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HIGH ADVENTURE

AN ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY

COMPILED BY
GUY N. POCOCK
M.A.

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INTRODUCTION

If you asked what was the motive or idea that lay behind this anthology, I would put it this way: In days of old, when knights set out on difficult and perilous quests, meeting all manner of dangers and enduring all kinds of hardship, they called it 'High Adventure,' or 'Joyous Venture'—or some term such as this, which implies a delight in living, and in taking dangers and hardships as part of the great game.

Many of our great poets have thought of life as High Adventure. That is the youthful attitude, and they have never lost it. In this anthology I have tried to catch that spirit in the poets, and have chosen and arranged poems that can mean nothing else. There are many aspects of the High Adventure, and I have arranged them thus:

The first section is called 'Vision'—that is, the vision by which it is given to the poet to see that life means High Adventure. These twelve poems are in happy key—and it is the key of the whole collection. Next comes a long section called 'Living in the Open'; for though there may be vision in cities too, and the world is what one makes it, the freedom of the

country is more in keeping with the High Adventure of life.

Next comes a section of vigorous old stories—'After-tea Stories' I have called them, and given them an appropriate tea-time introduction; for it seemed to me that tea-time was the most typical home-time, and the most comfortable time for reading stories of High Adventure. If one is kept indoors one may escape on to the plane of adventure in books.

'Times and Seasons' come next, especially spring and early morning, for then it is that the spirit of High Adventure is keenest and the blood runs freest. But all times and seasons are good times and seasons if one has the vision—even winter when it rains, as we may read in Christina Rossetti's poem.

Next, a touch of philosophy: 'The Spirit of Man' in courage or contentment. For this, too, is High Adventure: to master one's circumstances, to eliminate worry, and to keep one's freedom at least in thought.

The last section I have called 'Youth—and After'; and the general idea of it is High Adventure when one is young, and the holding on to ideals, the refusal to admit disillusionment as one grows older; and we close with Robert Browning's noble Epilogue.

So much for the scheme and arrangement of the

book. But after all is said and read, there need be no very fast line between the sections. Indeed, I was often much put to it to decide in which category a poem should be placed. For the whole of life is High Adventure which one poet may view from one angle, one from another.

G. N. P.

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I. VISION

II. LIVING IN THE OPEN

III. AFTER-TEA STORIES

IV. TIMES AND SEASONS

V. THE SPIRIT OF MAN

VI. YOUTH—AND AFTER

I. VISION

I. VISION

PIPPA'S SONG

THE year 's at the spring,
And day 's at the morn;
Morning 's at seven;
The hill-side 's dew-pearled;
The lark 's on the wing;
The snail 's on the thorn;
God 's in His heaven—
All 's right with the world!

ROBERT BROWNING.

PLEASURE IT IS

PLEASURE it is
  To hear, iwis,
  The birdès sing.
The deer in the dale,
The sheep in the vale,
  The corn springing;

Iwis. Truly.

God's purveyance
For sustenance
  It is for man.
Then we always
To Him give praise,
  And thank Him than,
  And thank Him than.

WILLIAM CORNISH.

THE RAINBOW

MY heart leaps up when I behold
  A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old,
  Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man:
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

Than. Then.

THE VISION SPLENDID

EXTRACT FROM 'ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD'

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore:—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and ~~fair~~;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

. . . . .

Ye blessèd creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fullness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
O evil day! If I were sullen
While the earth herself is adorning
This sweet May-morning,
And the children are pulling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,

Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there 's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone;
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

. . . . .

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed

Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence; truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence, in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea

Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

EXTRACT FROM 'THE PRELUDE'

. . . For I would walk alone,
Under the quiet stars, and at that time
Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound
To breathe an elevated mood, by form
Or image unprofaned; and I would stand,
If the night blackened with a coming storm,
Beneath some rock, listening to notes that are
The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
Or make their dim abode in distant winds.
Thence did I drink the visionary power;
And deem not profitless those fleeting moods
Of shadowy exultation: not for this,
That they are kindred to our purer mind
And intellectual life; but that the soul,
Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
Remembering not, retains an obscure sense

Of possible sublimity, whereto
With growing faculties one doth aspire,
With faculties still growing, feeling still
That whatsoever point they gain, they yet
Have something to pursue.

. . . . .

Ye mountains, and ye lakes
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
That dwell among the hills where I was born—
If in my youth I have been pure in heart,
If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
With God and Nature communing, removed
From little enmities and low desires,
The gift is yours: if in these times of fear,
This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,
If 'mid indifference and apathy,
And wicked exultation when good men
On every side fall off, we know not how,
To selfishness, disguised in gentle names
Of peace and quiet and domestic love,
Yet mingled not unwillingly with sneers
On visionary minds; if, in this time
Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
Despair not of my nature, but retain
A more than Roman confidence, a faith

That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
The blessing of my life; the gift is yours,
Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis yours,
Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
My lofty speculations: and in thee,
For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
A never-failing principle of joy
And purest passion.

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

I WANDERED lonely as a Cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden Daffodils;
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude.
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the Daffodils.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

SPIRIT OF DELIGHT

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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! O come,
Make once more my heart thy home!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

YOUTH

Oh, the wild joy of living! the leaping up from rock to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in the pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couch'd in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellow'd over with gold-dust divine,
And the locust fresh steeped in the pitcher, the full draught of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy!

Robert Browning.

HARK, HOW THE BIRDS DO SING

HARK, how the birds do sing,
And woods do ring!
All creatures have their joy, and man hath his;
Yet if we rightly measure,
Man's joy and pleasure
Rather hereafter than in present is:

Not that he may not here
Taste of the cheer,
But as birds drink and straight lift up the head,
So must he sip and think
Of better drink
He must attain to after he is dead.

GEORGE HERBERT.

MADRIGAL

COME let 's begin to revel 't out,
And tread the hills and dales about,
That hills and dales and woods may sound
An echo to this warbling sound
Fa la la la.

Lads merry be with music sweet,
And Fairies trip it with your feet,
Pan's pipe is dull; a better strain
Doth stretch itself to please your vein
Fa la la la.

UNKNOWN (*sixteenth century*).

EVERY ONE SANG

EVERY one suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark green fields; on; on; and out of sight.

Every one's voice was suddenly lifted,
And beauty came like the setting sun.
My heart was shaken with tears and horror
Drifted away . . . O but every one
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing will never be done.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

ABOARD AT A SHIP'S HELM

ABOARD at a ship's helm,
A young steersman steering with care.

Through fog on a sea-coast dolefully ringing,
An ocean-bell—O a warning bell, rock'd by the waves.

O you give good notice indeed, you bell by the sea-reefs ringing,
Ringing, ringing, to warn the ship from its wreck-place.

For as on the alert, O steersman, you mind the loud admonition,
The bows turn, the freighted ship tacking speeds away under her grey sails,
The beautiful and noble ship with all her precious wealth speeds away gaily and safe.
But O the ship, the immortal ship! O ship aboard the ship!

Ship of the body, ship of the soul, voyaging, voyaging, voyaging.

WALT WHITMAN
(from *Sea Drift*).

II. LIVING IN THE OPEN

II. LIVING IN THE OPEN

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

UNDER the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(from *As You Like It*).

THE SQUIRREL HUNT

THEN as a nimble squirrel from the wood,
Ranging the hedges for his filbert-food,
Sits pertly on a bough his brown nuts cracking,
And from the shell the sweet white kernel taking,
Till with their crooks and bags a sort of boys,
To share with him come with so great a noise,
That he is forced to leave a nut nigh broke,
And for his life leap to a neighbouring oak,
Thence to a beech, thence to a row of ashes;
Whilst through the quagmires and red water plashes
The boys run dabbling thorough thick and thin,
One tears his hose, another breaks his shin;
This, torn and tattered, hath with much ado
Got by the briars; and that hath lost his shoe;
This drops his band; that headlong falls for haste;
Another cries behind for being last:
With sticks and stones, and many a sounding hollow,
The little fool with no small sport they follow,
Whilst he from tree to tree, from spray to spray,
Gets to the wood, and hides him in his dray.

WILLIAM BROWNE
(from *Britannia's Pastorals*).

TEWKESBURY ROAD

It is good to be out on the road, and going one knows not where,
Going through meadow and village, one knows not whither nor why;
Through the grey light drift of the dust, in the keen cool rush of the air,
Under the flying white clouds, and the broad blue lift of the sky.

And to halt at the chattering brook, in the tall green fern at the brink
Where the harebell grows, and the gorse, and the foxgloves purple and white;
Where the shy-eyed delicate deer come down in a troop to drink
When the stars are mellow and large at the coming on of the night.

Oh, to feel the beat of the rain, and the homely smell of the earth,
Is a tune for the blood to jig to, a joy past power of words;
And the blessed green comely meadows are all a-ripple with mirth,
At the noise of the lambs at play and the dear wild cry of the birds.

JOHN MASEFIELD.

A SONG FROM 'WAVERLEY'

HIE away, hie away,
Over bank and over brae,
Where the copsewood is the greenest,
Where the fountains glisten sheenest,
Where the lady-fern grows strongest,
Where the morning dew lies longest,
Where the black-cock sweetest sips it,
Where the fairy latest trips it:
Hie to haunts right seldom seen,
Lovely, lonesome, cool, and green,
Over bank and over brae,
Hie away, hie away.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE PLOUGHBOY

OFT will he stoop, inquisitive to trace
The opening beauties of a daisy's face;
Oft will he witness, with admiring eyes,
The brook's sweet dimples o'er the pebbles rise;
And often bent, as o'er some magic spell,
He 'll pause and pick his shapèd stone and shell:

Raptures the while his inward powers inflame,
And joys delight him which he cannot name.
Thus pausing wild on all he saunters by,
He feels enraptured, though he knows not why;
And hums and mutters o'er his joys in vain,
And dwells on something which he can't explain.
The bursts of thought with which his soul 's perplexed
Are bred one moment, and are gone the next;
Yet still the heart will kindling sparks retain,
And thoughts will rise, and Fancy strive again.

JOHN CLARE.

THE WOODMAN

FORTH goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
The cheerful haunts of man; to wield the axe
And drive the wedge, in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur—
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow; and now with many a frisk
Wide scamp'ring, snatches up the drifted snow
With iv'ry teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.

Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
T' adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.

THE POSTMAN

HARK! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen locks,
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge, the close-packed load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn,
And having dropped the expected bag—pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.

WILLIAM COWPER
(from *The Task*).

VALOUR

FEAR to do base unworthy things is valour.
If they be done to us, to suffer them
Is valour too.

BEN JONSON.

MY HEART 'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

MY heart 's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart 's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart 's in the Highlands wherever I go!

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods!

My heart 's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart 's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart 's in the Highlands wherever I go!

ROBERT BURNS.

SPORT IN THE MEADOWS

MAYTIME is to the meadows coming in,
And cowslip peeps have gotten e'er so big,
And water blobs and all their golden kin
Crowd round the shallows by the striding brig.
Daisies and buttercups and ladysmocks
Are all abouten shining here and there,
Nodding about their gold and yellow locks
Like morts of folken flocking at a fair.
The sheep and cows are crowding for a share
And snatch the blossoms in such eager haste
That basket-bearing children running there
Do think within their hearts they 'll get them all
And hoot and drive them from their graceless waste
As though there wa'n't a cowslip peep to spare.
—For they want some for tea and some for wine
And some to maken up a cuckaball
To throw across the garland's silken line
That reaches o'er the street from wall to wall.

—Good gracious me, how merrily they fare:
One sees a fairer cowslip than the rest,
And off they shout—the foremost bidding fair
To get the prize—and earnest half and jest
The next one pops her down—and from her hand
Her basket falls and out her cowslips all
Tumble and litter there—the merry band
In laughing friendship round about her fall
To helpen gather up the littered flowers
That she no loss may mourn. And now the wind
In frolic mood among the merry hours
Wakens with sudden start and tosses off
Some untied bonnet on its dancing wings;
Away they follow with a scream and laugh,
And aye the youngest ever lags behind,
Till on the deep lake's very bank it hings.
They shout and catch it and then off they start
And chase for cowslips merry as before,
And each one seems so anxious at the heart
As they would even get them all and more.
One climbs a molehill for a bunch of may,
One stands on tiptoe for a linnet's nest
And pricks her hand and throws her flowers away
And runs for plantin leaves to have it drest.
So do they run abouten all the day
And teaze the grass-hid larks from getting rest.
—Scarce give they time in their unruly haste

To tie a shoestring that the grass unties—
And thus they run the meadows' bloom to waste,
Till even comes and dulls their phantasies,
When one finds losses out to stifle smiles
Of silken bonnet-strings—and utters sigh
O'er garments renten clambering over stiles.
Yet in the morning fresh afield they hie,
Bidding the last day's troubles all goodbye;
When red pied cow again their coming hears,
And ere they clap the gate she tosses up
Her head and hastens from the sport she fears:
The old yoe calls her lamb nor cares to stoop
To crop a cowslip in their company.
Thus merrily the little noisy troop
Along the grass as rude marauders hie,
For ever noisy and for ever gay
While keeping in the meadows holiday.

JOHN CLARE.

THE USEFUL PLOUGH

A COUNTRY life is sweet!
In moderate cold and heat,
To walk in the air, how pleasant and fair,
In every field of wheat,
The fairest of flowers adorning the bowers

And every meadow's brow;
So that, I say, no courtier may
Compare with them who clothe in grey
And follow the useful plough.

They rise with the morning lark,
And labour till almost dark;
Then folding their sheep, they hasten to sleep;
While every pleasant park
Next morning is ringing with birds that are singing
On each green tender bough.
With what content and merriment
Their days are spent, whose minds are bent
To follow the useful plough.

UNKNOWN.

COME TO THE MAYPOLE

COME, lasses and lads, get leave of your dads,
And away to the Maypole hie,
For every fair has a sweetheart there,
And the fiddler 's standing by.
For Willy shall dance with Jane,
And Johnny has got his Joan,
To trip it, trip it, trip it, trip it,
Trip it up and down.

'Strike up,' says Wat; 'Agreed,' says Matt,
'And I prithee, fiddler, play';
'Content,' says Hodge, and so says Madge,
'For this is a holiday.'
Then every lad did doff
His hat unto his lass,
And every girl did curtsey, curtsey,
Curtsey on the grass.

'Begin,' says Hal: 'Ay, ay,' says Moll,
'We 'll lead up *Packington's Pound*';
'No, no,' says Noll, and so says Doll,
'We 'll first have *Sellinger's Round*.'
Then every man began
To foot it round about,
And every girl did jet it, jet it,
Jet it in and out.

'You 're out,' says Dick; 'Not I,' says Nick,
''Twas the fiddler play'd it wrong';
''Tis true,' says Hugh, and so says Sue,
And so says every one.
The fiddler then began
To play the tune again,
And every girl did trip it, trip it,
Trip it to the men.

'Let 's kiss,' says Jane; 'Content,' says Nan,
And so says every she;
'How many?' says Batt; 'Why three,' says Matt,
'For that 's a maiden's fee.'
The men, instead of three,
Did give them half a score;
The maids in kindness, kindness, kindness,
Gave 'em as many more.

Then after an hour they went to a bower,
And play'd for ale and cakes;
And kisses too—until they were due
The lasses held the stakes.
The girls did then begin
To quarrel with the men,
And bade them take their kisses back,
And give them their own again.

Now there they did stay the whole of the day,
And tired the fiddler quite
With dancing and play, without any pay,
From morning until night.
They told the fiddler then
They 'd pay him for his play,
Then each a twopence, twopence, twopence,
Gave him, and went away.

'Good night,' says Harry; 'Good night,' says Mary,
'Good night,' says Dolly to John;
'Good night,' says Sue to her sweetheart Hugh;
'Good night,' says every one.
Some walk'd, and some did run;
Some loiter'd on the way,
And bound themselves by kisses twelve
To meet the next holiday.

UNKNOWN.

