the Parthenon, enduring in marble, are merely "forms that mock," i.e., imitate, the real immortals who have passed out of life, the "bards and sages" of 1. 35.

31-4. While Time lasts, the idea of Athens,

> the eye of Greece, mother of arts
> And eloquence,

has its permanent place in the mind of man. It was there in embryo before Athens itself existed: it remains now that the temporary supremacy of Athens is a thing of the past.

35. thy bards and sages] The bards and sages of liberty.

38, Shelley's favourite idea of religion as superstition and monarchy as tyranny is developed with frankness unusual even for him in the sequel of the poem.

43-5. Athens is the unifying influence which communicates the inspiration of liberty to the world, as the spirit of life and love gives order and form to what without this vivifying principle would be chaos. So Swinburne, in his enthusiastic praise of Athens, says:

All the world is sweeter, if the Athenian violet quicken:
All the world is brighter, if the Athenian sun return:
All things foul on earth wax fainter, by that sun's light stricken:
All ill growths are withered, where those fragrant flower-lights burn.

*(Athens, an Ode,* strophe i.) Swinburne apostrophises Athens in a similar strain in the first chorus of his *Erechtheus:*

The fruitful immortal anointed adored
Dear city of men without master or lord,
Fair fortress and fostress of sons born free,
Who stand in her sight and in thine, O sun,
Slaves of no man, subjects of none;
A wonder enthroned on the hills and sea,
A maiden crowned with a fourfold glory
That none from the pride of her head may rend.
Violet and olive-leaf purple and hoary,
Song-wreath and story the fairest of fame,
Flowers that the winter can blast not or bend;
A light upon earth as the sun's own flame,
A name as his name,
Athens, a praise without end.

## ARETHUSA.

Written at Pisa in 1820, and published in *Posthumous Poems.* The nymph Arethusa was pursued by the river-god Alpheus, but escaped under the sea to the island of Ortygia at Syracuse in Sicily, where she was changed by Artemis into the fountain of Arethusa. The Alpheus, which rises in Arcadia, has for some distance an underground course, and the legend was that the river followed Arethusa to Ortygia, and there attempted to mingle its waters with the spring. Kcats's Endymion, in his wanderings through the caverns of the earth, met the two streams, of which

> one
> Ever pursued, the other strove to shun

*(Endymion,* n, 916 sqq.). Shelley deals very freely with the legend and its geography.

3. The Acroceraunian or Chimariot mountains.

> Nature's volcanic amphitheatre,
> Chimaera's alps

(Byron, *Childe Harold,* n, 452, 453), form the northern boundary of Epirus in northern Greece. The geography of the poem does not matter greatly, but the Alpheus is a river in the Peloponnesus, and the actual meeting of the streams, as represented by Shelley, is in the sea.

5. jag] Cf. *The Cloud,* 1. 35 (p. 54 above).

6. Shepherding] The nymph, the spirit of the stream, guides its waters from their source like a shepherdess.

24. Erymanthus] This range of mountains, in the northwest of the Peloponnesus, is the source of a tributary of the Alpheus, which, before its junction with the main stream, forms the boundary between Elis and Arcadia.

27. urns] The south wind melts the snow, which poured down in water as from an urn and swelled the stream.

36. the Dorian deep] The Ionian sea. The Dorians, who gave their name to Doris in northern Greece, were the ruling race in the Peloponnesus, which they had traditionally conquered at a very early date.

72. their Dorian home] Syracuse was founded by a colony of Dorians from the Peloponnesus in B.C. 734.

74. Enna] Now called Castrogiovanni, in the middle of Sicily. The precipitous cliffs here shelter innumerable streams and fountains. It was in the "meadows of asphodel" (1. 84) that Pluto carried off Proserpine.

87. the Ortygian shore] The small island of Ortygia formed the original nucleus of the Greek colony of Syracuse.

90. Love is the permanent reality which lasts when the temporary course of life is past.

## HYMN OF PAN.

Written in 1820: published with *Posthumous Poems in* 1824. See note on 1. n.

2. We] I.e., Pan and his attendants.

9. cicale] The grasshopper, or, more correctly, the tree-cricket, called in Latin and Italian *cicada.* Cf. Tennyson, *Mariana in the South*, 1 85: "At eve a dry cicala sung."

II. old Tmolus] Tmolus was a mountain in Lydia. The occasion of this hymn sung by Pan is the contest to which he was fabled to have challenged Apollo. Tmolus, the mountain personified, was the judge in this contest and awarded the superiority to Apollo's lyre. Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* xi, 145 sqq., tells the story in connexion with that of Midas, who, listening to the competition and preferring Pan's flute-song, had his ears changed by Apollo into an ass's ears. Shelley's *Hymn of Apollo,* written in the same context, contrasts in its stateliness and smoothness with the dancing measures of the *Hymn of Pan.*

13. Peneus] A river of northern Thessaly, which flows into the sea through the vale of Tempe, between Olympus on the north and Ossa on the south. Pelion (1. 15) is considerably to the south of Ossa. It was through the vale of Tempe that Apollo pursued Daphne, and Pan here represents himself as exciting admiration upon Apollo's own ground.

18. Silenus was a rural deity of Greek mythology; Silvanus and Faunus were similar Latin deities. Multiplied in various satyr-like shapes, they formed the train of Pan.

20. river-lawns] The grassy clearings in the forest through which Peneus flowed.

26. daedal] Variegated, cunningly wrought (Gr. δαίδαλος, Lat. *daedalus*: cf. Daedalus, the name given to the architect of the Cretan labyrinth). Nature is called by Lucretius (v, 234) *daedala rerum*, i.e., artificer of the world; and the epithet *daedala tellus* is applied by him to the earth (i, 7 229). "Daedal earth" occurs also in Shelley, *Ode to Liberty*, 1. 18, and *Mont Blanc*, 1. 86.

27. the giant wars] These were connected with the vale of Tempe. The giants, in their assault upon Olympus, had attempted to climb the mountain by heaping Pelion upon Ossa.

30. Maenalus] A river in Pan's native Arcadia. The story alluded to is Pan's pursuit of the nymph Syrinx, who leaped into the river Ladon and was changed into a reed, out of which Pan made his pipe. See note in *Selections from Keats*, p. 118.

34. both ye] See note on 1. n above. The envious Apollo and the aged Tmolus.

## "A FAR EDEN OF THE PURPLE EAST."

*Epipsychidion, Verses addressed to the noble and unfortunate lady, Emilia V——, now imprisoned in the convent of——*, was written at Pisa early in 1821 and was sent to the publisher Charles Oilier on 16 Feb. with the *Ode to Naples*, written in the preceding August. Shelley desired that the piece should not be considered his own: "in a certain sense, it is a production of a portion of me already dead." It was " to be published simply for the esoteric few " and in a limited edition of a hundred copies: "those who are capable of judging and feeling rightly with respect

to a composition of so abstruse a nature, certainly do not arrive at that number—among those, at least, who would ever be excited to read an obscure and anonymous production; and it would give me no pleasure that the vulgar should read it." The same sentiment is repeated in the advertisement to the poem, which states that the anonymous writer "died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this,"

Emilia Viviani, the "Emily" of the poem, has been not unjustly described by Swinburne, as "a beautiful and sentimental if not hysterical young Italian lady of rank, confined as a schoolgirl in a convent till a suitor should appear who would take her off her father's hands without a dowry." Upon a transitory sympathy and idealistic attachment for this young lady Shelley wrought the material of one of his most beautiful poems, which combines with an allusive biography of his affections some of his highest speculations upon life and love. He likened his treatment of the subject to that of Dante in the *Vita Nuova:* the philosophy of the poem was strongly influenced by his study of Plato, and its dreamy atmosphere was certainly heightened by his love for Calderon, a poet after his own heart. He writes to Peacock in November 1820: "I have been reading nothing but Greek and Spanish. Plato and Calderon have been my gods."