FARMER'S BOY

HE waits all day beside his little flock
And asks the passing stranger what 's o'clock,
But those who often pass his daily tasks
Look at their watch and tell before he asks.
He mutters stories to himself and lies
Where the thick hedge the warmest house supplies,
And when he hears the hunters far and wide
He climbs the highest tree to see them ride—
He climbs till all the fields are blea and bare
And makes the old crow's nest an easy chair.
And soon his sheep are got in other grounds—
He hastens down and fears his master come,
He stops the gap and keeps them all in bounds
And tends them closely till it 's time for home.

JOHN CLARE.

PADDLING O'ER THE LAKE

YOUNG Calidore is paddling o'er the lake;
His healthful spirit eager and awake
To feel the beauty of a silent eve,
Which seem'd full loth this happy world to leave,
The light dwelt o'er the scene so lingeringly.
He bares his forehead to the cool blue sky,
And smiles at the far clearness all around,
Until his heart is wellnigh overwound,
And turns for calmness to the pleasant green
Of easy slopes, and shadowy trees that lean
So elegantly o'er the waters' brim
And show their blossoms trim.
Scarce can his clear and nimble eyesight follow
The freaks and dartings of the black-wing'd swallow,
Delighting much to see it, half at rest,
Dip so refreshingly its wings and breast
'Gainst the smooth surface, and to mark anon
The widening circles into nothing gone. . . .

JOHN KEATS
(from *Calidore—a Fragment*).

THE BATHING POOL

HERE the boiling pent-up water
Frees itself by a final descent, attaining a basin,
Ten feet wide and eighteen long, with whiteness and fury
Occupied partly, but mostly pellucid, pure, a mirror;
Beautiful there for the colour derived from green rocks under;
Beautiful, most of all, where beads of foam up-rising
Mingle their clouds of white with the delicate hue of the stillness,
Cliff over cliff for its sides, with rowan and pendent birch boughs,
Here it lies, unthought of above at the bridge and pathway,
Still more enclosed from below by wood and rocky projection.
You are shut in, left alone with yourself and perfection of water,
Hid on all sides, left alone with yourself and the goddess of bathing. . . .

There they bathed, of course, and Arthur, the Glory of headers,
Leapt from the ledges with Hope, he twenty feet, he thirty;

There, overbold, great Hobbes from a ten-foot height descended,
Prone, as a quadruped, prone with hands and feet protending;
There in the sparkling champagne, ecstatic, they shrieked and shouted.
'Hobbes's gutter' the Piper entitles the spot, profanely,
Hope 'the Glory' would have, after Arthur, the Glory of headers. . . .

Yes, it was he, on the ledge, bare-limbed, an Apollo, down-gazing,
Eyeing one moment the beauty, the life, ere he flung himself in it,
Eyeing through eddying green waters the green-tinting floor underneath them,
Eyeing the bead on the surface, the bead, like a cloud rising to it,
Drinking-in, deep in his soul, the beautiful hue and the clearness,
Arthur, the shapely, the brave, the unboasting, the Glory of headers.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

WHEN ALL THE WORLD IS YOUNG

WHEN all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away!
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

. . . . .

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THE ECHOING GREEN

THE Sun does arise,
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the Echoing Green.

Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say:
'Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys,
In our youth time were seen
On the Echoing Green.'

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening Green.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

A HUNTING SONG

THE dusky night rides down the sky,
And ushers in the morn;
The hounds all join in glorious cry,
The huntsman winds his horn.
Then a-hunting we will go.

The wife around her husband throws
Her arms, and begs him stay;
'My dear, it rains, it hails, it snows,
You will not hunt to-day?'
But a-hunting we will go.

A brushing fox in yonder wood
Secure to find we seek:
For why, I carried, sound and good,
A cartload there last week.
And a-hunting we will go.

Away he goes, he flies the rout,
Their steeds all spur and switch,
Some are thrown in, and some thrown out,
And some thrown in the ditch.
But a-hunting we will go.

At length his strength to faintness worn,
Poor Reynard ceases flight;
Then hungry, homeward we return,
To feast away the night.
Then a-drinking we do go.

HENRY FIELDING.

WAKEN, LORDS AND LADIES GAY

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay:
On the mountain dawns the day;
All the jolly chase is here,
With hawk and horse and hunting-spear;
Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
Merrily, merrily, mingle they.
'Waken, lords and ladies gay.'

Waken, lords and ladies gay:
The mist has left the mountain grey;
Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming,
And foresters have busy been,
To track the buck in thicket green;
Now we come to chant our lay:
'Waken, lords and ladies gay.'

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
To the greenwood haste away;
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot, and tall of size;
We can show the marks he made
When 'gainst the oak his antlers frayed;
You shall see him brought to bay.
'Waken, lords and ladies gay.'

Louder, louder chant the lay:
'Waken, lords and ladies gay';
Tell them, youth and mirth and glee
Run a course as well as we.
Time, stern huntsman, who can baulk,
Staunch as hound, and fleet as hawk?
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something well:
While all the neighbours shoot thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou mayst warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
  Are thine; the range of lawn and park:
  The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
  Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
  With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
  Cold February loved, is dry:
  Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when young.

And in the sultry garden-squares,
  Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
  I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
  While yon sun prospers in the blue,
  Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

LORD TENNYSON.

THE VAGABOND

GIVE to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above
And the byway nigh me.
Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river—
There 's the life for a man like me,
There 's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around
And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above
And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me
Where afield I linger,
Silencing the bird on tree,
Biting the blue finger.
White as meal the frosty field—
Warm the fireside haven—
Not to autumn will I yield,
Not to winter even.

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around
And the road before me.
Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I ask, the heaven above
And the road below me.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

CHAUCER AND THE DAISY

(Slightly simplified)

Now have I then such a condicioun
That of alle the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures white and rede
Such as men callen daisies in our toun.
To them have I so greet affecioun
As I said erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bed there dawneth me no day
That I nam up and walking in the mede
To see this floure again the sonné sprede,
When it upriseth erly by the morrow:
That blisful sighté softneth all my sorrow.
And when the sonné ginneth for to westé,
Then closeth it, and draweth it to resté,

Nam. Am not

So sore is it afearéd of the night,
Til on the morrow that it is dayés light.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
(from *The Legend of Good Women*).

I STOOD TIP-TOE

I STOOD tip-toe upon a little hill,
The air was cooling, and so very still,
That the sweet buds which with a modest pride
Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,
Their scantly leav'd and finely tapering stems,
Had not yet lost those starry diadems
Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.
The clouds were pure and white as flocks new shorn,
And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly they slept
On the blue fields of heaven, and then there crept
A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves:
For not the faintest motion could be seen
Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.

. . . . .

Open afresh your round of starry folds,
Ye ardent marigolds!
Dry up the moisture from your golden lids
For great Apollo bids
That in these days your praises should be sung

On many harps, which he has lately strung;
And when again your dewiness he kisses,
Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses:
So haply when I rove in some far vale,
His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet-peas, on tip-toe for a flight:
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,
With taper fingers catching at all things,
To bind them all about with tiny rings.

Linger awhile upon some bending planks
That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,
And watch intently Nature's gentle doings:
They will be found softer than ring-dove's cooings.
How silent comes the water round that bend;
Not the minutest whisper does it send
To the o'erhanging sallows: blades of grass
Slowly across the chequer'd shadows pass.
Why, you might read two sonnets, ere they reach
To where the hurrying freshnesses aye preach
A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds;
Where swarms of minnows show their little heads
Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams
To taste the luxury of sunny beams
Temper'd with coolness. . . .

JOHN KEATS.

A PRINCELY DITTY IN PRAISE OF THE ENGLISH ROSE

Amongst the princely paragons,
Bedeckt with dainty diamonds,
Within mine eye, none doth come nigh
The sweet red rose of England.
The lilies pass in bravery,
In Flanders, Spain, and Italy,
But yet the famous flower of France
Doth honour the Rose of England.

As I abroad was walking,
I heard the small birds talking,
And every one did frame her song
In praise of the Rose of England.
The lilies, etc.

Caesar may vaunt of victories,
And Croesus of his happiness;
But he were blest, that may bear in his breast
The sweet red Rose of England.
The lilies, etc.

The bravest lute bring hither,
And let us sing together,

Whilst I do ring, on every string,
The praise of the Rose of England.
The lilies, etc.

The sweetest perfumes and spices
The wise men brought to Jesus,
Did never smell a quarter so well
As doth the Rose of England.
The lilies, etc.

Then fair and princely flower,
That over my heart doth tower,
None may be compared to thee,
Which art the fair Rose of England.
The lilies, etc.

THOMAS DELONEY.

PRAÏSE O' DORSET

WE Dorset, though we mid be hwomely,
Be'nt asheäm'd to own our pleäce;
An' we 've zome women not uncomely,
Nor asheäm'd to show their feäce;
We 've a meäd or two wo'th mowèn,
We 've an ox or two wo'th showèn,

Wo'th. Worth.

In the village,
At the tillage,
Come along an' you shall vind
That Dorset men don't sheäme their kind.
Friend an' wife,
Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers,
Happy, happy, be their life!
Vor Dorset dear
Then gi'e woone cheer;
D' ye hear? woone cheer!

If you in Dorset be a-roamèn,
An' ha' business at a farm,
Then woont ye zee your eäle a-foamèn,
Or your cider down to warm!
Woont ye have brown bread a-put ye,
An' some vinny cheese a-cut ye!
Butter?—rolls o' 't,
Cream?—why bowls o' 't,
Woont ye have, in short, your vill,
A-gi'ed wi' a right good will!

If you do zee our good men travel,
Down a-voot, or on their meäres,
Along the windèn leänes o' gravel,
To the markets or the feäirs,—

Though their hosses' cwoats be ragged,
Though the men be muddy-laggèd,
Be they roughish,
Be they gruffish,
They be sound, an' they will stand
By what is right wi' heart an' hand.
Friend an' wife,
Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers,
Happy, happy, be their life!
Vor Dorset dear
Then gi'e woone cheer;
D' ye hear? woone cheer!

WILLIAM BARNES.

THE LEECH-GATHERER

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;

The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

I was a traveller then upon the moor;
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar,
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy!

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low,
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came:
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor
could name.

I heard the skylark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare:
Even such a happy child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;

But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood:
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good:
But how can he expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless soul that perished in his pride;
Of him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
By our own spirits are we deified;
We poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof comes in the end despondency and madness.

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself;

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

Himself he propped, his body, limbs, and face,
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the Old-man stood;
That heareth not the loud winds when they call;
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,

As if he had been reading in a book;
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And drawing to his side, to him did say,
'This morning gives us promise of a glorious day.'

A gentle answer did the Old-man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
And him with further words I thus bespake,
'What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you.'
He answered, while a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet vivid eyes.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and Man their dues.

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather Leeches, being old and poor:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure;
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance;
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

The Old-man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

My former thoughts returned; the fear that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
'How is it that you live, and what is it you do?'

He with a smile did then his words repeat:
And said, that, gathering Leeches, far and wide
He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
'Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may.'

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The Old-man's shape, and speech, all troubled me:
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace

About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind
But stately in the main: and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
'God,' said I, 'be my help and stay secure;
I 'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!'

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE COUNTRY LIFE

SWEET country life, to such unknown
Whose lives are others', not their own,
But, serving courts and cities, be
Less happy, less enjoying thee:—
Thou never plough'st the ocean's foam
To seek and bring rough pepper home;
Nor to the Eastern Ind dost rove
To bring from thence the scorchèd clove;
Nor, with the loss of thy loved rest,
Bring'st home the ingot from the west:

No! thy ambition's masterpiece
Flies no thought higher than a fleece;
Or how to pay thy hinds, and clear
All scores, and so to end the year:
But walk'st about thine own dear bounds,
Not envying others' larger grounds;
For well thou know'st 'tis not the extent
Of land makes life, but sweet content.
When now the cock, the ploughman's horn,
Calls forth the lily-wristed morn,
Then to thy cornfields thou dost go,
Which though well soiled, yet thou dost know
That the best compost for the lands
Is the wise master's feet and hands:
There at the plough thou find'st thy team,
With a hind whistling there to them;
And cheer'st them up, by singing how
The kingdom's portion is the plough:
This done, then to th' enamelled meads
Thou go'st, and as thy foot there treads,
Thou seest a present God-like power
Imprinted in each herb and flower;
And smell'st the breath of great-eyed kine,
Sweet as the blossoms of the vine:
Here thou behold'st thy large sleek neat
Unto the dew-laps up in meat;
And as thou look'st, the wanton steer,

The heifer, cow, and ox draw near,
To make a pleasing pastime there:
These seen, thou go'st to view thy flocks
Of sheep, safe from the wolf and fox,
And find'st their bellies there as full
Of short sweet grass, as backs with wool;
And leav'st them, as they feed and fill,
A shepherd piping on a hill.
For sports, for pageantry and plays,
Thou hast thy eves and holydays;
On which the young men and maids meet
To exercise their dancing feet,
Tripping the comely country round,
With daffodils and daisies crowned.
Thy wakes, thy quintels, here thou hast,
Thy May-poles too with garlands graced,
Thy morris-dance, thy Whistun-ale,
Thy shearing-feast, which never fail,
Thy harvest home, thy wassail bowl,
That 's tossed up after Fox' i' th' hole,
Thy mummeries, thy twelfth-tide kings
And queens, thy Christmas revellings,—
Thy nut-brown mirth, thy russet wit,
And no man pays too dear for it:—
To these, thou hast thy times to go
And trace the hare i' th' treacherous snow:
Thy witty wiles to draw, and get

The lark into the trammel net
Thou hast thy cockrood and thy glade
To take the precious pheasant made;
Thy lime-twigs, snares, and pitfalls then
To catch the pilfering birds, not men.

O happy life! if that their good
The husbandmen but understood;
Who all the day themselves do please
And younglings, with such sports as these,
And, lying down, have naught t' affright
Sweet sleep, that makes more short the night.

ROBERT HERRICK.

THE GIPSY'S CAMP

How oft on Sundays, when I 'd time to tramp,
My rambles led me to a gipsy's camp,
Where the real effigy of midnight hags,
With tawny smoked flesh and tattered rags,
Uncouth-brimmed hat, and weather-beaten cloak,
'Neath the wild shelter of a knotty oak,
Along the greensward uniformly pricks
Her pliant bending hazel's arching sticks:
While round-topt bush, or briar-entangled hedge,
Where flag-leaves spring beneath, or ramping sedge,

Keeps off the bothering bustle of the wind,
And give the best retreat she hopes to find.
How oft I 've bent me o'er her fire and smoke,
To hear her gibberish tale so quaintly spoke,
While the old Sybil forged her boding clack,
Two imps the meanwhile bawling at her back;
Oft on my hand her magic coin 's been struck,
And hoping chink, she talked of morts of luck:
And still, as boyish hopes did first agree,
Mingled with fears to drop the fortune's fee,
I never failed to gain the honours sought,
And Squire and Lord were purchased with a groat.
But as man's unbelieving taste came round,
She furious stampt her shoeless foot aground,
Wiped bye her soot-black hair with clenching fist,
While through her yellow teeth the spittle hist,
Swearing by all her lucky powers of fate,
Which like as footboys on her actions wait,
That fortune's scale should to my sorrow turn,
And I one day the rash neglect should mourn;
That good to bad should change, and I should be
Lost to this world and all eternity;
That poor as Job I should remain unblest:—
(Alas, for fourpence how my die is cast!)
Of not a hoarded farthing be possesst,
And when all 's done, be shoved to hell at last.

JOHN CLARE.

THE ROADSIDE FIRE

I WILL make you brooches and toys for your delight,
A bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me,
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

ARDEN

MUSE, first of Arden tell, whose footsteps yet are found
In her rough woodlands more than any other ground
That mighty Arden held even in her height of pride;
Her one hand touching Trent, the other Severn's side.

The very sound of these, the Wood-Nymphs doth awake:
When thus of her own self the ancient Forest spake:
My many goodly sites when first I came to show,
Here opened I the way to mine own overthrow:
For, when the world found out the fitness of my soil,
The gripple wretch began immediately to spoil
My tall and goodly woods, and did my grounds inclose:
By which, in little time my bounds I came to lose.
When Britain first her fields with Villages had filled,
Her people waxing still, and wanting where to build,
They oft dislodged the hart, and set their houses, where
He in the broom and brakes had long time made his lair.
Of all the Forests here within this mighty Isle,
If those old Britons then me Sovereign did instyle,
I needs must be the great'st; for greatness 'tis alone
That gives our kind the place: else were there many a one
For pleasantness of shade that far doth me excell.
But, of our Forests' kind the quality to tell,
We equally partake with woodland as with plain,
Alike with hill and dale; and every day maintain
The sundry kinds of beasts upon our copious wastes,
That men for profit breed, as well as those of chase.

Here Arden of herself ceased any more to show;
And with her sylvan joys the Muse along doth go.
When Phoebus lifts his head out of the Winter's wave,
No sooner doth the earth her flowery bosom brave,
At such time as the year brings on the pleasant Spring,
But Hunts-up to the Morn the feathered Sylvans sing:
And in the lower grove, as on the rising knoll,
Upon the highest spray of every mounting pole,
Those quiristers are perched with many a speckled breast.
Then from her burnished gate the goodly glittering East
Gilds every lofty top, which late the humorous Night
Bespangled had with pearl, to please the Morning's sight:
On which the mirthful Quires, with their clear open throats,
Unto the joyful Morn so strain their warbling notes,
That hills and valleys ring, and even the echoing air
Seems all composed of sounds, about them everywhere.
The Throstell with shrill sharps; as purposely he sung
T' awake the lustless Sun; or chiding, that so long
He was in coming forth, that should the thickets thrill:

The woosel near at hand, that hath a golden bill;
As Nature him had marked of purpose, t' let us see
That from all other birds his tunes should different be:
For, with their vocal sounds, they sing to pleasant May;
Upon his dulcet pipe the Merle doth only play.
When in the lower brake, the Nightingale hard by
In such lamenting strains the joyful hours doth ply,
As though the other birds she to her tunes would draw.
And, but that Nature (by her all-constraining law)
Each bird to her own kind this season doth invite,
They else, alone to hear that Charmer of the Night
(The more to use their ears), their voices sure would spare,
That moduleth her tunes so admirably rare,
As man to set in parts, at first had learned of her.
To Philomel the next the Linnet we prefer;
And by that warbling bird, the Wood-lark place we then,
The Red-sparrow, the Nope, the Red-breast, and the Wren,
The Yellow-pate: which though she hurt the blooming tree,
Yet scarce hath any bird a finer pipe than she.
And of these chanting fowls, the Goldfinch not behind,
That hath so many sorts descending from her kind.
The Tydie for her notes as delicate as they,
The laughing Hecco, then the counterfeiting Jay,

The softer with the shrill (some hid among the leaves,
Some in the taller trees, some in the lower greaves)
Thus sing away the morn, until the mounting sun,
Through thick exhaled fogs, his golden head hath run,
And through the twisted tops of our close covert creeps
To kiss the gentle shade, this while that sweetly sleeps.

MICHAEL DRAYTON (from *Polyolbion*).

ODE TO THE NORTH-EAST WIND

WELCOME, wild North-easter!
  Shame it is to see
Odes to every zephyr;
  Ne'er a verse to thee.
Welcome, black North-easter!
  O'er the German foam;
O'er the Danish moorlands,
  From thy frozen home.
Tired we are of summer,
  Tired of gaudy glare,
Showers soft and steaming,
  Hot and breathless air.
Tired of listless dreaming,
  Through the lazy day:
Jovial wind of winter,

Turn us out to play!
Sweep the golden reed-beds;
Crisp the lazy dyke;
Hunger into madness
Every plunging pike.
Fill the lake with wild-fowl;
Fill the marsh with snipe;
While on dreary moorlands
Lonely curlew pipe.
Through the black fir-forest
Thunder harsh and dry,
Shattering down the snow-flakes
Off the curdled sky.
Hark! The brave North-easter!
Breast-high lies the scent,
On by holt and headland,
Over heath and bent.
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
Through the sleet and snow.
Who can over-ride you?
Let the horses go!
Chime, ye dappled darlings,
Down the roaring blast;
You shall see a fox die
Ere an hour be past.
Go! and rest to-morrow,
Hunting in your dreams,

While our skates are ringing
  O'er the frozen streams.
Let the luscious South-wind
  Breathe in lover's sighs,
While the lazy gallants
  Bask in ladies' eyes.
What does he but soften
  Heart alike and pen?
'Tis the hard grey weather
  Breeds hard English men.
What 's the soft South-wester?
  'Tis the ladies' breeze,
Bringing home their true-loves
  Out of all the seas:
But the black North-easter,
  Through the snowstorm hurled,
Drives our English hearts of oak
  Seaward round the world.
Come, as came our fathers,
  Heralded by thee,
Conquering from the eastward,
  Lords by land and sea.
Come; and strong within us
  Stir the Vikings' blood;
Bracing brain and sinew;
  Blow, thou wind of God!

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THE HUNT IS UP

THE hunt is up, the hunt is up,
And it is wellnigh day;
And Harry our King is gone hunting,
To bring his deer to bay.

The east is bright with morning light,
And darkness it is fled,
And the merry horn wakes up the morn
To leave his idle bed.

Behold the skies with golden dyes
Are glowing all around;
The grass is green, and so are the treen
All laughing at the sound.

The horses snort to be at the sport,
The dogs are running free,
The woods rejoice at the merry noise
Of Hey-tantara-tee-ree!

The sun is glad to see us clad
All in our lusty green,
And smiles in the sky as he riseth high
To see and to be seen.

Awake all men, I say again,
Be merry as you may;
For Harry our King is gone hunting,
To bring his deer to bay.

UNKNOWN.

WITH A SWIMMER'S STROKE

How many a time have I
Cloven with arms still lustier, breast more daring,
The wave all roughened; with a swimmer's stroke
Flinging the billows back from my drench'd hair,
And laughing from my lips the audacious brine,
Which kiss'd it like a wine-cup, rising o'er
The waves as they arose, and prouder still
The loftier they uplifted me; and oft,
In wantonness of spirit plunging down
Into their green and glassy gulf, and making
My way to shells and seaweeds, all unseen
By those above, till they waxed fearful; then
Returning with my grasp full of such tokens
As showed that I had searched the deep: Exulting
With a far-dashing stroke, and drawing deep
The long-suspended breath, again I spurned
The foam which broke around me, and pursued
My track like a sea-bird.

THE COACH

Now there is nothing gives a man such spirits,
  Leavening his blood as cayenne doth a curry,
As going at full speed—no matter where its
  Direction be, so 'tis but in a hurry,
And merely for the sake of its own merits;
  For the less cause there is for all this flurry,
The greater is the pleasure in arriving
And the great *end* of travel—which is driving.

What a delightful thing 's a turnpike road!
  So smooth, so level, such a mode of shaving
The earth, as scarce the eagle in the broad
  Air can accomplish, with his wide wings waving.
Had such been cut in Phaeton's time, the god
  Had told his son to satisfy his craving
With the York mail;—but onward as we roll,
Surgit amari aliquid—the toll!

LORD BYRON (from *Don Juan*).

COUNTRY SCENES FROM THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES

(The God Hephaistos made Achilles a wonderful shield in which were depicted scenes of contemporary life. The following are country scenes.)

To these the fiery Artizan did add a new-ear'd field,
Large and thrice plow'd, the soil being soft, and of a wealthy yield;
And many men at plow he made, that drave earth here and there,
And turn'd up stitches orderly; at whose end when they were,
A fellow ever gave their hands full cups of luscious wine;
Which emptied, for another stitch, the earth they undermine,
And long till th' utmost bound be reacht of all the ample close.
The soil turn'd up behind the plow, all black like earth arose,
Though forg'd of nothing else but gold, and lay in show as light
As if it had been plow'd indeed, miraculous to sight.
There grew by this a field of corn, high, ripe, where reapers wrought,

And let thick handfuls fall to earth, for which some other brought
Bands, and made sheaves. Three binders stood, and took the handfuls reapt
From boys that gather'd quickly up, and by them armfuls heapt.
Amongst these at a furrow's end, the king stood pleas'd at heart,
Said no word, but his sceptre show'd. And from him, much apart,
His harvest-bailiffs underneath an oak a feast prepar'd,
And having kill'd a mighty ox, stood there to see him shar'd,
Which women for their harvest folks (then come to sup) had drest,
And many white wheat-cakes bestow'd, to make it up a feast.
He set near this a vine of gold, that crackt beneath the weight
Of bunches black with being ripe; to keep which at the height,
A silver rail ran all along, and round about it flow'd
An azure moat, and to this guard, a quickset was bestow'd
Of tin, one only path to all, by which the pressmen came

In time of vintage. Youths and maids, that bore not yet the flame
Of manly Hymen, baskets bore, of grapes and mellow fruit.
A lad that sweetly toucht a harp, to which his voice did suit,
Center'd the circles of that youth, all whose skill could not do
The wanton's pleasure to their minds, that danc't, sung, whistled too.
A herd of oxen then he carv'd, with high rais'd heads, forg'd all
Of gold and tin, for colour mixt, and bellowing from their stall
Rusht to their pastures at a flood, that echo'd all their throats,
Exceeding swift, and full of reeds; and all in yellow coats
Four herdsmen follow'd; after whom, nine mastives went. In head
Of all the herd, upon a bull, that deadly bellowèd,
Two horrid lions rampt, and seis'd, and tugg'd off bellowing still;
Both men and dogs came; yet they tore the hide, and lapt their fill
Of black blood, and the entrails ate. In vain the men assay'd

To set their dogs on; none durst pinch, but cur-like stood and bay'd
In both the faces of their kings, and all their onsets fled.
Then in a passing pleasant vale, the famous Artsman fed,
Upon a goodly pasture ground, rich flocks of white-fleec't sheep,
Built stables, cottages, and cotes, that did the shepherds keep
From wind and weather. Next to these, he cut a dancing place,
All full of turnings, that was like the admirable maze
For fair-hair'd Ariadne made, by cunning Daedalus;
And in it youths and virgins danc't, all yong and beauteous,
And glewèd in another's palms. Weeds that the wind did toss
The virgins wore; the youths woven coats, that cast a faint dim gloss
Like that of oil. Fresh garlands too, the virgins' temples crown'd;
The youths gilt swords wore at their thighs, with silver bawdricks bound.
Sometimes all wound close in a ring, to which as fast they spun

As any wheel a turner makes, being tried how it will
run,
While he is set; and out again, as full of speed they
wound,
Not one left fast, or breaking hands. A multitude
stood round,
Delighted with their nimble sport; to end which
two begun,
Mids all, a song, and turning sung the sports con-
clusiòn.
All this he circled in the shield, with pouring round
about,
In all his rage, the Ocean, that it might never out.

HOMER

(*trans. George Chapman*)

III. AFTER-TEA STORIES

III. AFTER-TEA STORIES

TEA-TIME

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steaming column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

WILLIAM COWPER (from *The Task*).

OLD SONG

'TIS a dull sight
To see the year dying,
When winter winds
Set the yellow wood sighing:
Sighing, O sighing!

When such a time cometh
I do retire
Into an old room
Beside a bright fire:
O pile a bright fire!

And there I sit
Reading old things,
Of knights and lone damsels,
While the wind sings—
O, drearily sings!

I never look out
Nor attend to the blast;
For all to be seen
Is the leaves falling fast:
Falling, falling!

But close at the hearth,
Like a cricket, sit I,
Reading of summer
And chivalry—
Gallant chivalry!

Then with an old friend
I talk of our youth—
How 'twas gladsome, but often
Foolish, forsooth;
But gladsome, gladsome!

Or, to get merry,
We sing some old rhyme
That made the wood ring again
In summer-time—
Sweet summer-time!

Then we go smoking,
Silent and snug:
Naught passes between us,
Save a brown jug—
Sometimes.

And sometimes a tear
Will rise in each eye,
Seeing the two old friends
So merrily—
So merrily!

And ere to bed
Go we, go we,
Down on the ashes
We kneel on the knee,
Praying together!

Thus, then, live I
Till, 'mid all the gloom,
By Heaven! the bold sun
Is with me in the room,
Shining, shining!

Then the clouds part,
Swallows soaring between;
The spring is alive,
And the meadows are green!

I jump up like mad,
  Break the old pipe in twain,
And away to the meadows,
  The meadows again!

EDWARD FITZGERALD.

THE CHILD AND THE MARINER

THE sailor knows of wondrous lands afar,
More rich than Spain, when the Phoenicians shipped
Silver for common ballast and they saw
Horses at silver mangers eating grain;
This man has seen the wind blow up a mermaid's hair
Which, like a golden serpent, reared and stretched
To feel the air away beyond her head. . . .
He many a tale of wonder told: of where,
At Agustolil, Cephalonia's sea
Ran over the earth's lip in heavy floods;
And then again of how the strange Chinese
Conversed much as how homely blackbirds sing.
He told us how he sailed in one old ship
Near that volcano Martinique, whose power
Shook like dry leaves the whole Caribbean seas;
And made the sun set in a sea of fire

Which only half was his; and dust was thick
On deck, and stones were pelted at the mast. . . .
He told how isles sprang up and sank again,
Between short voyages, to his amaze;
How they did come and go, and cheated charts;
Told how a crew was cursed when one man killed
A bird that perched upon a moving barque;
And how the sea's sharp needles, firm and strong,
Ripped open the bellies of big, iron ships;
Of mighty icebergs in the Northern seas,
That haunt the far horizon like white ghosts.
He told of waves that lift a ship so high
That birds could pass from starboard unto port
Under her dripping keel.
Oh, it was sweet
To hear that seaman tell us such wondrous tales. . . .

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES.

EARL MAR'S DAUGHTER

IT was intill a pleasant time,
Upon a summer's day,
The noble Earl Mar's daughter
Went forth to sport and play.

And as she play'd and sported
Below a green oak tree,
There she saw a sprightly doo
Set on a branch so hie.

'O Coo-my-doo, me Love so true,
If ye 'll come down to me,
Ye 'll have a cage of good red gold
Instead o' simple tree.

'I 'll put gold hingers roun' your cage,
And siller round your wa',
I 'll gar ye shine as fair a bird
As any o' them a'.'

And she had not these words well spoke,
Nor yet these words well said,
Till Coo-my-doo flew from the tower
And lighted on her head.

Then she has brought this pretty bird
Home to her bower and ha',
And made him shine as fair a bird
As any o' them a'.

Doo. Dove. *Tree.* Wood.

When day was gone and night was come,
About the evening-tide,
This lady spied a sprightly youth
Stand straight up by her side.

'O who are ye, young man?' she said,
'What country come ye frae?'—
'I flew across the sea,' he said,
''Twas but this very day.

'My mither is a queen,' he says,
'Likewise of magic skill;
'Twas she that turn'd me in a doo,
To fly where'er I will.

'And it was but this very day
That I came o'er the sea:
I loved you at a single look;
With you I 'll live and dee.'—

'O Coo-my-doo, my Love so true,
No more from me ye 'll gae—'
'That 's never my intent, my Love:
As ye said, it shall be sae.'

Thus he has stay'd in bower with her
For twenty years and three;
Till there came a lord of high renown
To court this fair ladye.

But still his proffer she refused,
And all his presents too;
Says: 'I 'm content to live alone
With my bird Coo-my-doo.'

Her father sware a solemn oath,
Among the nobles all,
'To-morrow, ere I eat or drink,
That bird I 'll surely kill.'

The bird was sitting in his cage,
And heard what he did say;
He jump'd upon the window-sill:
''Tis time I was away.'

Then Coo-my-doo took flight and flew
Beyond the raging sea,
And lighted at his mother's castle,
On a tower of gold so hie.

The Queen his mother was walking out,
To see what she could see,
And there she saw her darling son
Set on the tower so hie.

'Get dancers here to dance,' she said,
'And minstrels for to play;
For here 's my dear son Florentine
Come hame wi' me to stay.'—

'Instead of dancers to dance, mither,
Or minstrels for to play,
Turn four-and-twenty well-wight men
Like storks, in feathers grey;

'My seven sons in seven swans,
Above their heads to flee;
And I myself a gay goshawk,
A bird o' high degree.'