The untranslatable term *Epipsychidion* was coined by Shelley from the Greek *psychidion,* a little soul, with the preposition *epi* prefixed, implying an addition to or intensification of the soul. The Italian motto of the book was taken from words of Emilia Viviani herself, and is the best commentary on the title: "The soul that loves detaches itself from the creature and creates in the infinite a world entirely for itself, quite distinct from this dim and fearsome abyss."

5. Cf. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, *i*, 166, 167:

With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls,
For stony limits cannot hold love out.

7. continents] The limits which contain it.

19. halcyons] Kingfishers, which, according to the legend, made their nests upon the sea in calm weather. See note on L 9, p. 187 below.

29. The island is imagined by Shelley as being one of the Sporades, the scattered isles of the Aegean.

31. for] Because.

41. The sound and movement of this line exactly reproduce the sense which it conveys.

42. sylvan forms] See note on *Hymn of Pan*, 1. 18 (p. 159 above).

53. element] Atmosphere.

59. that delicious pain] Cf. *Ode to the West Wind*, 11. 35, 36:

flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them.

Pope, *Essay on Man*, I, 200, pictures a delicacy of scent so extreme that its possessor might "die of a rose in aromatic pain."

62. a soul within the soul] The combined perfections of the island are likened to music within the soul, controlling and ordering its motions. Shelley's idea of the unheard rhythm and harmony which form the music of the life of the soul is derived from Plato, whose doctrine of the power of music in education is embodied in the *Republic*, 401 D. "Is not an education in music of supreme importance on this account, that rhythm and harmony have a special power of finding their way to the inmost part of the soul and touch it most strongly with their gift of comely grace, fashioning such grace of behaviour in him who is rightly educated ?"

63. an antenatal dream] Cf. *The Lady of the Garden*, 1. 53 (p. 152 above). Here again is an echo of Platonic philosophy, one of the cardinal doctrines of which is that all knowledge in the present life is recollection of an antenatal state, in which

the immortal soul shared the life of the gods. This is set forth in the famous myth of the soul's "antenatal dream" in the *Phaedrus,* one of Shelley's favourite Platonic dialogues.

66. Lucifer] The morning star.

70. blind] Vultures are keen-sighted, but the eyes of these metaphorical vultures are sealed to beauties of the isle.

86. th' Eternal] The eternal soul of all things, which gives being and order to the universe.

105. imagery] Sculpture.

108. volumes] Intertwining coils.

114. Parian] See note on *The Golden Age of Greece,* 1. 13 (p. 155 above).

119. reality] The outward appearances of these things are unreal: their reality consists in the ideas of which they are the image.

## ADONAIS.

*Adonais,* the most highly finished of Shelley's poems and the most sublime of English elegies, was composed at Bagni di San Giuliano, near Pisa, in May and June 1821, three to four months after the death of Keats at Rome. "It is a highly-wrought *piece of att$_f$"* wrote Shelley on 5 June, "and perhaps better, in point of composition, than anything I have written." It was sent to the press at Pisa on 16 June, and printed before 13 July. Shelley alludes to it frequently in his letters during the next few months. His opinion of it never varied, and, on II Nov. 1821, in the covering letter with which he sent *Hellas* to the London bookseller Oilier, he says, " I am especially curious to hear the fate of *Adonais.* I confess I should be surprised if *that* poem were born to an immortality of oblivion."

Written in Spenserian stanza, the poem is modelled upon the pastoral fiction which writers of elegy, like Milton in *Lycidas,* had borrowed from the Greek idyllists and their Latin imitator Vergil. The first idyll of Theocritus, the tenth eclogue of Vergil, the *Epitaphium Adonidos* of Bion, and the *Epitaphium Bionis* attributed to Moschus, were all laid under contribution;

and the influence of the last two is seen very clearly in some of the most striking passages of the poem. The name Adonais, given to Keats, was adapted by Shelley from that of Adonis; and the lamentation of Urania for her child and her visit to the death-chamber are intimately modelled upon the grief of Cypris for her mortal lover Adonis. The difference, however, between Shelley's high conception of the goddess Urania and Bion's conception of Cypris is the quality which distinguishes *Adonais* from all other elegies. Cypris in her sorrow is simply a woman bereaved of her lover; while Urania is a lofty and spiritual idea of profound intellectual significance. The elegiac form is similarly used by Shelley as the foundation of a poem in which he expresses much of his deepest thought upon life and death, and the influence which formed the metaphysical part of *Adonais* was that of Plato, the philosopher whose dialogues were his constant reading. It is in this union of philosophical speculation with the elegiac form that the unique character of *Adonais* among poems of its class consists.

The resentment expressed in the course of the poem for the reviewer who was supposed to be the primary cause of the death of Keats is typical of Shelley's devotion to his friends and generosity on their behalf. Shelley, however, made too much of the reviewer's guilt, and it is extremely doubtful whether the connexion of the review with Keats's death was not a welding together of a cause and effect, which had no real relation to one another. Shelley knew little personally of Keats, and his quick sympathy adopted a story which Byron's common-sense, although he gave it currency in flippant verse, forbade him to accept without reserve.

The motto of *Adonais* was thus translated by Shelley:

> Thou wert the morning star among the living,
> Ere thy fair light had fled;—
> Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
> New splendour to the dead.

i, 2. Cf. the opening lines of the *Epitaphium Adonidos* of Bion:

Αἴαῖ' ὦ τὸν Ἄδωνιν· ἀπώλετο καλὸς Ἄδωνις,
ὤλετο καλὸς Ἄδωνις· ἐπαιάζουσιν Ἔρωτες.

"Wail 'Oh! Adonis.' Fair Adonis is dead, dead is fair Adonis: the Loves swell the lament."

3. so dear a head] A frequent classical phrase for "so dear a person," the head being taken as the seat of the understanding and the most representative part of the visible personality. Cf. Horace, *Carm.* I, xxiv, 2:

Quis desiderio sit pudor ant modus
tarn cari capitis?

"What shame, what limit can there be to the longing for so dear a head?" Cf. also Milton, *Lycidas,* 1. 102: "That sunk so low that sacred head of thine."

5. obscure] Because they are of small importance beside the hour of so great a loss.