This flock of birds took flight and flew
Beyond the raging sea;
They landed near the Earl Mar's castle,
Took shelter in every tree.

These birds flew up from bush and tree,
And lighted on the ha';
And when the wedding-train came forth
Flew down among them a' .

The storks they seized each wedding guest,
That they could not fight or flee;
The swans they bound the bridegroom fast
Unto a green oak tree.

They lighted next on the bride-maidens,
Then on the bride's own head;
And with the twinkling of an e'e,
The bride an' them were fled!

There 's ancient men at weddings been
For sixty years or more,
But siccan a curious wedding-day
They never saw before.

For naething could the companie do,
And naething could they say;
But they saw a flock o' pretty birds
That took their bride away.

UNKNOWN.

JOHN BARLEYCORN

THERE was three kings into the East,
Three kings both great and high,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath,
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
And showers began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surprised them all.

The sultry suns of summer came,
And he grew thick and strong;
His head well armed wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong.

The sober autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.

They 've ta'en a weapon long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
And tied him fast upon the cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgell'd him full sore;
They hung him up before the storm,
And turn'd him o'er and o'er.

They fillèd up a darksome pit
With water to the brim,
They heavèd in John Barleycorn,
There let him sink or swim.

They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him further woe,
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.

They wasted, o'er a scorching flame,
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller used him worst of all,
For he crush'd him 'tween two stones.

And they hae ta'en his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland!

UNKNOWN.

THE DRAGON OF WANTLEY

Old stories tell, how Hercules
A dragon slew at Lerna,
With seven heads, and fourteen eyes,
To see and well discern-a:
But he had a club, this dragon to drub,
Or he had ne'er done it, I warrant ye:
But More of More-hall, with nothing at all,
He slew the dragon of Wantley.

This dragon had two furious wings,
Each one upon each shoulder;
With a sting in his tayl, as long as a flayl,
Which made him bolder and bolder.
He had long claws, and in his jaws
Four-and-forty teeth of iron;
With a hide as tough as any buff,
Which did him round environ.

Have you not heard how the Trojan horse
Held seventy men in his belly?
This dragon was not quite so big,
But very near, I 'll tell ye.
Devoured he poor children three,
That could not with him grapple;
And at one sup he eat them up,
As one would eat an apple.

All sorts of cattle this dragon did eat:
Some say he ate up trees,
And that the forests sure he would
Devour up by degrees:
For houses and churches were to him geese and turkies;
He ate all, and left none behind,
But some stones, dear Jack, that he could not crack,
Which on the hills you will find.

In Yorkshire, near fair Rotherham,
The place I know it well;
Some two or three miles, or thereabouts,
I vow I cannot tell;
But there is a hedge, just on the hill edge,
And Matthew's house hard by it;
Oh, there and then was this dragon's den,
You could not chuse but spy it.

Hard by a furious knight there dwelt,
Of whom all towns did ring,
For he could wrestle, play at quarter-staff, kick, cuff, and huff,
Call son of a gun, do any kind of thing:
By the tail and the main, with his hands twain
He swung a horse till he was dead;
And that which is stranger, he for very anger
Ate him all up but his head.

These children, as I told, being eat;
Men, women, girls, and boys,
Sighing and sobbing, came to his lodging,
And made a hideous noise:
Oh, save us all, More of More-hall,
Thou peerless knight of these woods;
Do but slay this dragon, who won't leave us a rag on,
We 'll give thee all our goods.

This being done, he did engage
To hew the dragon down;
But first he went, new armour to
Bespeak at Sheffield town;
With spikes all about, not within but without,
Of steel so sharp and strong;
Both behind and before, arms, legs, and all o'er,
Some five or six inches long.

Had you but seen him in this dress,
How fierce he look'd and how big,
You would have thought him for to be
Some Egyptian porcupig:
He frighted all, cats, dogs, and all,
Each cow, each horse, and each hog:
For fear they did flee, for they took him to be
Some strange, outlandish hedge-hog.

To see this fight, all people then
Got up on trees and houses,
On churches some, and chimneys too;
But these put on their trowses,
Not to spoil their hose. As soon as he rose,
To make him strong and mighty,
He drank by the tale, six pots of ale,
And a quart of aqua-vitae.

It is not strength that always wins,
For wit doth strength excell;
Which made our cunning champion
Creep down into a well;
Where he did think, this dragon would drink,
And so he did in truth;
And as he stoop'd low, he rose up and cry'd: Boh!
And hit him in the mouth.

Our politic knight, on the other side,
Crept out upon the brink,
And gave the dragon such a douse,
He knew not what to think:
By cock, quoth he, say you so, do you see?
And then at him he let fly
With hand and with foot, and so they went to 't;
And the word it was, Hey, boys, hey!

Your words, quoth the dragon, I don't understand;
Then to it they fell at all,
Like two wild boars so fierce, if I may
Compare great things with small.
Two days and a night, with this dragon did fight
Our champion on the ground;
Tho' their strength it was great, their skill it was neat,
They never had one wound.

At length the hard earth began to quake,
The dragon gave him a knock,
Which made him to reel, and straightway he thought,
To lift him as high as a rock,
And thence let him fall. But More of More-hall,
As happy and brave as a king,
As he came like a lout, so he turn'd him about,
And kicked him under the wing.

Oh, quoth the dragon, with a deep sigh,
And turn'd six times together,
Sobbing and tearing, cursing and swearing
Out of his throat of leather;
More of More-hall! O thou rascàl!
Would I had seen thee never;
Thou hast struck that thing right under my wing,
And I 'm quite undone for ever.

Murder, murder, the dragon cry'd,
Alack, alack for grief;
Had you but mist that place, you could
Have done me no mischief.
Then his head he shak'd, trembled and quaked,
And down he laid and cry'd;
First on one knee, then on back tumbled he,
So groan'd and kickt and dy'd.

UNKNOWN.

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

Now, as the story plain doth tell,
Within our countrey there did rest
A dreadful dragon fierce and fell,
Whereby they were full sore opprest:
Who by his poisonous breath each day,
Did many of the city slay.

The wise-men all before the king
This answer fram'd incontinent;
The dragon none to death might bring
By any means they could invent:
His skin more hard than brass was found,
That sword nor spear could pierce nor wound.

When this the people understood,
They cryèd out most piteouslye,
The dragon's breath infects their blood,
That every day in heaps they dye:
Among them such a plague it bred,
The living scarce could bury the dead.

No means there were, as they could hear,
For to appease the dragon's rage,
But to present some virgin clear,
Whose blood his fury might asswage;
Each day he would a maiden eat,
For to allay his hunger great.

Thus did the dragon every day
Untimely crop some virgin flowr,
Till all the maids were worn away,
And none were left him to devour:
Saving the king's fair daughter bright,
Her father's only heart's delight.

Then came the officers to the king
That heavy message to declare,
Which did his heart with sorrow sting;
She is, quoth he, my kingdom's heir:
O let us all be poisoned here,
Ere she should die, that is my dear.

Then rose the people presentlye,
And to the king in rage they went;
They said his daughter dear should dye,
The dragon's fury to prevent:
Our daughters all are dead, quoth they,
And have been made the dragon's prey:

And by their blood we rescued were,
And thou hast saved thy life thereby;
And now in sooth it is but faire,
For us thy daughter so should die.
O save my daughter, said the king;
And let ME feel the dragon's sting.

Then fell fair Sabra on her knee,
And to her father dear did say,
O father, strive not thus for me,
But let me be the dragon's prey;
It may be, for my sake alone
This plague upon the land was thrown.

Farewell, my father dear, quoth she,
And my sweet mother meek and mild;
Take you no thought nor weep for me,
For you may have another child:
Since for my country's good I dye,
Death I receive most willinglye.

The king and queen and all their train
With weeping eyes went then their way,
And let their daughter there remain,
To be the hungry dragon's prey:
But as she did there weeping lye,
Behold St. George came riding by.

And seeing there a lady bright
So rudely tyed unto a stake,
As well became a valiant knight,
He straight to her his way did take:
Tell me, sweet maiden, then quoth he,
What caitif thus abuseth thee?

And lo! by Christ his cross I vow,
Which here is figured on my breast,
I will revenge it on his brow,
And break my lance upon his chest:
And speaking thus whereas he stood,
The dragon issued from the wood.

The lady that did first espy
The dreadful dragon coming so,
Unto St. George aloud did cry,
And willèd him away to go;
Here comes that cursèd fiend, quoth she,
That soon will make an end of me.

St. George then looking round about,
The fiery dragon soon espy'd,
And like a knight of courage stout,
Against him did most fiercely ride;
And with such blows he did him greet,
He fell beneath his horse's feet.

For with his launce that was so strong,
As he came gaping in his face,
In at his mouth he thrust along;
For he could pierce no other place:
And thus within the lady's view
This mighty dragon straight he slew.

The savour of his poisoned breath
Could do this holy knight no harm:
Thus he the lady sav'd from death,
And home he led her by the arm:
Which when King Ptolemy did see,
There was great mirth and melody.

UNKNOWN.

OSSEO AND OWEENEE

'Once, in days no more remembered,
Ages nearer the beginning,
When the heavens were closer to us,
And the Gods were more familiar,
In the North-land lived a hunter,
With ten young and comely daughters,
Tall and lithe as wands of willow;
Only Oweenee, the youngest,
She the wilful and the wayward,
She the silent, dreamy maiden,
Was the fairest of the sisters.

'All these women married warriors,
Married brave and haughty husbands;
Only Oweenee, the youngest,
Laughed and flouted all her lovers,
All her young and handsome suitors,
And then married old Osseo,
Old Osseo, poor and ugly,
Broken with age and weak with coughing,
Always coughing like a squirrel.

'Ah, but beautiful within him
Was the spirit of Osseo,
From the Evening Star descended,
Star of Evening, Star of Woman,
Star of tenderness and passion!

All its fire was in his bosom,
All its beauty in his spirit,
All its mystery in his being,
All its splendour in his language!

'And her lovers, the rejected,
Handsome men with belts of wampum,
Handsome men with paint and feathers,
Pointed at her in derision,
Followed her with jest and laughter.
But she said: "I care not for you,
Care not for your belts of wampum,
Care not for your paint and feathers,
Care not for your jests and laughter;
I am happy with Osseo!"

'Once to some great feast invited,
Through the damp and dusk of evening,
Walked together the ten sisters,
Walked together with their husbands;
Slowly followed old Osseo,
With fair Oweenee beside him·
All the others chatted gaily,
These two only walked in silence.

'At the western sky Osseo
Gazed intent, as if imploring,
Often stopped and gazed imploring
At the trembling Star of Evening,
At the tender Star of Woman;

And they heard him murmur softly:
"*Ah, showain nemeshin, Nosa!*
Pity, pity me, my father!"
'"Listen!" said the eldest sister,
"He is praying to his father!
What a pity that the old man
Does not stumble in the pathway,
Does not break his neck by falling!"
And they laughed till all the forest
Rang with their unseemly laughter.
'On their pathway through the woodlands
Lay an oak, by storms uprooted,
Lay the great trunk of an oak-tree,
Buried half in leaves and mosses,
Mouldering, crumbling, huge and hollow.
And Osseo, when he saw it,
Gave a shout, a cry of anguish,
Leaped into its yawning cavern.
At one end went in an old man,
Wasted, wrinkled, old and ugly;
From the other came a young man,
Tall and straight and strong and handsome.
'Thus Osseo was transfigured,
Thus restored to youth and beauty;
But, alas for good Osseo,
And for Oweenee, the faithful!
Strangely, too, was she transfigured,

Changed into a weak old woman,
With a staff she tottered onward,
Wasted, wrinkled, old and ugly!
And the sisters and their husbands
Laughed until the echoing forest
Rang with their unseemly laughter.

'But Osseo turned not from her,
Walked with slower step beside her,
Took her hand, as brown and withered
As an oak-leaf is in Winter,
Called her sweetheart, Nenemoosha,
Soothed her with soft words of kindness,
Till they reached the lodge of feasting,
Till they sat down in the wigwam,
Sacred to the Star of Evening,
To the tender Star of Woman.

'Wrapt in visions, lost in dreaming,
At the banquet sat Osseo;
All were merry, all were happy,
All were joyous but Osseo.
Neither food nor drink he tasted,
Neither did he speak nor listen,
But as one bewildered sat he,
Looking dreamily and sadly,
First at Oweenee, then upward
At the gleaming sky above them.

'Then a voice was heard, a whisper,

Coming from the starry distance,
Coming from the empty vastness,
Low, and musical, and tender;
And the voice said: "O Osseo!
O my son, my best beloved!
Broken are the spells that bound you,
All the charms of the magicians,
All the magic powers of evil;
Come to me; ascend, Osseo!

'"Taste the food that stands before you:
It is blessed and enchanted,
It has magic virtues in it,
It will change you to a spirit.
All your bowls and all your kettles
Shall be wood and clay no longer;
But the bowls be changed to wampum,
And the kettles shall be silver;
They shall shine like shells of scarlet,
Like the fire shall gleam and glimmer.

'"And the women shall no longer
Bear the dreary doom of labour,
But be changed to birds, and glisten
With the beauty of the starlight,
Painted with the dusky splendours
Of the skies and clouds of evening!"

'What Osseo heard as whispers,
What as words he comprehended,

Was but music to the others,
Music as of birds afar off,
Of the whippoorwill afar off,
Of the lonely Wawonaissa
Singing in the darksome forest.

'Then the lodge began to tremble,
Straight began to shake and tremble,
And they felt it rising, rising,
Slowly through the air ascending,
From the darkness of the tree-tops
Forth into the dewy starlight,
Till it passed the topmost branches;
And behold! the wooden dishes
All were changed to shells of scarlet!
And behold! the earthen kettles
All were changed to bowls of silver!
And the roof-poles of the wigwam
Were as glittering rods of silver,
And the roof of bark upon them
As the shining shards of beetles.

'Then Osseo gazed around him,
And he saw the nine fair sisters,
All the sisters and their husbands,
Changed to birds of various plumage.
Some were jays and some were magpies,
Others thrushes, others blackbirds;
And they hopped, and sang, and twittered,

Perked and fluttered all their feathers,
Strutted in their shining plumage,
And their tails like fans unfolded.

'Only Oweenee, the youngest,
Was not changed, but sat in silence,
Wasted, wrinkled, old, and ugly,
Looking sadly at the others;
Till Osseo, gazing upward,
Gave another cry of anguish,
Such a cry as he had uttered
By the oak-tree in the forest.

'Then returned her youth and beauty,
And her soiled and tattered garments
Were transformed to robes of ermine,
And her staff became a feather,
Yes, a shining silver feather!

'And again the wigwam trembled,
Swayed and rushed through airy currents,
Through transparent cloud and vapour,
And amid celestial splendours
On the Evening Star alighted,
As a snow-flake falls on snow-flake,
As a leaf drops on a river,
As the thistle-down on water.

'Forth with cheerful words of welcome
Came the father of Osseo,
He with radiant locks of silver,

He with eyes serene and tender.
And he said: "My son, Osseo,
Hang the cage of birds you bring there,
Hang the cage with rods of silver,
And the birds with glistening feathers,
At the doorway of my wigwam."

'At the door he hung the bird-cage,
And they entered in and gladly
Listened to Osseo's father,
Ruler of the Star of Evening,
As he said: "O my Osseo!
I have had compassion on you,
Given you back your youth and beauty,
Into birds of various plumage
Changed your sisters and their husbands;
Changed them thus because they mocked you
In the figure of an old man,
In that aspect sad and wrinkled,
Could not see your heart of passion,
Could not see your youth immortal;
Only Oweenee, the faithful,
Saw your naked heart and loved you.

'"In the lodge that glimmers yonder,
In the little star that twinkles
Through the vapours, on the left hand,
Lives the envious Evil Spirit,
The Wabeno, the magician,

Who transformed you to an old man.
Take heed lest his beams fall on you,
For the rays he darts around him
Are the power of his enchantment,
Are the arrows that he uses."

'Many years, in peace and quiet,
On the peaceful Star of Evening
Dwelt Osseo with his father;
Many years, in song and flutter,
At the doorway of the wigwam,
Hung the cage with rods of silver,
And fair Owenee, the faithful,
Bore a son unto Osseo,
With the beauty of his mother,
With the courage of his father.

'And the boy grew up and prospered,
And Osseo, to delight him,
Made him little bows and arrows,
Opened the great cage of silver,
And let loose his aunts and uncles,
All those birds with glossy feathers,
For his little son to shoot at.

'Round and round they wheeled and darted,
Filled the Evening Star with music,
With their songs of joy and freedom;
Filled the Evening Star with splendour,
With the fluttering of their plumage;

Till the boy, the little hunter,
Bent his bow and shot an arrow,
Shot a swift and fatal arrow,
And a bird, with shining feathers,
At his feet fell wounded sorely.
'But, O wondrous transformation!
'Twas no bird he saw before him,
'Twas a beautiful young woman,
With the arrow in her bosom!
'When her blood fell on the planet,
On the sacred Star of Evening,
Broken was the spell of magic,
Powerless was the strange enchantment,
And the youth, the fearless bowman,
Suddenly felt himself descending,
Held by unseen hands, but sinking
Downward through the empty spaces,
Downward through the clouds and vapours,
Till he rested on an island,
On an island, green and grassy,
Yonder in the Big-Sea-Water.
'After him he saw descending
All the birds with shining feathers,
Fluttering, falling, wafted downward,
Like the painted leaves of Autumn;
And the lodge with poles of silver,
With its roof like wings of beetles,

Like the shining shards of beetles,
By the winds of heaven uplifted,
Slowly sank upon the island,
Bringing back the good Osseo,
Bringing Oweenee, the faithful.
'Then the birds, again transfigured,
Reassumed the shape of mortals,
Took their shape, but not their stature;
They remained as Little People,
Like the pygmies, the Puk-Wudjies,
And on pleasant nights of Summer,
When the Evening Star was shining,
Hand in hand they danced together
On the island's craggy headlands,
On the sand-beach low and level.
'Still their glittering lodge is seen there,
On the tranquil Summer evenings,
And upon the shore the fisher
Sometimes hears their happy voices,
Sees them dancing in the starlight!'

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

ALLEN-A-DALE

ALLEN-A-DALE has no fagot for burning,
Allen-a-Dale has no furrow for turning,
Allen-a-Dale has no fleece for the spinning,
Yet Allen-a-Dale has red gold for the winning.
Come, read me my riddle! come, hearken my tale!
And tell me the craft of bold Allen-a-Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride,
And he views his domains upon Arkindale side,
The mere for his net, and the land for his game,
The chase for the wild, and the park for the tame,
Yet the fish of the lake, and the deer of the vale,
Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allen-a-Dale!

Allen-a-Dale was ne'er belted a knight,
Though his spur be as sharp, and his blade be as bright;
Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,
Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his word;
And the best of our nobles his bonnet will vail,
Who at Rere-cross on Stanmore meets Allen-a-Dale.

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come;
The mother, she ask'd of his household and home:

'Though the castle of Richmond stand fair on the hill,
My hall,' quoth bold Allen, 'shows gallanter still;
'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its crescent so pale,
And with all its bright spangles!' said Allen-a-Dale.

The father was steel, and the mother was stone;
They lifted the latch, and they bade him be gone;
But loud, on the morrow, their wail and their cry;
He had laugh'd on the lass with his bonny black eye,
And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,
And the youth it was told by was Allen-a-Dale!

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE BALLAD OF THE BRAVE LORD WILLOUGHBY

THE fifteenth of July,
With glistening spear and shield,
A famous fight in Flanders
Was foughten in the field;
The most courageous officers
Were English captains three,
But the bravest man in battle
Was brave Lord Willoughby.

The next was Captain Morris,
A valiant man was he;
The other, Captain Turner,
From field would never flee.
With fifteen hundred fighting men—
Alas, there were no more—
They fought with fourteen thousand men
Upon the bloody shore.

'Stand to it, noble pikemen,
And look you round about!
And shoot you right, you bowmen,
And we will keep them out!
You musquet and caliver men,
Do you prove true to me;
I 'll be the foremost in the fight!'
Says brave Lord Willoughby.

And then the bloody enemy
They fiercely did assail;
And fought it out most furiously,
Not doubting to prevail.
The wounded men on both sides fell,
Most piteous for to see,
Yet nothing could the courage quell
Of brave Lord Willoughby.

For seven hours, to all men's view,
The fight endurèd sore,
Until our men so feeble grew
That they could fight no more.
And then upon their dead horses
Full savoury they ate,
And drank the puddle-water—
They could not better get.

When they had fed so freely,
They kneelèd on the ground,
And praisèd God devoutly
For the favour they had found;
And beating up their colours,
The fight they did renew,
And turning tow'rds the Spaniard,
A thousand more they slew.

The sharp steel-pointed arrows
And bullets thick did fly;
Then did our valiant soldiers
Charge on most furiously;
Which made the Spaniards waver,
They thought it best to flee;
They feared the stout behaviour
Of brave Lord Willoughby.

And then the fearful enemy
Was quickly put to flight;
Our men pursued courageously
And caught their forces quite.
But at the last they gave a shout
Which echoed through the sky;
'God and Saint George for England!'
The conquerors did cry.

The news was brought to England,
With all the speed might be,
And soon our gracious Queen was told
Of this same victory.
'Oh, this is brave Lord Willoughby,
My love that ever won;
Of all the Lords of honour
'Tis he great deeds hath done.'

To the soldiers that were maimèd
And wounded in the fray,
The Queen allowed a pension
Of fifteenpence a day:
And from all costs and charges
She quit and set them free;
And this she did all for the sake
Of brave Lord Willoughby.

Then, courage! noble Englishmen,
And never be dismayed:
If that we be but one to ten
We will not be afraid
To fight with foreign enemies,
And set our nation free;
And thus I end the bloody bout
Of brave Lord Willoughby.

UNKNOWN.

SHERWOOD

SHERWOOD in the twilight, is Robin Hood awake?
Grey and ghostly shadows are gliding through the brake,
Shadows of the dappled deer, dreaming of the morn,
Dreaming of a shadowy man that winds a shadowy horn.

Robin Hood is here again: all his merry thieves
Hear a ghostly bugle-note shivering through the leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Merry, merry England has kissed the lips of June:
All the wings of fairyland were here beneath the moon,
Like a flight of rose-leaves fluttering in a mist
Of opal and ruby and pearl and amethyst.

Merry, merry England is waking as of old,
With eyes of blither hazel and hair of brighter gold:
For Robin Hood is here again beneath the bursting spray
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Love is in the greenwood building him a house
Of wild rose and hawthorn and honeysuckle boughs:
Love is in the greenwood, dawn is in the skies,
And Marian is waiting with a glory in her eyes.

Hark! The dazzled laverock climbs the golden steep!
Marian is waiting: is Robin Hood asleep?
Round the fairy grass-rings frolic elf and fay,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Oberon, Oberon, rake away the gold,
Rake away the red leaves, roll away the mould,
Rake away the gold leaves, roll away the red,
And wake Will Scarlett from his leafy forest bed.

Friar Tuck and Little John are riding down together
With quarter-staff and drinking-can and grey goose feather.
The dead are coming back again, the years are rolled away
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Softly over Sherwood the south wind blows.
All the heart of England hid in every rose
Hears across the greenwood the sunny whisper leap,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Hark, the voice of England wakes him as of old,
And, shattering the silence with a cry of brighter gold,
Bugles in the greenwood echo from the steep,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy glen
All across the glades of fern he calls his merry men—
Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through the May
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day—

Calls them and they answer: from aisles of oak and ash
Rings the *Follow! Follow!* and the boughs begin to crash,

The ferns begin to flutter and the flowers begin to fly,
And through the crimson dawning the robber band
goes by.

Robin! *Robin!* *Robin!* All his merry thieves
Answer as the bugle-note shivers through the leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

ALFRED NOYES.

FROM 'THE SONG OF THE TEA-KETTLE'

SINCE first began my ominous song,
Slowly have passed the ages long . . .
Slow was the world my worth to glean,
My visible secret long unseen!
Surly, apart the nations dwelt,
Nor yet the magical impulse felt;
Nor deemed that charity, science, art,
All that doth honour or wealth impart,
Spell-bound, till mind should set them free,
Slumbered, and sung in their sleep—in me!
At length the day in its glory rose,
And off on its speed—the *Engine* goes!

On whom first fell the amazing dream?
Watt woke to fetter the giant Steam,
His fury to crush to mortal rule,
And wield Leviathan as his tool!
The monster, breathing disaster wild,
Is tamed and checked by a tutor child;
Ponderous and blind, of rudest force,
A fire or a whisper guides its course;
Around its sinews of iron play
The viewless bonds of a mental sway,
And triumphs the soul in the mighty dower,
To knowledge, the plighted boon—is *Power*!

Hark! 'tis the din of a thousand wheels
At play with the fleeces of England's fields;
From its bed upraised, 'tis the flood that pours
To fill little cisterns at cottage doors;
'Tis the many-fingered, intricate, bright machine,
With its flowery film of care, I ween!
And see where it rushes, with silvery wreath,
The span of yon archèd cave beneath;
Stupendous, vital, fiery, bright,
Trailing its length in a country's sight;
Riven are the rocks, the hills give way,
The dim valley rises to unfelt day;
And man, fitly crowned with brow sublime,
Conqueror of distance reigns, and time.

Lone was the shore where the hero mused,
His soul through the unknown leagues transfused;
His perilous bark on the ocean strayed,
And moon after moon, since its anchor weighed,
On the solitude strange and drear, did shine
The untracked ways of that restless brine;
Till at length his shattered sails were furled,
'Mid the golden sands of a western world!
Still centuries passed with their measured tread,
While winged by the winds the nations sped;
And still did the moon, as she watched that deep,
Her triple task o'er the voyagers keep;
And sore farewells, as they hove from land,
Spake of absence long, on a distant strand.

She starts—wild winds at her bosom rage,
She laughs in her speed at the war they wage;
In queenly pomp on the surf she treads,
Scarce waking the sea-things from their beds;
Fleet as the lightning tracks the cloud,
She glances on, in her glory proud;
A few bright suns, and at rest she lies,
Glittering to transatlantic skies! . . .
Simpleton man! Why who would have thought
To this, the song of a tea-kettle brought!

ANN TAYLOR.

FIDELITY

A BARKING sound the shepherd hears,
A cry as of a dog or fox;
He halts—and searches with his eyes
Among the scattered rocks:
And now at distance can discern
A stirring in a brake of fern;
And instantly a dog is seen,
Glancing through that covert green.

The dog is not of mountain breed;
Its motions, too, are wild and shy;
With something, as the shepherd thinks,
Unusual in its cry:
Nor is there any one in sight
All round, in hollow or on height;
Nor shout, nor whistle strikes his ear;
What is the creature doing here?

It was a cove, a huge recess,
That keeps, till June, December's snow;
A lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn below!
Far in the bosom of Helvellyn,
Remote from public road or dwelling,

Pathway, or cultivated land;
From trace of human foot or hand.

There sometimes doth a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
The crags repeat the raven's croak,
In symphony austere;
Thither the rainbow comes—the cloud—
And mists that spread the flying shroud;
And sunbeams; and the sounding blast,
That, if it could, would hurry past;
But that enormous barrier holds it fast.

Not free from boding thoughts, a while
The shepherd stood; then makes his way
O'er rocks and stones, following the dog
As quickly as he may;
Nor far had gone before he found
A human skeleton on the ground;
The appalled discoverer with a sigh
Looks round, to learn the history.

From those abrupt and perilous rocks
The man had fallen, that place of fear!
At length upon the shepherd's mind
It breaks, and all is clear:

He instantly recalled the name,
And who he was, and whence he came;
Remembered, too, the very day
On which the traveller passed this way.

But hear a wonder, for whose sake
This lamentable tale I tell!
A lasting monument of words
This wonder merits well.
The dog, which still was hovering nigh,
Repeating the same timid cry,
This dog had been through three months' space
A dweller in that savage place.

Yes, proof was plain that, since the day
When this ill-fated traveller died,
The dog had watched about the spot,
Or by his master's side:
How nourished here through such long time
He knows, who gave that love sublime;
And gave that strength of feeling, great
Above all human estimate!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

AS I LAYE A-THYNKYNGE

As I laye a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge,
Merrie sang the Birde as she sat upon the spraye;
There came a noble Knyghte,
With his hauberke shynynge brighte,
And his gallant heart was lyghte,
Free and gaye;
As I laye a-thynkynge he rode upon his waye.

As I laye a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge,
Sadly sang the Birde as she sat upon the tree!
There seem'd a crimson plain,
Where a gallant Knyghte laye slayne,
And a steed with broken rein
Ran free;
As I laye a-thynkynge, most pitiful to see!

As I laye a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge,
Merrie sang the Birde as she sat upon the boughe;
A lovely Mayde came bye
And a gentel youth was nyghe,
And he breathed manie a syghe
And a vowe;
As I laye a-thynkynge her heart was gladsome now.

As I laye a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge,
Sadly sang the Birde as she sat upon the boughe;
No more a Youth was there,
But a Maiden rent her haire,
And cried in sadde despaire,
'That I was borne!'
As I laye a-thynkynge she perished forlorne.

As I laye a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge,
Sweetly sang the Birde as she sat upon the brier,
Then came a lonely childe,
And his face was meek and mild,
Yet joyously he smiled
On his sire;
As I laye a-thynkynge a cherub mote admire.

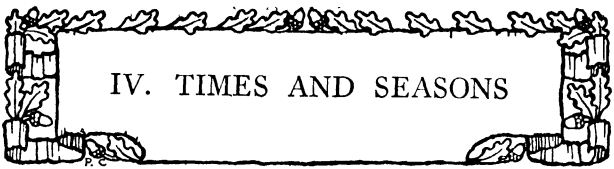
But I laye a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge,
And sadly sang the Birde as it perched upon a brier;
That joyous smile was gone,
And the face was white and wan,
As the downe upon the swan
Doth appear;
As I laye a-thynkynge—oh! bitter flowed the tear!

As I laye a-thynkynge, the golden sun was sinking,
O, merrie sang that Birde as it glitter'd on her breast

With a thousand gorgeous dyes,
While soaring to the skies,
'Mid the stars she seem'd to rise,
As to her nest;
As I laye a-thynkynge, her meaning was emprest:
'Follow, follow me away,
It boots not to delay'—
'Twas so she seem'd to saye,
'HERE IS REST!'

RICHARD HARRIS BARHAM.

IV. TIMES AND SEASONS



IV. TIMES AND SEASONS

SONG IN PRAISE OF SPRING

WELCOME, the Lord of Light and Lamp of Day;
Welcome, fost'rer of tender herbës green;
Welcome, quickener of flourished flowërs sheen
Welcome, support of every root and vein;
Welcome, comfort of all kind fruit and grain;
Welcome, the birdës bield upon the brier;
Welcome, master and ruler of the year;
Welcome, welfare of husbands at the ploughs;
Welcome, repairer of woodës, trees, and boughs;
Welcome, depainter of the bloomëd meads;
Welcome, the life of everything that spreads;
Welcome, storer of all kinds bestial;
Welcome, be thy bright beamës, gladding all;
Welcome, celestial mirror, and espy,
Atteaching all that bountës sluggardy.

GAWAIN DOUGLAS

(from the *Aeneid*, Prologue to Book XII).

Bield. Shelter. *Husbands*. Husbandmen.
Sluggardy. That practise idleness.

MAY MORNING

WHEN March was with varying windës past,
And April had, with her silver showers,
Ta'en leave at Nature, with an orient blast,
And lusty May, that mother is of flowers,
Had made the birdës to begin their hours
Among the tender odours red and white,
Whose harmony it was to her delight;

In bed at morrow sleeping as I lay,
Methought Aurora, with her crystal eyne
In at the window lookëd by the day,
And hailëd me, with visage pale and green,
On whose hand a lark sang from the spleen,
'Awake, lovers, out of your slumbering,
See how the lusty morrow does up spring!'