10. mighty Mother] Urania, not the muse of astronomy, but the spiritual and heavenly goddess described by Plato in the *Symposium,* a dialogue admired profoundly by Shelley as "the delight and astonishment of all who read it," and translated by him in 1819. Plato distinguished between two forms of Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, "the elder, she without a mother, the daughter of Heaven (Uranus), to whom we give the surname of Heavenly (Urania), and the younger, the daughter of Zeus and Dione, whom we call the Vulgar (Pandemos)." He also associated these two forms with the names Urania and Polymnia, given to two of the muses. At the beginning of *Paradise Lost,* vn, Milton invokes Urania as the heavenly muse:

Descend from Heav'n, Urania, by that name
If rightly thou art call'd, whose voice divine
Following, above th' Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean wing.
The meaning, not the name I call: for thou
Nor of the muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st, but heav'nly born
Before the hills appear'd, or fountain flow'd,
Thou with eternal wisdom didst converse,

> Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
> In presence of th' Almighty Father, pleas'd
> With thy celestial song.

This heavenly muse, whom Milton, "fall'n on evil days," invokes as an unfailing guide, superior to the "empty dream," the muse who could not "defend her son" Orpheus against the Thracian bacchanals, is the muse of Keats and of all divinest poetry. Shelley (15 Feb. 1821), rallying Peacock upon his "anathemas against poetry itself," writes: "I had the greatest possible desire to break a lance with you, within the lists of a magazine, in honour of my mistress Urania."

The question "Where wert thou, mighty Mother," is an echo **of** the chartered elegiac device employed by Theocritus, *Idyll* i, 66 sqq.: "Where were ye then when Daphnis pined away, where were ye, Nymphs," etc. This was imitated closely by Vergil, *Eel.* X, 9 sqq., and by Milton, *Lyc-idas,* 51 sqq. In the case of Shelley, this is a mere reminiscence, not an adaptation, and his picture of the mourning Urania bears a closer likeness to Bion's invocation of the Cyprian Aphrodite *(Idyll* I, 3 sqq.): "No longer, Cypris, sleep shrouded in purple. Wake, dark-robed mourner, beat thy breast and say to all 'Fair Adonis is dead.' "

**ii. the shaft]** See Psalm xci, 6: "the arrow that flieth by day, and the pestilence that walketh in darkness." Cf. *Ginevra,* 211, 212: "the dark arrow fled In the noon." The allusion is to the anonymous review of Keats's poems in the *Quarterly Review,* which, in the opinion of Shelley, was primarily responsible for Keats's decline and early death. Shelley, in Keats's life-time, drafted a letter to the editor in defence of his friend, which describes the state of health which the article was supposed to have occasioned: this letter, written with great moderation, was never sent. It is probable that Keats's sympathisers made too much of the annoyance which the review caused him: see Introduction to *Selections from Keats.*

25. **the amorous Deep]** The abyss of death, to which he has descended with "all things wise and fair," is as enamoured of his strains as the mourners who lament him, and will not

restore him to life. Cf. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet,* v, iii, 103:

Shall I believe
That unsubstantial Death is amorous, etc.

29. He] Milton, whose greatest poems were written after the restoration, when his dreams of liberty had been disappointed and his ears were rilled with that

barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers

against which he invoked the aid of Urania. Cf. Shelley, *Ode to Liberty,* 147-50:

Not unseen
Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

32. liberticide] The slayer of liberty.

33. many a loathed rite] Shelley may have been thinking of the language in which Milton *(Par. Lost,* I, 380 sqq.) describes the abominations with which the heathen gods insulted the sanctuary of Jehovah.

35. clear Sprite] Cf. Milton, *Lycidas,* 1. 70: "Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise," etc.

36. the third among the sons of light] It is probable that Shelley recalled the well-known lines of Dryden on Homer, Dante and Milton: "Three poets in three distant ages born," etc. In his *Defence of Poetry* he specifically names Homer, Dante and Milton as the three greatest epic poets, excluding Lucretius and Vergil from the first rank, and giving enthusiastic praise to Dante. It is not certain, however, that Shelley refers exclusively in this passage to epic poetry, and in another passage of the *Defence of Poetry* he instances Shakespeare, Dante and Milton, among the moderns, as three supreme poets who combine the highest poetry with philosophy "of the very loftiest power."

38-45. The passage is somewhat obscure, but the meaning seems to be as follows. Not all dared that height of achievement which is reached by only a few^pens of light among poets.

Happier than these—for the attainment of the heights of poetry involves unhappiness and suffering, as in the case of Dante and Milton—were the poets who were happily content with more modest performances, and yet have still left a lasting reputation, like tapers lighting the dark past which has been fatal to lights of greater magnitude. To these others, "the inheritors of unfulfilled renown," like Keats and Chatterton, the envy or wrath of man or heaven has brought extinction while they were still full of glorious promise: the full extent of their powers is unknown. Last of all, there are the living poets, like Shelley himself, who are still going through the ordeal of tribulation and obloquy which is necessary before they can arrive at the permanent quiet of achieved fame.

39. Cf. Vergil, *Georg.* n, 458: "O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint."

48, 49. Shelley was evidently thinking of Keats's Isabel, who

> Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
> And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.
> And so she ever fed it with thin tears, etc.

*(Isabella, sit.* liii, liv). Cf. also Shakespeare, *Rich.* ,'I, v, i, 7-10:

> But soft, but see, or rather do not see,
> My fair rose wither: yet look up, behold,
> That you in pity may dissolve to dew,
> And wash him fresh again with true-love tears.

55. that high Capital] Rome, the "eternal city" (seel. 58), where Keats came in the autumn of 1820. He died there on 23 Feb. 1821.

63. liquid] In the classical sense of "serene," derived from the secondary meaning of *liquidus* as "clear, transparent."

65. Shelley, in whose mind the mystery of death occupied a prominent place, constantly recurs to the ghastly imagery of the charnel-house. See, e.g., *The Revolt of Islam, x,* st. xxi, *The Witch of Atlas,* st. Ixx, etc., and the vivid description of the decay of the garden in *The Sensitive Plant,* part JIT.

66. The shadow] Cf. Tennyson, *In Memoriam,* xxm:

The Shadow, cloak'd from head to foot,
Who keeps the keys of all the creeds.

69. The eternal Hunger] Death, ever hungry for fresh victims.

73. The quick Dreams] Cf. the spirits in *Prometheus Unbound,* act i (p. 145 above):

Those subtle and fair spirits,
Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,
And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,
Its world-surrounding aether.

Poetic dreams were Shelley's own "ministers of thought": cf. *Marianne's Dream,* 11. 146, 147:

Sleep has sights as clear and true
As any waking eyes can view.

75. his flocks] The pastoral tradition of the elegiac form of verse is recalled here.

80. their sweet pain] The dreams, born of the brain (1. 79) in mingled pleasure and suffering, find their source of strength and permanent resting-place in the heart of the poet.

83. moonlight] Cf. 1.107 below and "twilight," 11, 65 above, 112 below.

84. Cf. Milton, *Lycidas,* 1. 166: "For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead."

89. with no stain] Cf. *The Cloud,* 1. 77 (p. 55 above).

94. anadem] A head-band, tiara, the Greek *anadema, anadesme.*

97. reeds] Arrows. *Harundo,* the Latin word for a reed, is used for the shaft of an arrow, and so is applied to the whole arrow.

99. the barbed fire] The barb is the point of the arrow: thus Cupid, in Ovid, *Met.* v, 384, strikes the heart of Dis with his "barbed reed" *(hamata harundine).*

100. Cf. *Prometheus Unbound,* i, 737 (1. 44, p. 40 above).

102. to pierce the guarded wit] To find its way to men's approving judgment through the barriers of caution and reserve which guard the critical intelligence.

107. clips] Embraces, surrounds.

116. pomp] Procession. Cf. note on 1. 9, p. 123 above.

118. The general lament of Nature for her poet recalls the idyllic lament for Bion *(Epitaphium Bionis),* especially 11. 25 sqq.: "Thy speedy fate, Bion, Apollo himself bewailed: the Satyrs bewept it and the black-cloaked country gods. The Pans groan for thine end. Throughout the wood the fountain-nymphs lamented, and the waters were turned into tears. And Echo laments amid the rocks that she is silent and mimics no more thy lips. And at thy dying the trees have cast their fruit to the ground, and all the flowers are withered. The fair milk of the goats floweth not, nor the honey of the bee-hives, but it is dead of grief in the honey-comb; for, now that thine own honey is dead, it may be harvested no more."

121. watch-tower] Cf. "watch-tower in the skies" of the morning lark in Milton, *L'Allegro,* 1. 43.

her hair unbound] A sign of mourning.

125,126. The picture is precisely the opposite of the charmed stillness in Milton, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity,* 11. 64 sqq.:

> The winds with wonder whist,
> Smoothly the waters kist,
> Whispering new joys to the mild Ocean,
> Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
> While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.

127. See the quotation in note on 1. 118 above.

133. those for whoso disdain] The lips of Narcissus, for love of whom the nymph Echo pined away and became merely a voice. See Ovid, *Met.* in, 349 sqq.

136. Cf. the picture of Primavera (Spring) by Botticelli, in which she is represented as a maiden carrying buds in the folds of her robe.

140. For the story of the transformation of Hyacinthus, accidentally killed by Phoebus with a quoit, into a flower whose leaves were marked with the words AI, AT (woe, woe), see Ovid, *Met.* x, 162 sqq.

141. Narcissus] The youth who had scorned Echo's love

fell in hopeless love with his own reflexion in a pool of water, and after his death was changed into the flower which bears his name. See Ovid, *Met.* in, 402 sqq.

145. Thy spirit's sister] An allusion to Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale.*

147. the eagle] The simile is a reminiscence of the picture in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon,* 11. 49 sqq., of the vultures, wild with grief for the loss of their young, wheeling in circles high above their nest. It is combined, however, with the remembrance of the passage in Milton, *Areopagilica,* where an awakening nation is likened to "an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam."

154. The thought in this and the two following stanzas Is that of the writer of *Epitaphium Bionis,* 11. 106 sqq.: "Alas! when the mallows die in the garden, and the green parsley and the twining anise with its bloom, they live again and grow another year. But we men, the great and strong and wise, as soon as we die, deaf in the hollow earth we sleep well, ay, a long unending sleep that knows no waking."

160. brere] Briar.

161. It should be remembered that this picture of the young year is drawn from Italy, not from England.

174, 175. when splendour Is changed to fragrance] I.e., when the quality of fragrance in flowers takes the place, in such incarnations, of that of splendour which belongs to the stars.

177,178. Nothing dies which comes within the range of man's knowledge. Shall the mind, the only thing which has this active power of knowledge, perish?

178. The sword is the active mind: the sheath the body which contains it, the corpse which lives again in the flowers whose life it feeds.

179. sightless] Unseen.

the intense atom] The mind, glowing for a moment with intense light. Cf. *Ode to Heaven,* 1. 18:

> And mighty suns beyond the night,
> Atoms of intensest light.

186. who lends what life must borrow] I.e., life is but a brief space of time borrowed from death, which controls it.

188. urge] Hurry on. Cf. Lucretius n, 578-80:

Nee nox ulla diem, neque noctem aurora secuta est, etc.

"Nor is there any night that follows day nor dawn that follows night, that hears not wailing mingled with sick complaints, the attendants of death and the black grave."

191. childless Mother] Urania. Shelley returns to the picture in stanza ii: see note on 1. 10 above.

191-3. Adapted from Bion's lament for Adonis *(Idyll* i, 11 16, 17; for which see note on 1.10 above, and 11.14,15). "Cruel, cruel is the wound that Adonis hath in his thigh, but deeper is the wound that Cytherea beareth at her heart,"

195. their sister's song] See 11. 15-18 above.

196. holy silence] Reverent silence, as at a sacred rite.

198. the fading Splendour] I.e., Urania, whose brightness vanishes from her ambrosial place of rest.

199. Cf. the picture of the autumnal night following day in *Ode to the West Wind,* st. ii (p. 47 above).

204. rapt] Carried away.

208. her secret Paradise] See 1. 14 above, and cf. "her ambrosial rest" (1. 198). A paradise is literally an enclosed space, a park. "Secret" is used in its literal classical sense of "set apart, remote,"

she sped] The picture is again drawn from Bion, *Idyll* x, 19 sqq.: "But Aphrodite, with her tresses unbound, wanders through the oak-woods full of grief, unkempt, with bare feet; and the brambles wound her as she goes and cause her sacred blood to flow. But shrilly wailing she speeds through the long glens, crying out for her Assyrian lover and calling, calling." Bion's picture is that of a mortal mourner: Shelley intensifies and spiritualises it.

213. barbed] Cf. 1. 99 above.

214. they never could repel] They were powerless to deter her from her journey, however deeply they might wound her. So Browning, *Ring and the Book,* in. 23, speaking of

the *dying* Pompilia, describes the "probationary soul" that. moving

From nobleness to nobleness, as she,
Over the rough way of the world, succumbs,
Bloodies its last thorn with unflinching foot.

216. undeserving] I.e., of being paved with eternal flowers, as it had caused her so much pain.

217. the death-chamber] Cf. 1. 65 above.

219. Blushed to annihilation] "White Death" (1.66 above) is annihilated for the moment by the blush that revives in the face of the corpse. Cf. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet,* v, iii, 94:

Beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.

223. silent] In silence. Cf. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet,* n, ii, 119-20:

the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say "It lightens."

226. The lament contains further reminiscences of Bion, *Idyll* I, 40 sqq.: "When she saw, when she perceived the wound of Adonis that might not be stanched, when she saw the purple blood about his pallid thigh, she stretched out her arms and wailed, 'Stay, Adonis! stay, hapless Adonis, that I may reach thee for the last, last time, that I may embrace thee and press my lips to thine. Wake a while, Adonis, and give me now the last kiss. Kiss me so long as a kiss can live, until thy spirit flow from thy soul to my mouth and to my heart-strings, until I drink in thy sweet love-potion and quaff love to the dregs, and may keep this kiss as it were thyself, Adonis, now that, ill-fated one, thou art passing from me, passing for long, Adonis, and going into Acheron to the loathed and cruel king, while I, poor wretch, live and am a goddess and cannot follow thee,' "

228. my heartless breast] My breast, from which the heart is gone.