Methought fresh May before my bed upstood,
In weed depaint of many divers hue,
Sober, benign, and full of mansuetude,
In bright attire of flowers forgëd new,
Heavenly of colour, white, red, brown, and blue,
Balmëd in dew, and gilt with Phoebus' beams;
While all the house illumined of her leams.

Hours. Matins.
Weed. Garments.
Spleen. Heart.
Depaint of. Painted with.
Leams. Rays.

'Sluggard,' she said, 'awake anon for shame,
And in my honour something thou go write:
The lark hath done the merry day proclaim,
To raise up lovers with comfort and delight;
Yet nought increases thy courage to indite,
Whose heart sometime has glad and blissful been,
Songës to make under the leavës green.'

WILLIAM DUNBAR
(from *The Thistle and the Rose*).

SISTER, AWAKE!

SISTER, awake! close not your eyes!
The day her light discloses,
And the bright morning doth arise
Out of her bed of roses.

See the clear sun, the world's bright eye,
In at our window peeping:
Lo, how he blusheth to espy
Us idle wenches sleeping!

Therefore awake! make haste, I say,
And let us, without staying,
All in our gowns of green so gay
Into the Park a-maying!

UNKNOWN.

THE VOICE OF SPRING

I COME, I come! ye have called me long,
I come o'er the mountains with light and song;
Ye may trace my step o'er the wakening earth,
By the winds which tell of the violet's birth,
By the primrose stars in the shadowy grass,
By the green leaves opening as I pass.

I have breathed on the South, and the chestnut-flowers
By thousands have burst from the forest-bowers;
And the ancient graves, and the fallen fanes,
Are veiled with wreaths on Italian plains.
—But it is not for me, in my hour of bloom,
To speak of the ruin or the tomb!
I have passed o'er the hills of the stormy North,
And the larch has hung all his tassels forth,
The fisher is out on the sunny sea,
And the reindeer bounds through the pasture free,
And the pine has a fringe of softer green,
And the moss looks bright where my step has been.

I have sent through the wood-paths a gentle sigh,
And called out each voice of the deep-blue sky,

From the night-bird's lay through the starry time,
In the groves of the soft Hesperian clime,
To the swan's wild note by the Iceland lakes,
When the dark fir-bough into verdure breaks.

From the streams and founts I have loosed the chain:
They are sweeping on to the silvery main,
They are flashing down from the mountain-brows,
They are flinging spray on the forest-boughs,
They are bursting fresh from their sparry caves,
And the earth resounds with the joy of waves.

Come forth, O ye children of gladness, come!
Where the violets lie may now be your home.
Ye of the rose-cheek and dew-bright eye,
And the bounding footstep, to meet me fly,
With the lyre, and the wreath, and the joyous lay,
Come forth to the sunshine—I may not stay.

Away from the dwellings of care-worn men,
The waters are sparkling in wood and glen;
Away from the chamber and dusky hearth,
The young leaves are dancing in breezy mirth,
Their light stems thrill to the wild-wood strains,
And Youth is abroad in my green domains.

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS.

A DAY IN JUNE

AND what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays;
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there 's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest—
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL
(from *The Vision of Sir Launfal*).

WHITSUNTIDE

In somer, when the shawes be sheyne,
And leves be large and long,
Hit is full mery in feyre foreste
To here the foulys song:

To se the dere draw to the dale,
And leve the hillës hee,
And shadow hem in the levës grene,
Under the grene-wode tre.

Hit befel on Whitsontide,
Erly in a May mornyng,
The son up feyre can shyne,
And the briddis mery can syng.

'This is a mery mornyng,' seid Litull John,
'Be Hym that dyed on tre;
A more mery man then I am one
Lyves not in Christiantë.

'Pluk up thi hert, my dere mayster,'
Litull John gan sey,
'And thynk hit is a full fayre tyme
In a mornyng of May.'

UNKNOWN.

A DREAM IN MAY MORNING

ME thoughtë thus that it was May
And in the dawning where I lay
Me mettë thus in my bed all naked;—
And lookëd forth, for I was waked
With smallë fowlës, a great heap,
That had affrayed me out of sleep,
Through noise and sweetness of their song,
And as me mette, they sat among
Upon my chamber roof without,
Upon the tilës all about;
And sungen evereach in his wise
The most solemnë service
By note, that ever man, I trow,
Had heard. For some of them sung low,
Some high, and all of one accord.
To tellë shortly at one word
Was never heard so sweet a steven,
But it had been a thing of heaven.
For there was none of them that feigned
To sing, for each of them him pained
To find out merry crafty notes;
They ne sparëd not their throats.

Mette. Dreamt. *Heap*. Crowd. *Steven*. Sound.

My windowës were shut each one
And through the glass the sonnë shone,
Upon my bed with brightë beams
With many gladë, gildë streams;
And eke the welkin was so fair,
Blue, brightë, clearë was the air
And full atemper, for sooth, it was;
For neither too cold nor hot it nas,
Ne in all the welkin was a cloud.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

DAWN

To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow,
Through the sweet-brier, or the vine,
Or the twisted elgantine:
While the cock with lively din
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before,

Atemper. Temperate. *Nas.* Was not.

Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumb'ring morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Some time walking, not unseen,
By hedge-row elms on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great sun begins his state,
Robed in flames, and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman near at hand
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

JOHN MILTON
(from *L'Allegro*).

MORNING

PACK, clouds, away, and welcome day:
With night we banish sorrow;
Sweet air blow soft, mount larks aloft
To give my Love good morrow!
Wings from the wind, to please her mind,
Notes from the lark I 'll borrow;

Bird prune thy wing, nightingale sing,
To give my Love good morrow;
To give my Love good morrow
Notes from them both I 'll borrow.

Wake from thy nest, robin red-breast,
Sing, birds, in every furrow;
And from each hill, let music shrill
Give my fair Love good morrow!
Blackbird and thrush, in every bush,
Stare, linnet, and cock-sparrow!
You pretty elves, amongst yourselves
Sing my fair Love good morrow;
To give my Love good morrow
Sing, birds, in every furrow!

THOMAS HEYWOOD.

AT DAWN

THE busy larkë, messager of day,
Saluëth in her song the morrow grey,
And fiery Phoebus riseth up so bright
That all the orient laugheth of the light,
And with his streamës drieth in the greves
The silver dropës hanging on the leaves.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

Greves. Groves.

THE ANGLER'S WISH

I IN these flowery meads would be;
These crystal streams should solace me;
To whose harmonious bubbling noise,
I with my angle will rejoice;
  Sit here, and see the turtle-dove
  Court his chaste mate to acts of love,

Or on that bank feel the west wind
Breathe health and plenty; please my mind
To see sweet dewdrops kiss these flowers,
And then wash'd off by April showers;
  Here, hear my Kenna sing a song;
  There, see a blackbird feed her young,

Or a laverock build her nest:
Here give my weary spirits rest,
And raise my low-pitch'd thoughts above
Earth, or what poor mortals love:
  Thus, free from lawsuits and the noise
  Of princes' courts, I would rejoice.

Or with my Bryan and a book,
Loiter long days near Shawford brook;
There sit with him and eat my meat,

There see the sun both rise and set,
There bid good morning to each day,
There meditate my time away,
And angle on: and beg to have
A quiet passage to a welcome grave.

IZAAK WALTON.

THE SPRING

Now that winter's gone, the earth hath lost
Her snow-white robes, and now no more the frost
Candies the grass, or casts an icy cream
Upon the silver lake and crystal stream.
But the warm sun thaws the benumbèd earth,
And makes it tender, gives a sacred birth
To the dead swallow, wakes in hollow tree
The drowsy cuckoo and the humble-bee.
Now do a choir of chirping minstrels bring,
In triumph to the world, the youthful spring;
The valleys, hills and woods, in rich array,
Welcome the coming of the longed-for May.
Now all things smile, only my love doth lower;
Nor hath the scalding noonday sun the power
To melt that marble ice which still doth hold
Her heart congealed, and makes her pity cold.

The ox, which lately did for shelter fly
Into the stall, doth now securely lie
In open fields; and love no more is made
By the fireside; but, in the cooler shade,
Amyntas now doth with his Chloris sleep
Under a sycamore; and all things keep
Time with the season—only she doth carry
June in her eyes, in her heart January.

THOMAS CAREW.

TO-DAY

So here hath been dawning
  Another blue day;
Think, wilt thou let it
  Slip useless away?

Out of Eternity
  This new day is born;
Into Eternity
  At night will return.

Behold it aforetime
  No eye ever did;
So soon it forever
  From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning
Another blue day;
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away?

THOMAS CARLYLE.

THE YEAR

THE crocus, while the days are dark,
Unfolds its saffron sheen;
At April's touch, the crudest bark
Discovers gems of green.

Then sleep the seasons, full of might;
While slowly swells the pod
And rounds the peach, and in the night
The mushroom bursts the sod.

The Winter falls; the frozen rut
Is bound with silver bars;
The snow-drift heaps against the hut,
And night is pierced with stars.

COVENTRY PATMORE.

THE MONTHS

JANUARY

THE moon that mounts the sun's deserted way,
Turns the long winter night to a silver day;
But setteth golden in face of the solemn sight
Of her lord arising upon a world of white.

FEBRUARY

I have in my heart a vision of spring begun
In a sheltering wood, that feels the kiss of the sun:
And a thrush adoreth the melting day that dies
In clouds of purple afloat upon saffron skies.

MARCH

Now carol the birds at dawn, and some new lay
Announceth a homecome voyager every day.
Beneath the tufted sallows the streamlet thrills
With the leaping trout and the gleam of the daffodils.

APRIL

Then laugheth the year; with flowers the meads are bright;
The bursting branches are tipped with flames of light:

The landscape is light; the dark clouds flee above,
And the shades of the land are a blue that is deep as love.

MAY

But if you have seen a village all red and old
In cherry-orchards a-sprinkle with white and gold,
By a hawthorn seated, or a witch-elm flowering high,
A gay breeze making riot in the waving rye!

JUNE

Then night retires from heaven; the high winds go
A-sailing in cloud-pavilions of cavern'd snow.
O June, sweet Philomel sang thy cradle-lay;
In rosy revel thy spirit shall pass away.

JULY

Heavy is the green of the fields, heavy the trees
With foliage hang, drowsy the hum of bees
In the thund'rous air: the crowded scents lie low:
Thro' tangle of weeds the river runneth slow.

AUGUST

A reaper with dusty shoon and hat of straw
On the yellow field, his scythe in his armës braw:
Beneath the tall grey trees resting at noon
From sweat and swink with scythe and dusty shoon.

SEPTEMBER

Earth's flaunting flower of passion fadeth fair
To ripening fruit in sunlit veils of the air,
As the art of man makes wisdom to glorify
The beauty and love of life born else to die.

OCTOBER

On frosty morns with the woods aflame, down, down
The golden spoils fall thick from the chestnut crown.
May Autumn in tranquil glory her riches spend,
With mellow apples her orchard-branches bend.

NOVEMBER

Sad mists have hid the sun, the land is forlorn:
The plough is afield, the hunter windeth his horn.
Dame Prudence looketh well to her winter stores,
And many a wise man finds his pleasure indoors.

DECEMBER

I pray thee don thy jerkin of olden time,
Bring us good ice, and silver the trees with rime;
And I will good cheer, good music and wine bestow,
When the Christmas guest comes galloping over the snow.

ROBERT BRIDGES
(from *Eclogue I*).

WINTER RAIN

EVERY valley drinks,
  Every dell and hollow:
Where the kind rain sinks and sinks,
  Green of Spring will follow.

Yet a lapse of weeks
  Buds will burst their edges,
Strip their wool-coats, blue-coats, streaks,
In the woods and hedges;

Weave a bower of love
  For birds to meet each other,
Weave a canopy above
  Nest and egg and mother.

But for fattening rain
  We should have no flowers,
Never a bud or leaf again
  But for soaking showers;

Never a mated bird
  In the rocking tree-tops,
Never indeed a flock or herd
  To graze upon the lea-crops.

Lambs so woolly white,
  Sheep the sun-bright leas on,
They could have no grass to bite
  But for rain in season.

We should find no moss
  In the shadiest places,
Find no waving meadow-grass
  Pied with broad-eyed daisies:

But miles of barren sand,
  With never a son or daughter,
Not a lily on the land,
  Or lily on the water.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

THE SEASONS

SPRING

So forth issued the Seasons of the year;
First, lusty Spring, all dight in leaves of flowers
That freshly budded and new blooms did bear,
In which a thousand birds had built their bowers
That sweetly sung to call forth paramours;

And in his hand a javelin he did bear,
And on his head (as fit for warlike stoures)
A gilt engraven morion he did wear;
That as some did him love, so others did him fear.

SUMMER

Then came the jolly Summer, being dight
In a thin silken cassock coloured green,
That was unlinèd all, to be more light:
And on his head a garland well beseen
He wore, from which, as he had chafèd been,
The sweat did drop; and in his hand he bore
A bow and shafts, as he in forest green
Had hunted late the leopard or the boar,
And now would bathe his limbs with labour heated sore.

AUTUMN

Then came the Autumn all in yellow clad,
As though he joyèd in his plenteous store,
Laden with fruits that made him laugh, full glad
That he had banished hunger, which to-fore
Had by the belly oft him pinchèd sore;
Upon his head a wreath, that was enrolled
With ears of corn of every sort, he bore;
And in his hand a sickle he did hold,
To reap the ripened fruits the which the earth had yold.

WINTER

Lastly came Winter, clothèd all in frieze,
Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill;
Whilst on his hoary beard his breath did freeze,
And the dull drops that from his purpled bill
As from a limbeck did adown distill:
In his right hand a tippèd staff he held,
With which his feeble steps he stayèd still;
For he was faint with cold, and weak with eld;
That scarce his loosèd limbs he able was to weld.

EDMUND SPENSER
(from *The Faerie Queene*).

HAY HARVEST

I MET a man mowing
A meadow of hay;
So smoothly and flowing
His swathes fell away,
At break of the day
Up Hambleden way;
A yellow-eyed collie
Was guarding his coat—
Loose-limbed and lob-lolly,
But wise and remote.

The morning came leaping—
'Twas five o' the clock,
The world was still sleeping
At Hambleden Lock—
As sound as a rock
Slept village and Lock;
'Fine morning!' the man says,
And I says: 'Fine day!'
Then I to my fancies,
And he to his hay!

And lovely and quiet
And lonely and chill,
Lay river and eyot,
And meadow and mill;—
I think of them still—
Mead, river, and mill;
For wasn't it jolly
With only us three—
The yellow-eyed collie,
The mower and me?

PATRICK CHALMERS.

CHRISTMAS IN THE OLDEN TIME

HEAP on more wood!—the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We 'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deemed the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer:
Even, heathen yet, the savage Dane
At Iol more deep the mead did drain;
High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate crew;
Then in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes decked the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dressed steer;
Caroused in seas of sable beer;
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown
The half-gnawed rib and marrow-bone;
Or listened all, in grim delight,
While Scalds yelled out the joys of fight.
Then forth in frenzy would they hie,
While wildly-loose their red locks fly;
And, dancing round the blazing pile,
They make such barbarous mirth the while,
As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

Iol. Yule, the heathen Christmas. ‖ *Scalds.* Poets.
Odin's hall. In the Other-world, where heroes fought and feasted forever.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had rolled
And brought blithe Christmas back again
With all its hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night:
On Christmas Eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas Eve the mass was sung;
That only night, in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donned her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dressed with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside;
And Ceremony doffed her pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of 'post and pair.'
All hailed with uncontrolled delight,
And general voice, the happy night

Christmas Eve . . . rear. The mass is not celebrated at night except at Christmas.
Underogating. Without loss of dignity.

That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.
The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving-man;
Then the grim boar's-head frowned on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garbed ranger tell
How, when, and where the monster fell;
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassail round, in good brown bowls,
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.
There the huge sirloin reeked; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;
Nor failed old Scotland to produce,
At such high-tide, her savoury goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roared with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see

Traces of ancient mystery;
White skirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made:
But, oh! what maskers richly dight
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

SIR WALTER SCOTT
(from *Marmion*, Introduction to Canto VI).