235. This stanza is founded on Bion, *Idyll* I, 11. 60, 61: "Why, daring one, didst thou go a-hunting? Why, beautiful

as thou wert, wert thou so mad as to contend with the beast?"

238. the unpastured dragon] The dragon is the critic, on the look-out for fresh prey. "Unpastured," the Latin *impastus*, means "hungry, ravenous": the idea implied is not that criticism is not supplied with victims, but that its appetite for fresh food is insatiable. Shelley probably had in his mind the memory of the den of Error, the "monster vile" of Spenser, *Faerie Queene, i,* i.

240. Wisdom the mirrored shield] When Perseus set out to slay the Gorgon Medusa, Pallas, the goddess of wisdom, gave him her shield, which mirrored in it the form of the enemy and so saved him from being turned to stone by the direct sight of the Gorgon. Ovid, *Met.* iv, 782, 783, says that "he saw the form of dread Medusa reflected in the brazen shield which his left arm carried." Bacon, *Wisdom of the Ancients*, vii, speaks of the shield and mirror as two separate things: "the mystery of the shield and mirror... denotes, that not only a prudent caution must be had to defend, like the shield, but also such an address and penetration as may discover the strength, the motions, the counsels, and designs of the enemy; like the mirror of Pallas.... The principal use of the glass" (as Bacon understood the mirror to be) "is, in the very instant of danger, to discover the manner thereof, and prevent consternation." The lack of the protecting shield of wisdom, which enables its wearer to forestall the attack of his opponent, and of the spear of scorn with which he can transfix the adverse critic, left Keats defenceless.

242. its crescent sphere] Keats's genius was only in its growth. The comparison of it to the crescent moon is appropriate to the poet of *Endymion.*

243. like deer] The simile again recalls the young hunter Adonis, to whose fate that of Adonais bears so close a likeness.

245. obscene] In its classical sense of "ill-omened." Ravens were among the birds from whose flight augurs took omens of the future. So Horace, *Carm.* m, xxvii, n, speaks of *oscinew*

*corvum,* the obscene raven. Marlowe, *Jew of Malta,* n, 1-4, refers to

> the sad presaging raven, that tolls
> The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,
> And in the shadow of the silent night
> Doth shake contagion from her sable wings.

In 1. 248 is a direct reminiscence of this passage, applied, however, not to the raven but the vulture.

250. The Pythian] Apollo was called Pythius in connexion with his chief sanctuary at Delphi, where he slew with his arrows the serpent Python. "The Pythian of the age" is a compliment to Byron, whose satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1808), had been the first work which won him fame.

253. Cf. Shakespeare, *Ant. and Cleo.* n, vii, 29, 30: "Your serpent of Egypt is bred now of your mud by the operation of your sun."

261. its kindred lamps] Corresponding in the world of living men to the "immortal stars" who have the natural night to themselves.

262. the mountain shepherds] The imaginary procession of shepherds has its origin in Theocritus, *Idyll* I, 76:

Ἦνθον τοὶ βοῦται, τοὶ ποιμένες αἰπόλοι ἦνθον.

"The herdsmen came, the shepherds, goat-herds came."

263. sere] Withered. Cf. Milton, *Lycidas,* 1. 2: "ivy never sere."

264. The Pilgrim of Eternity] Byron, the author of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.*

265. is bent] I.e., is curved like the dome of the sky. In his life-time Byron is covered by a canopy of fame, the firmament of his genius.

266. early] Byron was born in 1788. *Chtlde Harold* was published in two sections, the first two cantos in 1812, the third and fourth in 1818.

267. 268. Byron's sorrow for Keats's death was actually confined to the surprise which he felt on hearing from Shelley that the article in the *Quarterly* had had so fatal an effect. He

wrote to Shelley from Ravenna, 26 April 1821: "I am very sorry to hear what you say of Keats—is it *actually* true? I did not think criticism had been so killing. Though I differ from you essentially in your estimate of his performances, I so much abhor all unnecessary pain, that I would rather he had been seated on the highest peak of Parnassus than have perished in such a manner. Poor fellow! though with such inordinate self-love he would probably not have been very happy." In the same letter he speaks of Keats's verse as belonging to *"that second-hand* school of poetry," but adds, "Had 1 known that Keats was dead—or that he was alive and so sensitive—I should have omitted some remarks upon his poetry, to which I was provoked by his *attack* upon *Pope,* and my disapprobation of his own style of writing." To Moore he wrote on 14 May 1821: "Did you know John Keats? They say that he was killed by a review of him in the *Quarterly*—if he be dead, which I really don't know. I don't understand this *yielding* sensitiveness." Shelley, on 26 Aug. 1821, told Leigh Hunt that Byron, though "loud in his praise of *Prometheus,"* said nothing about *Adonais,* "I suppose from modesty on account of his being mentioned in it." The well-known stanza of *Don Juan* (xi, lx) on "John Keats, who was killed off by one critique," expresses the same surprise two years later. In the lines "Who killed John Keats?" Byron veiled all the lightnings of his song in doggerel.

268. lerne] Ireland. "The sweetest lyrist" (1. 269) is Thomas Moore (1779-1852), whose *Irish Melodies* were a series of short lyrics written to traditional Irish tunes. Many of these songs, such as "The Harp that once through Tara's halls," "Silent, O Moyle, be the sound of thy waters," and "Avenging and bright falls the swift sword of Erin," have patriotic lamentation for their theme, and their somewhat thin poetic quality was assisted by the plaintive airs to which Moore himself sung them with feeling and skill.

271. one trail Form] Shelley himself. Cf. the picture from *Alastorof* the wandering poet, and the spirit "tameless, and swift, and proud" of the *Ode to the West Wind,* pp. 2, 48 above.

276. Actaeon-like] The hunter Actaeon saw Diana bathing with her nymphs, and for his transgression was turned into a stag and devoured by his own hounds.

280. pardlike] Beautiful and swift like a leopard.

289-93. the pansies and violets are recalled from Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* iv, v, 176, 177, 184, 185: "And there is pansies, that's for thoughts.... I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died." The word "pansy " = French *pensie,* a thought. The pansies are "overblown" and the violets "faded," in reference to Shelley's presage of his own approaching death (see 1. 300 below), and in harmony with the general sense of decay spread by the death of Keats in the nature which he loved. The "light spear" wreathed in ivy recalls the thyrsus borne by the followers of Bacchus, the "ivy-dart" of Keats, *Endymion, iv,* 210; but ivy is also a plant sacred to poets, as in the epitaph of Sophocles in the Greek anthology, where ivy is invoked to grow over the poet's tomb, so that the spear may thus be regarded as emblematic of poetic power. The cone of "cypresse funerall" (Spenser, *F. Q.* i, i, 8) is an emblem of mourning, to which Shelley has consecrated his verse on the present occasion. Mr Churton Collins *(Ephemera Critica,* p. 81) thought that Shelley might be alluding to the cypress staff of Silvanus in Vergil, *Georg. I,* 20, and so "symbolizing his sympathy with the genius of the woods"; but this seerns to carry the meaning of the passage too far. Shelley is simply picturing himself among the other shepherds, adorned with natural attributes suitable to his gift of poetry which are qualified by his sense of weakness and loneliness and his sorrow for Keats.