DAY

O DAY, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
A mite of my twelve hours' treasure,
The least of thy gazes or glances . . .
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!
Thy long, blue, solemn hours serenely flowing,
Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help and good—
Thy fitful sunshine minutes, coming, going,
As if earth turned from work in gamesome mood,
All shall be mine! . . .

ROBERT BROWNING (from *Pippa Passes*).

V. THE SPIRIT OF MAN

V. THE SPIRIT OF MAN

SWEET ARE THE THOUGHTS

SWEET are the thoughts that savour of content;
  The quiet mind is richer than a crown;
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
  The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown:
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbours quiet rest;
  The cottage that affords no pride nor care;
The mean that 'grees with country music best;
  The sweet consort of mirth and modest fare;
Obscurèd life sets down a type of bliss;
A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

ROBERT GREENE.

JUSTUM ET TENACEM

THE man of life upright
  Whose cheerful mind is free
From weight of impious deeds
  And yoke of vanity;

The man whose silent days
In harmless joys are spent,
Whom hope cannot delude
Nor sorrow discontent;

That man needs neither towers
Nor armour for defence,
Nor vaults his guilt to shroud
From thunder's violence.

He only can behold
With unaffrighted eyes
The horrors of the deep,
The terrors of the skies.

Thus, scorning all the cares
That fate or fortune brings,
His book the heaven he makes,
His wisdom heavenly things.

Good thoughts his surest friends,
His wealth a well-spent age,
The earth his sober inn,
And quiet pilgrimage.

THOMAS CAMPION.

THE CHARACTER OF A HAPPY LIFE

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are,
Whose soil is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the world by care
Of public fame, or private breath;

Who envies none that chance doth raise,
Nor vice. Who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise;
Nor rules of state, but rules of good:

Who hath his life from rumours freed,
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great.

Who God doth late and early pray
More of His grace than gifts to lend;
And entertains the harmless day
With a religious book or friend;

This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath All.

SIR HENRY WOTTON.

INVICTUS

OUT of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

THE SHEPHERD BOY'S SONG

He that is down needs fear no fall;
He that is low no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much;
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because Thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is
That go on pilgrimage;
Here little and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age.

JOHN BUNYAN.

HAPPY HE

HAPPY he
Who to sweet home retired,
Shuns glory so admired;
And to himself lives free!
Whilst he who strives, with pride, to climb the skies,
Falls down, with foul disgrace, before he rise.

Let who will
The Active Life commend:
And all his travails bend
Earth with his fame to fill!
Such fame, so forced, at last dies with his death;
Which life maintained, by others' idle breath.

My delights
To dearest home confined,
Shall there make good my mind
Not awed with fortune's spites:
High trees heaven blasts, winds shake and honours fell,
When lowly plants long time in safety dwell.

All I can,
My worldly strife shall be,
They, one day, say of me,
'He died a good old man!'
On his sad soul a heavy burden lies,
Who, known to all, unknown to himself, dies.

UNKNOWN.

FREEDOM

A! FREDOME is a noble thing!
Fredome makes man to have likeing,
Fredome all solace to man gives,
He lives at ease that frely lives!
A noble heart may have none ease
Nor ellys nought that may him please,
If fredom fail'th; for fre likeing
Is yharnit over all other thing
Nor he that ay has livit fre
May not know well the propertè,
The anger, nor the wretched doom
That is conplit to foul thraldom.
But if he had essayed it
Then all perquer he should it wit;
And should think fredom more to prize
Than all the gold in world that is.
Thus contrar thingis evermar
Discoverings of the tother are.

JOHN BARBOUR.

Likeing. Delight. *Yharnit.* Longed for.
Perquer. Thoroughly.

THE SPIRIT OF MAN

As the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
In the green trees; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own,
Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene:—Like power abides
In man's celestial-spirit; virtue thus
Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus feeds
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
From the encumbrances of mortal life,
From error, disappointment—nay, from guilt;
And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
From palpable oppressions of despair.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
(from *The Excursion*).

THE SAILOR-BOY

HE rose at dawn, and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbour-bar,
And reached the ship and caught the rope,
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled loud and long
He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,
'O boy, tho' thou art young and proud
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

'The sands and yeasty surges mix
In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall play.'

'Fool,' he answered, 'death is sure
To those that stay and those that roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

'My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying "stay for shame,"
My father raves of death and wreck—
They are all to blame, they are all to blame.

'God help me! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart
Far worse than any death to me.'

LORD TENNYSON.

MANHOOD

GIVE me a spirit that on life's rough sea
Love to have his sails filled with a lusty wind,
Even till his sail-yards tremble, his masts crack,
And his raft ship run on her side so low
That she drinks water, and her keel ploughs air.
There is no danger to a man who knows
What life and death is; there 's not any law
Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful
That he should stoop to any other law;
He goes before them and commands them all,
That to himself is a law rational.

GEORGE CHAPMAN.

THE CONTENTED ANGLER

THE Angler hath a jolly life
  Who by the rail runs down,
And leaves the business and his wife,
  And all the din of town.
The wind down stream is blowing straight,
  And nowhere cast can he:
Then lo, he doth but sit and wait
  In kindly company.

The miller turns the water off,
Or folk be cutting weed,
While he doth at misfortune scoff,
From every trouble freed.
Or else he waiteth for a rise,
And ne'er a rise may see;
For why, there are not any flies
To bear him company.

Or, if he mark a rising trout,
He straightway is caught up;
And then he takes his flasket out
And drinks a rousing cup.
Or if a trout he chance to hook
Weeded and broke is he:
And then he finds a goodly book
Instructive company.

ANDREW LANG.

FORTUNATUS NIMIUM

I HAVE lain in the sun,
I have toiled as I might,
I have thought as I would,
And now it is night.

My bed full of sleep,
My heart of content,
For friends that I met
The way that I went.

I welcome fatigue,
While frenzy and care
Like thin summer clouds
Go melting in air.

To dream as I may
And awake when I will
With the song of the birds
And the sun on the hill.

Or death—were it death—
To what should I wake
Who loved in my home
All life for its sake?

What good have I wrought?
I laugh to have learned
That joy cannot come
Unless it is earned.

For a happier lot
Than God giveth me
It never hath been
Nor ever shall be.

ROBERT BRIDGES.

THE ENCHANTED TRAVELLER

We travelled empty-handed
With hearts all fear above,
For we ate the bread of friendship,
We drank the wine of love.

Through many a wondrous autumn,
Through many a magic spring,
We hailed the scarlet banners,
We heard the bluebird sing.

We looked on life and nature
With the eager eyes of youth,
And all we asked or cared for
Was beauty, joy, and truth.

We found no other wisdom,
We learned no other way,
Than the gladness of the morning,
The glory of the day.

So all our earthly treasure
Shall go with us, my dears,
Aboard the Shadow Liner,
Across the sea of years.

BLISS CARMAN.

CARELESS CONTENT

I AM content, I do not care,
Wag as it will the world for me;
When fuss and fret was all my fare,
It got no ground as I could see:
So when away my caring went,
I counted cost, and was content.

With more of thanks and less of thought,
I strive to make my matters meet;
To seek what ancient sages sought,
Physic and food is sour and sweet:
To take what passes in good part,
And keep the hiccups from the heart.

With good and gentle-humoured hearts
I choose to chat where'er I come,
Whate'er the subject be that starts;
But if I get among the glum,
I hold my tongue to tell the troth,
And keep my breath to cool my broth.

For chance or change of peace or pain,
For Fortune's favour or her frown,
For lack or glut, or loss or gain,
I never dodge nor up nor down:
But swim what way the ship shall swim,
Or tack about with equal trim.

I sink not where I shall not speed,
  Nor trace the turn of every tide;
If simple sense will not succeed,
  I make no bustling, but abide:
For shining wealth, or scaring woe,
I force no friend, I fear no foe.

Of ups and downs, of ins and outs,
  Of they 're i' the wrong, and we 're i' the right,
I shun the rancours and the routs;
  And wishing well to every wight,
Whatever turn the matter takes,
I deem it all but ducks and drakes.

With whom I feast I do not fawn,
  Nor if the folks should flount me, faint;
If wonted welcome be withdrawn,
  I look no kind of a complaint:
With none disposed to disagree,
But like them best who best like me.

Not that I rate myself the rule
  How all my betters should behave;
But fame shall find me no man's fool,
  Nor to a set of men a slave:
I love a friendship free and frank,
And hate to hang upon a hank.

Fond of a true and trusty tie
I never loose whate'er I link;
Though if a business budges by,
I talk thereon just as I think;
My word, my work, my heart, my hand,
Still on a side together stand.

If names or notions make a noise,
Whatever hap the question hath,
The point impartially I poise,
And read or write, but without wrath;
For should I burn or break my brains,
Pray who will pay me for my pains?

I love my neighbour as myself,
Myself like him too, by his leave;
Nor to his pleasure, power, or pelf,
Came I to crouch, as I conceive:
Dame Nature doubtless has designed
A man the monarch of his mind.

Now taste and try this temper, sirs,
Mood it and brood it in your breast;
Or if ye ween, for worldly stirs,
That man does right to mar his rest,
Let me be deft, and debonair,
I am content I do not care.

JOHN BYROM.

THE OLD VICAR

LET the bells ring, and let the boys sing,
The young lasses skip and play;
Let the cups go round, till round goes the ground;
Our learnèd old vicar will stay.

Let the pig turn merrily, merrily, ah,
And let the fat goose swim;
For verily, verily, verily, ah,
Our vicar this day shall be trim.

The stewed cock shall crow, cock-a-loodle-loo,
A loud cock-a-loodle shall he crow;
The duck and the drake shall swim in a lake
Of onions and claret below.

Our wives shall be neat, to bring in our meat
To thee our most noble adviser;
Our pains shall be great, and bottles shall sweat,
And we ourselves will be wiser.

We 'll labour and swink, we 'll kiss and we 'll drink,
And tithes shall come thicker and thicker;
We 'll fall to our plough, and get children enow,
And thou shalt be learnèd old vicar.

JOHN FLETCHER (from *The Spanish Curate*).

JACK AND JOAN

JACK and Joan they think no ill,
But loving live, and merry still;
Do their week-day's work, and pray
Devoutly on the holy-day:
Skip and trip it on the green,
And help to choose the Summer Queen:
Lash out, at a country feast,
Their silver penny with the best.

Well can they judge of nappy ale,
And tell at large a winter tale;
Climb up to the apple loft,
And turn the crabs till they be soft.
Tib is all the father's joy,
And little Tom the mother's boy.
All their pleasure is Content;
And care, to pay their yearly rent.

Joan can call by name her cows,
And deck her windows with green boughs;
She can wreaths and tutties make,
And trim with plums a bridal cake.
Jack knows what brings gain or loss;
And his long flail can stoutly toss:

Make the hedge which others break,
And ever thinks what he doth speak.

Now, you courtly dames and knights,
That study only strange delights;
Though you scorn the homespun grey
And revel in your rich array;
Though your tongues dissemble deep,
And can your heads from danger keep;
Yet for all your pomp and train,
Securer lives the silly swain.

THOMAS CAMPION.

WHO LIVETH SO MERRY

WHO liveth so merry in all this land
As doth the poor widow that selleth the sand?
Cho. And ever she singeth as I can guess,
'Will you buy any sand, any sand, Mistress?'

The broom-man maketh his living most sweet,
With carrying of brooms from street to street.
Cho. Who would desire a pleasanter thing
Than all the day long to do nothing but sing?

The chimney sweeper all the long day,
He singeth and sweepeth the soot away:
Cho. Yet when he comes home, although he be weary,
With his pretty, sweet wife he maketh full merry.

The cobbler he sits cobbling till noon,
And cobbleth his shoes till they be done:
Cho. Yet doth he not fear, and so doth say,
For he knows his work will soon decay.

The merchant-man he doth sail on the seas,
And lie on the ship-board with little ease:
Cho. For always he doubts that the rocks are near—
How can he be merry and make good cheer?

The husbandman all day goeth to plough,
And when he comes home he serveth his sow:
Cho. He moileth and toileth all the long year—
How can he be merry and make good cheer?

The serving man waiteth from street to street,
Either blowing his nails or beating his feet:
Cho. Yet all that serves for, four angels a year,
Impossible 'tis that he make good cheer.

Who liveth so merry and maketh such sport,
As those that be of the poorest sort?

Cho. The poorest sort, whatsoever they be,
They gather together, by one, two, and three.

And every man will spend his penny,
What makes such a shot among a great many.

UNKNOWN.

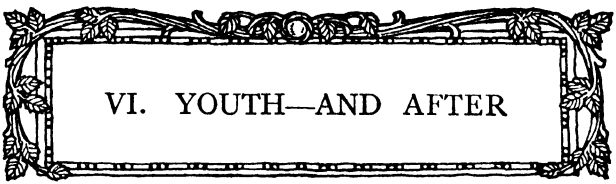
WISDOM

WHEN Wisdom tells me that the world 's a speck
Lost on the shoreless blue of God's To-day . . .
I smile and think: 'For every man his way:
The world 's my ship, and I 'm alone on deck!'

And when he tells me that the world 's a spark
Lit in the whistling gloom of God's To-night . . .
I look within me to the edge of dark,
And dream: 'The world 's my field, and I 'm the lark,
Alone with upward song, alone with light!'

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.

VI. YOUTH—AND AFTER



VI. YOUTH—AND AFTER

GATHER YE ROSEBUDS

GATHER ye rosebuds while ye may;
Old time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he 's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be done,
The nearer he 's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst,
Times, will succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

ROBERT HERRICK.

PEGGY

My Peggy is a young thing,
Just enter'd in her teens,
Fair as the day, and sweet as May,
Fair as the day, and always gay;
My Peggy is a young thing
And I 'm not very auld,
Yet well I like to meet her at
The wawking of the fauld.

My Peggy speaks sae sweetly
Whene'er we meet alone,
I wish nae mair to lay my care,
I wish nae mair of a' that 's rare;
My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
To a' the lave I 'm cauld,
But she gars a' my spirits glow
At wawking of the fauld. . . .

My Peggy sings sae saftly
When on my pipe I play,
By a' the rest it is confest
By a' the rest, that she sings best;

My Peggy sings sae saftly,
And in her sangs are tauld
With innocence the wale of sense
At wawking of the fauld.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

BLIND MAN'S BUFF

WHEN silver snow decks Susan's clothes,
And jewel hangs at th' shepherd's nose,
The blushing bank is all my care,
With hearth so red, and walls so fair;
'Heap the sea-coal, come, heap it higher,
The oaken log lay on the fire.'
The well-wash'd stools, a circling row,
With lad and lass, how fair the show!
The merry can of nut-brown ale,
The laughing jest, the love-sick tale,
Till, tir'd of chat, the game begins.
The lasses prick the lads with pins;
Roger from Dolly twitch'd the stool,
She, falling, kiss'd the ground, poor fool!
She blush'd so red, with side-long glance
At hob-nail Dick, who griev'd the chance,
But now for Blind Man's Buff they call;

Of each encumbrance clear the hall—
Jenny her silken 'kerchief folds,
And blear-eyed Will the black lot holds.
Now laughing stops, with 'Silence! hush!'
And Peggy Pout gives Sam a push.
The Blind man's arms, extended wide,
Sam slips between:—'O woe betide
Thee, clumsy Will!'—but titt'ring Kate
Is penn'd up in the corner straight!
And now Will's eyes beheld the play;
He thought his face was t' other way.
'Now, Kitty, now! what chance hast thou,
Roger so near thee!—Trips, I vow!'
She catches him—then Roger ties
His own head up—but not his eyes;
For thro' the slender cloth he sees,
And runs at Sam, who slips with ease
His clumsy hold; and, dodging round,
Sukey is tumbled on the ground!—
'See what it is to play unfair!
Where cheating is, there 's mischief there.'
But Roger still pursues the chase—
'He sees! he sees!' cries, softly, Grace;
'O Roger, thou, unskilled in art,
Must, surer bound, go thro' thy part!'
Now Kitty, pert, repeats the rimes,
And Roger turns him round three times,

Then pauses ere he starts—but Dick
Was mischief bent upon a trick;
Down on his hands and knees he lay
Directly in the Blind man's way,
Then cries out 'Hem!' Hodge heard, and ran
With hood-wink'd chance—sure of his man;
But down he came.—Alas, how frail
Our best of hopes, how soon they fail!
With crimson drops he stains the ground;
Confusion startles all around.
Poor piteous Dick supports his head,
And fain would cure the hurt he made;
But Kitty hasted with a key;
And down his back they straight convey
The cold relief; the blood is stay'd,
And Hodge again holds up his head.
Such are the fortunes of the game,
And those who play should stop the same
By wholesome laws; such as all those
Who on the blinded man impose
Stand in his stead; as, long a-gone,
When men were first a nation grown,
Lawless they liv'd, till wantonness
And liberty began t' increase,
And one man lay in another's way;
Then laws were made to keep fair play.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

THE LITTLE DANCERS

A LONDON VISION

LONELY, save for a few faint stars, the sky
Dreams; and lonely, below, the little street
Into its gloom retires, secluded and shy.
Scarcely the dumb roar enters this soft retreat;
And all is dark, save where come flooding rays
From a tavern window: There to the brisk measure
Of an organ that down in an alley merrily plays,
Two children, all alone and no one by,
Holding their tatter'd frocks, through an airy maze
Of motion, lightly threaded with nimble feet,
Dance sedately: face to face they gaze,
Their eyes shining, grave with a perfect pleasure.