298. partial] Because in the death which he mourned he saw an image of his own decline and approaching end.

305. ensanguined] Marked with blood.

306. Cain's or Christ's] The two names form an antithesis. To those who regarded Shelley as an atheist and revolutionary he bore the brand of the murderer Cain, wandering restlessly over the earth. Others regarded him as a reformer and preacher of idealistic doctrine, and to these the bleeding brow recalls

that of the divine Reformer, whom Shelley, though an opponent of the Christian dogmatic system, reverenced deeply as a man. For this bold comparison, cf. the words of the suffering Richard in Shakespeare, *Richard II,* iv, i, 239-42:

Though some of you with Pilate wash your hands
Showing an outward pity; yet you Pilates
Have here dehver'd me to my sour cross,
And water cannot wash away your sin.

307. What softer voice] James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784-*859), the friend of Keats and early object of his enthusiastic admiration. Hunt's pronounced radicalism endeared him to Shelley and obscured the manifold faults of his poetry, which had a baneful influence upon the cloying sweetness of Keats's earliest verse. As time went on, Keats emerged from his influence and felt a distaste for his society which he does not conceal in his letters (see Introduction to *Selections from Keats).* Shelley *(Letter to Maria Gisborne,* 11. 209-12) calls Hunt

one of those happy souls
Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom
The world would smell like what it is—a tomb;
Who is, what others seem.

310. Like the allegorical figures of mourners sculptured on the monuments of the dead.

316. Shelley prefixed to his preface to *Adonais* the four lines on which this stanza is founded, from the *Epitaphium Bionis,* 11. 116-20. His text differs in several points from the text as received at present. "Poison has touched thy mouth, Bion, thou hast seen poison. How did it reach thy lips and grew not sweet? What mortal was there so unkind as to mix the poison for thee or give it thee, that heard thy voice and missed thy poesy?"

319. The nameless worm] The review in the *Quarterly* was anonymous, and its author remains unidentified, although suspicion has rested upon the name of John Gibson Lockhart, the son-in-law and biographer of Scott, whose critical essays won him the nickname of the Scorpion.

325. whose infamy is not thy fame! The criticism, which you consider a passport to fame, is destined in reality to make its writer infamous.

327. noteless blot] Blot not worth remembering. "Noteless" is in antithesis to "remembered."

332. thy secret brow] I.e., your brow when you are alone. For the classical sense of "secret" see note on 1. 208 above.

334. our delight] Keats himself. Cf. the phrase applied by Suetonius to the Emperor Titus, "deliciae generis humani," i.e., the delight of the human race.

338-42. The Platonic philosophy distinguishes between the eternal and indivisible source of things, which *is,* and the temporary and manifold objects of the universe, which *become*—i.e., between what is real and permanent, and what is apparent and transitory. In the doctrine of creation allegorically expounded in the *Timaeus,* the soul is compounded partly of the eternal substance and partly of the secondary and bodily material. The "pure spirit" is the eternal part of the soul, the intellect, "that alone which knows" of 1. 177 above. See also 1. 179, where the spirit, compounded of fire, the first of the elements, is called "the intense atom." Keats's fiery spirit is an atom of the eternal: his critic is without this element, and his soul suffers the death of his body.

343-51. Cf. the conclusion of *The Sensitive Plant,* st. iii:

> This life
> Of error, ignorance, and strife,
> Where nothing is, but all things seem,
> And we the shadow of the dream.

The speculation that life is the unreal, and that death is the avenue to reality, was ever present with Shelley. This was impressed upon him by his classical reading, and a parallel passage has been quoted in this connexion from a fragment of the *Polyeidus* of Euripides: "Who knoweth whether life is but to die, while death is counted life in the world below?" Shelley also, in his recent study of Calderon, must have noticed the soliloquy of Segismundo in *La Vida es Sueno* (Life is a Dream),

II, xix: "In this world.. .all men dream they are what they are, although none understands it.... What is life? A frenzy. What is life? An illusion, a shadow, a fiction, and the great man is but a pigmy: for all life is a dream, and its dreams are a dream."

356. the world's slow stain] The stain of worldliness, which gradually denies even the noblest natures, when the first generous impulses of youth are past.

360. sparkless ashes] Ashes in which the "intense atom" of the spirit has ceased to glow, quenched by contact with the world.

362. Shelley returns to the lament of Nature for her poet, already described in 1. 118 sqq.

375. that Power] See note on 1. 478 below.

377. never-wearied love] The part of love in the universe is described by Agathon in Shelley's favourite Platonic dialogue, the *Symposium.* Love (Eros), he says, is the first, most beautiful and best of the gods, and is the cause of beauty and goodness in all things. "He it is who banishes unkindness from us and fills us with kindness, who, taking the lead in festivals, dances, sacrifices, orders all such assemblies of ourselves with one another. He gives gentleness, and sets harshness afar off. He loves to give good-will and has no enmity to give. He is easily entreated of the good, plain to the sight of the wise man, an object of glory to the gods, of envy to the hapless, of possession to the fortunate. He is the father of delicacy, luxury, daintiness, pleasure, desire, longing. His care is for good, not for evil. In labour, in fear, in longing, in speech he is the best pilot, the best fighting man of the crew, comrade, and deliverer, the ordering principle of all gods and men, the fairest and best general, whom every man must follow with sweet chanting, each taking his share in the beauteous song which he sings to soothe the heart of all, both gods and men."

381. the one Spirit's plastio stress] Shelley obtained this idea from the description of creation in Plato's *Timaeus* (30 A) : "For, since God wished all things to be good, and nothing,

so far as possible, to be bad, he therefore took to himself everything that was visible, not while it was at rest, but while it was moving about discordantly and disorderly, and out of disorder brought it into order, considering that the second was better than the first." See also Spenser, *Hymne in Honour of Beantie,* stt. v-viii, in which Plato's theory of creation and the archetypal universe created by "this worlds great workmaistcr" is adapted. Shelley had this passage of Spenser in his mind, and the phrases "dull dense world" and "unwilling dross" shew the influence of its phraseology.

382. compelling] Forcing every kind of thing in succession, as it comes into being, into the visible form which it wears.

390. Like stars] Cf. the "kindred lamps" m 1. 261 above.

393. lair] See note on 1. 20, p. 123 above.

397. unfulfilled renown] I.e., whose renown upon earth has been incomplete.

398. Hose from their thrones] The passage is a reminiscence of Isaiah xiv, 9, 10: "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?"

399. the Unapparent] I.e., the eternal region beyond earthly phenomena.

Ghatterton] Chatterton, to whose memory Keats had dedicated *Endymion,* committed suicide in 1770.

401. Sidney] Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86) died of a wound received at the battle of Zutphcn. His love (1. 402) is commemorated in his series of sonnets, *Astrophel and Stella.*

404. Lucan] Marcus Annaeus Lucanus (A.D, 39-65), the nephew of the philosopher Seneca and author of the *Pharsalia,* joined the conspiracy of Piso against Nero and, turning informer, betrayed his accomplices, including his own mother. This, however, did not spare his life, and, to escape execution, he had his veins opened in a bath, and died of loss of blood, reciting some

of his own verses appropriate to his situation. Shelley means that the coolness with which he met death approved a life which was otherwise blotted by his act of treachery.

411. yon kingless sphere] The sphere in the heaven of song, among the other "splendours of the firmament," which is waiting for Keats to fill. Each poet is the tenant of a sphere, all of which, like the traditional spheres of the universe, make music together.

412. blind] In darkness (like the Latin *caecus),* before its ascension to the firmament.

414. thou Vesper] See the introductory note, p. 163 above, where the lines by Plato chosen for the motto of the poem are given in Shelley's translation.

416-23. The meaning of these lines is somewhat obscure. The mourner is told, in order to comprehend the place of himself and Keats in the universe, first to gain firm hold of the earth as it swings in space, and then to enter space with his intelligence and use it until its might has penetrated to the utmost extremity of that boundless region. If he can do this, he can understand the genius of Keats, compared with which his own is a small thing, limited by the day and night of the ordinary world. But, in the effort to follow the greater genius, he must keep a light heart, lest, when, lured on by one hope after another, he is about to quit the brink of the world for space, sudden heaviness of heart may assail him and be his destruction. The whole passage embodies a paradox which is beyond the power of simple expression.

424. Or go to Rome] Cf. 1. 55 sqq. above.

435~7- Cf. Byron's description of the Coliseum, *Childe Harold,* iv, stt. cxliii, cxliv.

439. a slope of green access] Shelley described the English cemetery in Rome, where his own heart was to lie, in a letter of 22 Dec. 1818, to Peacock. "The English burying-place is a green slope near the walls, under the pyramidal tomb of Cestius, and is, I think, the most beautiful and solemn cemetery 1 ever beheld. To sec the sun shining on its bright grass, fresh,

when we first visited it, with the autumnal dews, and hear the whispering of the wind among the leaves of the trees which have overgrown the tomb of Cestius, and the soil which is stirring in the sun-warm earth, and to mark the tombs, mostly of women and young people who were buried there, one might, if one were to die, desire the sleep they seem to sleep,"

444. one keen pyramid] The pyramidal tomb of Caius Cestius, erected shortly before the Christian era.

447. flame] The tapering form of the pyramid is likened appropriately to a tongue of flame.

460. See note on ll. 338-42 above.

462-4. While we live, Life with its variety of transitory forms partially hides the unchanging clearness of Eternity, just as a coloured glass roof above our heads partly conceals the radiance of the firmament. Death is the shattering of the roof, which removes the deceptive appearance, and shews us the firmament as it really is.

478. That Light] The "Power" of 1. 375 above. This is the heavenly Love, the Aphrodite Urania (see note on 1. 10 above), which, in the *Symposium,* is the spiritual source of the passion of love in its nobler forms. Of the influence of the love which is the child of Aphrodite Urania in the affairs of the world, Eryximachus says in the dialogue (188 A): "Seeing that the revolution of the seasons of the year is full of both of these (i.e., the well-ordered love in question, and the baser love which is the child of the vulgar Aphrodite), whensoever the hot and cold and dry and moist (i.e., the four humours which go to compose physical being) partake in their relation to one another of the well-ordered love, and are harmonised and meetly mingled together, they come bringing fruitful seasons and health to men and the other beasts and plants, and do no wrong." So Spenser, *Hymne in Honour of Love,* speaks of the common idea of love as

> The world's great Parent, the most kind preserver
> Of living wights, the soveraine Lord of all.

Cf. also the last stanzas of the *Hymne of Heavenly Beautie,*

in which Spenser adapts the Platonic Aphrodite Urania to Christian ideals:

Ah! ceasse to gaze on matter of thy grief:
And looke at last up to that Soveraine Light,
From whose pure beams al perfect beauty springs,
That kindleth love in every godly spright,
Even the love of God.

484. mirrors] The Platonic doctrine of ideas teaches that all earthly and finite things are images of heavenly archetypes, which have their origin in the eternal being of God, the "burning fountain" of 1. 339 above.

488. my spirit's bark is driven] Shelley experiences that passage of the spirit into space to which he had referred in 11. 418-20 above. This sublime passage is curiously prophetic of the death which, in the course of the following year, befell his own mortal part and loosened his spirit to join that of Keats.

## THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY.

*Hellas, a lyrical drama,* was written at Pisa in 1821, and the MS. was sent to Charles Oilier on 11 November. It was published by the Olliers in 1822. Its immediate cause was the attempt of prince Alexander Ypsilanti to raise a revolution against Turkish rule in the Balkan peninsula. Ypsilanti invaded Moldavia on 6 March 1821. Neither he nor his assistants, among whom was his cousin prince Alexander Mavrocordato, to whom *Hellas* is dedicated, were competent leaders, and his insurrection was suppressed at Dragashan on 19 June 1821. Meanwhile, the far more important revolution in southern Greece had broken out, which developed into the Greek war of independence.

*Hellas* is full of lyric poetry of the highest order, celebrating, as in *Prometheus Unbound,* the downfall of tyranny and the coming of a golden age of liberty, and culminating in the beautiful chorus "The world's great age begins anew" (11. 1060-1101).

The passage selected here is 11. 197-238. Apart from its intrinsic beauty, it is of interest as a tribute from Shelley to the Founder of a religion which he himself rejected. "The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as true in their relation to the worship they superseded, and that which in all probability they will supersede, without considering their merits in a relation more universal." (Shelley's notes to *Hellas.)*

i. "The first stanza contiasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and to use a common and inadequate phrase, *clothe themselves in matter,* with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world" (Shelley's note). The general meaning is as follows: " The material creation is ever changing: all external phenomena are transitory and pass into nothing. But there is immortal existence for the spirit, which, ever moving, enters life by the gate of birth and leaves it by the chasm of death, clothing itself in temporary material forms. It is thus perpetually passing through new stages of existence, in new material shapes and under new religious and political conditions, its state in each new stage being brilliant or obscure according to its relative condition in previous incarnations." The theory is, of course, that of the immortality of the soul, preserved by transmigration through various bodily forms.

6. orient portal] Eastern gate, the gate of dawn.

10. their chariots] Shelley probably recalled the myth in Plato's *Phaedrus* of the pre-natal state of the soul, accompanying the charioted gods in their progress round the vault of heaven.

16. A Promethean conqueror] In Shelley's mind our Lord is classed with Prometheus as one of the liberators of humanity. The present sense of this comparison is felt constantly in *Prometheus Unbound.*

19. A mortal shape to him] The rhythm and phraseology of this and the next stanza recall, probably with intention, those of Milton's hymn *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity.*

21. the orient planet] The rising sun.

24. Nor preyed] Christ tamed hell, sin, and slavery. It was not till after His departure that they began to exercise their fell power again.

25. The moon **of** Mahomet] The crescent, the emblem of Mohammedanism, as opposed to the cross. Mahomet's brightness is that of the moon contrasted with the "orient planet" (l. 21) to which Christ is compared.

27. Heaven's immortal noon] "The white radiance of Eternity" *(Adonais,* 1. 463).

31. fond] Deluded by vain fancies.

35. folding-star] The star that shone above the sheep-fold. Shelley confused the star and stable of Bethlehem with the angelic vision to the shepherds.

36. Apollo, Pan, and Love] Cf. Milton, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity,* 11. 173 sqq.

39. **Our** hills] The singers of the chorus are Greek captive women. Cf. Milton, ibid. 11. 181 sqq., where the lament of nature for the "parting Genius" of classical mythology is expressed with consummate beauty.

## TO NIGHT.

Written in 1821: published in *Posthumous Poems,* 1824.

9. Star-inwrought] Cf. *Hymn of Apollo,* 1. 2: "star-inwoven tapestries." The idea occurs in several other passages of Shelley.

22-4. Death and Sleep are usually represented as brothers, as in *Queen Mab,* 11. i, 2.

## TIME.

Written in 1821: published in *Posthumous Poems,* 1824.

## SONG.

Written in 1821: published in *Posthumous Poems,* 1824. Mrs Shelley, speaking of the summer of this year, spent at Bagni di San Giuliano, near Pisa, says: "It was a pleasant summer, bright in all but Shelley's health and inconstant spirits; yet he enjoyed himself greatly, and became more and more attached to the part of the country where chance appeared to cast us."

32. the radiant frost] See, e.g., *Mont Blanc* and the magic picture in *Alastor,* 11. 35.2 4, already quoted in note on 1. 42, p. 122 above.

## MUTABILITY.

Written in 1821: published in *Posthumous Poems,* 1824.

20, 21. Cf. *The Coming of Christianity,* 11. 31, 32 (p. 95 above).

## A LAMENT.

Written in 1821: published in *Posthumous Poems,* 1824. The theme is again that which is expressed in the song, "Rarely, rarely, comest thou," p. 98 above.

## TO——.

Written in 1821: published in *Posthumous Poems,* 1824. The "one word" in 1. i is the "love" of 1. 9; the "one feeling" of 1. 3, the "worship" of 1. u.

## TO—.

Written in 1821: published in *Posthumous Poems,* 1824.

## LINES.

Written in 1822: published in *Posthumous Poems,* 1824.

25. Its passions] The passions awakened by love. Cf. the theme of the poem on p. 103. "Passion's trance" cannot be broken by the mockery of reason, whose cold brightness repels.

30. thine eagle home] The eyrie or eagle's nest which love has left. As the eagle looks at the sun without blinking, so passion is unmoved by the sun of reason.

## TO JANE: THE INVITATION.

This and the next two poems were written in 1822, and addressed to Clara Mary Jane Claiimont, or Claire Clairmont, as she called herself, the daughter of Mrs Shelley's step-mother, the second Mrs William Godwin. This impulsive girl, famous for her disastrous infatuation for Byron, was the companion of the Shelleys in their later wanderings. She survived her friends many years, dying in 1879. In *Posthumous Poems,* 1824, *The Invitation* and *The Recollection* were printed as they were written, as one piece, under the title of *The Pine Forest of the Cascine near Pisa. The Invitation,* written, like Milton's *L' Allegro,* under the influence of the

> goddess fair and free.
> In Heav'n ycleped Euphrosyne,
> And by men, heart-easing Mirth,

combines perfect spontaneity and freedom with a playfulness not habitual to Shelley at this date.

9. halcyon] Calm. The halcyon is the kingfisher, the legend about which is alluded to by Milton, *On the Morning of*

*Christ's Nativity*, 1. 68: "While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave." Mrs Shelley says of the winter of this year: "If we might call that season winter in which autumn merged into spring after the interval of but few days of bleaker weather."

ii. azure mirth] The gladness of the bine sky.

53. dun] Dark-hued, used again in 1. 63 below.

55. lawns] Clearings in the forest.

63. blind] Cf. *Adonais*, 1. 412, and see note on p. 181 above.

66, 67. There is an echo here of the contrast, ever present to Shelley, between the one and unchangeable reality and the many and transitory shapes of earth. For a moment the perfect early spring day merges all the shapes lit by the sun in one harmony of being, and time approaches the ideal perfection of eternity.

## TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION.

See introductory note to previous poem. *The Recollection* commemorates the day in the pine-forest near Pisa to which *The Invitation* was a prelude.

ii. Cf. "the halcyon Morn" in *The Invitation*, 1. 9.

42. the white mountain waste] The mountains of Carrara, which form the western range of the Apennines between Pisa and Leghorn,

45. A spirit interfused] Cf. Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey:*

A sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, etc.

53. the pools] Cf. *The Invitation*, 11. 50, 51.

65. lawn] Cf. *The Invitation*, 1. 55.

## WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE.

See introductory note to *The Invitation.* This poem was first printed in *The Athenaeum*, 20 Oct. 1832.

I. The poem is cast in the form of an address by Ariel, the "fine spirit" of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, to Miranda, the daughter of Prospero. Ariel is, of course, Shelley; Miranda, Jane Clairmont. Jane's Prince Ferdinand was Byron, who had treated her with the utmost heartlessness; and Frospero may be an allusion to William Godwin, Shelley's father-in-law and Jane's step-father. The "throne of Naples" in 1. 19 recalls the fact that Jane had accompanied the Shelleys on their travels in Italy, which reached their southern limit at Naples.

7. denies itself] Refuses to impart itself.

14. From life to life] In every re-incarnation of the spirit: cf. the first stanza of *The Coming of Christianity*, p. 94 above. Ariel finds his present incarnation in Shelley, Miranda hers in Jane; and in every successive incarnation Ariel has been and will be her guardian spirit.

18. the mighty verses] See *The Tempest*, v, i, 313-8, where Prospero commissions Ariel to guide the royal fleet to Naples.

24. her interlunar swoon] The time when the moon is invisible. Cf. Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 11. 86-9:

> The Sun to me is dark
> And silent as the Moon,
> When she deserts the night
> Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

39. In a body like a grave] Shelley's bodily weakness was constantly before his mind and checked his happiness.

43. idol] In the literal sense of the Greek erSwXop *(idolon)*, an image of some reality. The guitar (11. u, 12) is the

> silent token
> Of more than ever can be spoken.

57. Heaven's fairest star] The planet of love.

75. The note which the earth in its revolution contributes to the harmony of the spheres.

90. Shelley wrote another lyric, "The keen stars were twinkling," to Jane playing her guitar, which mimics in its rhythm the characteristic tones of the instrument.

## ARCHY'S SONG IN *CHARLES THE FIRST*.

*Charles the First* is an incomplete tragedy, of which portions of five scenes remain. Shelley worked at it at intervals from 1819 to 1822, when he abandoned it for *The Triumph of Life*. Archy [Douglas] is the court fool of the piece, and this song, full of the "natural magic" of which Shelley had so rich an endowment, concludes the fragmentary drama. Although *Charles the First* remains in this unfinished state, it should be remembered that Shelley in *The Cenci* (1820), the composition of which took place between that of the third and fourth acts of *Prometheus Unbound*, had written an historical tragedy which stands in the first rank of English literary dramas.

7. The frozen wind] Cf. the lines, "The cold earth slept below," p. I above.

## A DIRGE.

Written in 1822: published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.

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# ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETS

EDITED BY A. HAMILTON THOMPSON, M.A., F.S.A.

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