LAURENCE BINYON.

KINGS' SONS

Belarius. But, up to the mountains!
This is not hunter's language. He that strikes
The venison first shall be the lord o' the feast;
To him the other two shall minister;
And we will fear no poison which attends

In place of greater state. I 'll meet you in the valleys. [*Exeunt Guiderius and Arviragus.*
How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature!
These boys know little they are sons to the king;
Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive.
They think they are mine; and, though trained up thus meanly
I' the cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit
The roofs of palaces, and nature prompts them
In simple and low things to prince it much
Beyond the trick of others. This Polydore,
The heir of Cymbeline and Britain, who
The king his father called Guiderius—Jove!
When on my three-foot stool I sit and tell
The war-like feats I have done, his spirits fly out
Into my story: say, 'Thus mine enemy fell,
And thus I set my foot on 's neck'; even then
The princely blood flows in his cheek, he sweats,
Strains his young nerves, and puts himself in posture
That acts my words. The younger brother, Cadwal—
Once Arviragus—in as like a figure,
Strikes life into my speech and shows much more
His own conceiving. Hark! the game is rous'd.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (from *Cymbeline*).

HOLIDAYS

If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wish'd for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(from 1 *Henry IV*).

VITAÎ LAMPADA

There 's a breathless hush in the Close to-night—
Ten to make and the match to win—
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it 's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote—
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'

The sand of the desert is sodden red—
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;—
The Gatling 's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.

The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England 's far, and Honour a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'

This is the word that year by year,
While in her place the School is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind—
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'

HENRY NEWBOLT.

FORTY YEARS ON

FORTY years on, when afar and asunder
Parted are those who are singing to-day,
When you look back, and forgetfully wonder
What you were like in your work and your play:
Then, it may be, there will often come o'er you
Glimpses of notes like the catch of a song—
Visions of boyhood shall float them before you,
Echoes of dreamland shall bear them along.

Follow up! Follow up! Follow up! Follow up! Follow up!
Till the field ring again and again,
With the tramp of the twenty-two men,
Follow up! Follow up!

Routs and discomfitures, rushes and rallies,
Bases attempted, and rescued, and won,
Strife without anger, and art without malice—
How will it seem to you, forty years on?
Then, you will say, not a feverish minute
Strained the weak heart and the wavering knee,
Never the battle raged hottest, but in it
Neither the last nor the faintest were we!
Follow up! . . .

O the great days, in the distance enchanted,
Days of fresh air, in the rain and the sun,
How we rejoiced as we struggled and panted—
Hardly believable, forty years on!
How we discoursed of them, one with another,
Auguring triumph, or balancing fate,
Loved the ally with the heart of a brother,
Hated the foe with a playing at hate!
Follow up! . . .

Forty years on, growing older and older,
Shorter in wind, as in memory long,
Feeble of foot, and rheumatic of shoulder,
What will it help you that once you were strong?
God give us bases to guard or beleaguer,
Games to play out, whether earnest or fun;
Fights for the fearless, and goals for the eager,
Twenty, and thirty, and forty years on!
Follow up! . . .

E. E. BOWEN.

A MORNING BATHE

DROWSY, unkempt, of wilful hair,
Bare toes adrift on the creaking stair,
Still half in sleep, with dream-dipped eyes
Wide with the childlike mysteries
Of fading elf-lands, 'wildered hands
Weaving instinctive towel bands
O'er dress-lack slowly half-perceived;
Feet on the dew-grass dimly grieved
By changing tread of heat and cold;
The narrow path in fancy rolled
A mile of flinty points, the bank
Shivering with misty verdure, dank

Of river, and an ague breeze
Spurting chill plashes from the trees
On shrinking limbs that shyly bend
Where the green slimy steps descend,
Like some long terror of the night
Merged in weed-waters infinite;
A wakening sense of wind and chill;
The leap of habit, not of will;
A flash of near green depths; the feel
Of smooth cool shock from brow to heel;
A throb of quickening thought, a strange
Burst of cold light—and O the change!

Bright breaks the day! A golden haze
Stirs in the long dew-laden sprays
Of wild blush-rose and trailing thorn,
Lights laughing in the breath of morn.
Broad breaks the day! The brown banks seem
To race upon the dancing stream;
The rushes blink in quaint surprise,
Wave-startled with a thousand eyes,
And merry blossoms from the grass
Twinkle good morrow as we pass.
Swift down the stream! The silver streak
Curls whispering from the glowing cheek;
O'er curving arm a crystal shower
Crowns the smooth rush of conscious power.

Strong speeds the stroke! Too swift to heed
On wrist and knee the clinging weed;
Through the green tendrils as they part
The deep-seen water-shadows dart;
From willow tree a sapphire gleam
Flames into ruby o'er the stream,
Where Kingfisher, his errand sped,
Leaves murmurs in the lily-bed;
From yew and alder, ripple-clear,
Bright notes break quivering on the ear;
The wren to mock the morning fills
Its sunbeam path with broken trills;
The warbler tosses back one ray
In tumult to the laughing day.
Strong speeds the stroke! In light new born
We leap to catch the kiss of morn;
New hopes salute a summer sky,
New winds of thought shrill gladly by;
Gone is the night and the dusk of showers;
Beauty 's awake, and the day is ours!
Hail to the spirits of morning air!
Hail to the gods of the wet brown hair!
Light be the path and joy the race,
Life is afoot! We are in chase!

GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG
(from *Wind and Hill*).

ONE CROWDED HOUR

SOUND, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

MAJOR MORDAUNT.

HONOUR

BY heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon;
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks. . . .

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(from 1 *Henry IV*—Hotspur speaking).

HENRY THE FIFTH'S SPEECH

Westmoreland. O! that we now had here
But one ten thousand of those men in England
That do no work to-day.
Henry. What 's he that wishes so?
My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin:

If we are marked to die, we are enow
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.
No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England:
God's peace! I would not lose so great an honour
As one man more, methinks, would share from me,
For the best hope I have. O! do not wish one more:
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my
host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.
This day is called the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam'd,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,

And say: 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian':
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say: 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,
But he 'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words,
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England, now a-bed,
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(from *Henry V*).

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

Ye Mariners of England
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze—
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe!
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow—
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave!
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave.
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow—
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;

Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore
When the stormy winds do blow—
When the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean warriors!
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow—
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

SAILOR'S CONSOLATION

ONE night came on a hurricane,
The sea was mountains rolling,
When Barney Buntline turned his quid,
And said to Billy Bowling:
'A strong nor-wester 's blowing, Bill:
Hark! Don't ye hear it roar now?
Lord help 'em! How I pities all
Unhappy folks on shore now!

'Foolhardy chaps who live in towns,
What danger they are all in,
And now lie quaking in their beds,
For fear the roof should fall in;
Poor creatures! How they envies us,
And wishes, I 've a notion,
For our good luck, in such a storm
To be upon the ocean!

'And as for them who 're out all day
On business from their houses,
And late at night are coming home,
To cheer their babes and spouses;
While you and I, Bill, on the deck
Are comfortably lying,
My eyes! What tiles and chimney-pots
About their heads are flying!

'And very often have we heard
How men are kill'd and undone,
By overturns of carriages,
By thieves, and fires in London.
We know what risks all landsmen run,
From noblemen to tailors;
Then, Bill, let us thank Providence
That you and I are sailors!'

CHARLES DIBDIN.

'HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX'

I

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
'Good speed!' cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
'Speed!' echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

II

Not a word to each other: we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

III

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with: 'Yet there is time!'

IV

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

V

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;

And one eye's black intelligence—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which ay and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

VI

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris: 'Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault 's not in her,
We 'll remember at Aix'—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

VII

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And 'Gallop,' gasped Joris, 'for Aix is in sight!'

VIII

'How they 'll greet us!'—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

IX

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

X

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

ROBERT BROWNING.

THE WRECK

'TURN out, boys'—'What 's up with our super to-night?
The man 's mad—Two hours to daybreak I 'd swear—
Stark mad—why, there isn't a glimmer of light.'
'Take Bolingbroke, Alec, give Jack the young mare;
Look sharp. A large vessel lies jammed on the reef,
And many on board still, and some washed on shore.
Ride straight with the news—they may send some relief
From the township; and we—we can do little more.
You, Alec, you know the near cuts; you can cross
The "Sugarloaf" ford with a scramble, I think;
Don't spare the blood filly, nor yet the black horse;
Should the wind rise, God help them! the ship will soon sink.
Old Peter 's away down the paddock, to drive
The nags to the stockyard as fast as he can—
A life and death matter; so, lads, look alive,'
Half-dressed, in the dark to the stockyard we ran.

There was bridling with hurry, and saddling with haste,
Confusion and cursing for lack of a moon;

'Be quick with these buckles, we 've no time to waste';
'Mind the mare, she can use her hind legs to some tune.'
'Make sure of the crossing-place; strike the old track,
They 've fenced off the new one; look out for the holes
On the wombat hills.' 'Down with the slip rails; stand back.'
'And ride, boys, the pair of you, ride for your souls.'

In the low branches heavily laden with dew,
In the long grasses spoiling with deadwood that day,
Where the blackwood, the box, and the bastard oak grew,
Between the tall gum-trees we galloped away—
We crashed through a brush fence, we splashed through a swamp—
We steered for the north near the 'Eaglehawk's Nest'—
We bore to the left, just beyond the 'Red Camp,'
And round the black tea-tree belt wheeled to the west—

We crossed a low range sickly scented with musk
From wattle-tree blossom—we skirted a marsh—
Then the dawn faintly dappled with orange the dusk,
And pealed overhead the jay's laughter note harsh,

And shot the first sunstreak behind us, and soon
The dim dewy uplands were dreamy with light;
And full on our left flashed 'the reedy lagoon,'
And sharply the 'Sugarloaf' reared on our right.
A smothered curse broke through the bushman's brown beard,
He turned in his saddle, his brick-coloured cheek
Flushed feebly with sun-dawn, said: 'Just what I feared;
Last fortnight's late rainfall has flooded the creek.'

Black Bolingbroke snorted, and stood on the brink
One instant, then deep in the dark, sluggish swirl
Plunged headlong. I saw the horse suddenly sink,
Till round the man's armpits the wave seemed to curl.
We followed—one cold shock, and deeper we sank
Than they did, and twice tried the landing in vain;
The third struggle won it; straight up the steep bank
We staggered, then out on the skirts of the plain.

The stockrider, Alec, at starting had got
The lead, and had kept it throughout; 'twas his boast
That through thickest of scrub he could steer like a shot,

And the black horse was counted the best on the coast.
The mare had been awkward enough in the dark,
She was eager and headstrong, and barely half broke;
She had had me too close to a big stringybark,
And had made a near thing of a crooked she-oak;
And now on the open, lit up by the morn,
She flung the white foam-flakes from nostril to neck
And chased him—I hatless, with shirt-sleeves all torn
(For he may ride ragged who rides from a wreck)—
And faster and faster across the wide heath
We rode till we raced. Then I gave her her head,
And she—stretching out with the bit in her teeth—
She caught him, outpaced him, and passed him, and led.

We neared the new fence; we were wide of the track;
I looked right and left—she had never been tried
At a stiff leap. 'Twas little he cared on the black.
'You 're more than a mile from the gateway,' he cried.
I hung to her head, touched her flank with the spurs
(In the red streak of rail not the ghost of a gap);
She shortened her long stroke, she pricked her sharp ears,
She flung it behind her with hardly a rap—

I saw the post quiver where Bolingbroke struck,
And guessed that the pace we had come the last mile
Had blown him a bit (he could jump like a buck).
We galloped more steadily then for a while.

The heath was soon passed, in the dim distance lay
The mountain. The sun was just clearing the tips
Of the ranges to eastward. The mare—could she stay?
She was bred very nearly as clean as Eclipse;
She led, and as oft as he came to her side,
She took the bit free and untiring as yet;
Her neck was arched double, her nostrils were wide,
And the tips of her tapering ears nearly met—
'You 're lighter than I am,' said Alec at last;
'The horse is dead beat and the mare isn't blown.
She must be a good one—ride on and ride fast,
You know your way now.' So I rode on alone.

Still galloping forward we passed the two flocks
At M'Intyre's hut and M'Allister's hill—
She was galloping strong at the Warrigal Rocks—
On the Wallaby Range she was galloping still—
And over the wasteland and under the wood,
By down and by dale, and by fell and by flat,

She galloped, and here in the stirrups I stood
To ease her, and there in the saddle I sat
To steer her. We suddenly struck the red loam
Of the track near the troughs—then she reeled on the rise—
From her crest to her croup covered over with foam,
And blood-red her nostrils and bloodshot her eyes,
A dip in the dell where the wattle fire bloomed—
A bend round a bank that had shut out the view—
Large framed in the mild light the mountain had loomed,
With a tall purple peak bursting out from the blue.

I pulled her together, I pressed her, and she
Shot down the decline to the Company's yard,
And on by the paddocks, yet under my knee
I could feel her heart thumping the saddle-flaps hard.
Yet a mile and another, and now we were near
The goal, and the fields and the farms flitted past;
And 'twixt the two fences I turned with a cheer,
For a green grass-fed mare 'twas a far thing and fast;
And labourers roused by her galloping hoofs,
Saw bare-headed rider and foam-sheeted steed;
And shone the white walls and the slate-coloured roofs
Of the township, I steadied her then—I had need—

Where stood the old chapel (where stands the new
church—
Since chapels to churches have changed in that
town).
A short, sidelong stagger, a long forward lurch,
A slight choking sob, and the mare had gone down.

I slipped off the bridle, I slackened the girth,
I ran on and left her and told them my news;
I saw her soon afterwards. What was she worth?
How much for her hide? She had never worn
shoes.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON.

PHEIDIPPIDES

Χαίρετε, νικῶμεν

FIRST I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock!
Gods of my birthplace, daemons and heroes, honour
to all
Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-equal
in praise
—Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the aegis
and spear!

Also, ye of the bow and the buskin, praised be your peer, henceforth and forever—O latest to whom I upraise
Hand and heart and voice! For Athens, leave pasture and flock!
Present to help, potent to save, Pan—patron I call!

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see, I return!
See, 'tis myself here standing alive, no spectre that speaks,
Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me, Athens and you,
'Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid!
Persia has come, we are here, where is She?' Your command I obeyed,
Ran and raced: like stubble, some field which a fire runs through,
Was the space between city and city: two days, two nights did I burn
Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke: breath served but for 'Persia has come!
Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute, water and earth;

Razed to the ground is Eretria—but Athens, shall Athens sink,
Drop into dust and die—the flower of Hellas utterly die,
Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid, the stander-by?
Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch o'er destruction's brink?
How—when? No care for my limbs!—there 's lightning in all and some—
Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it birth!'

O my Athens—Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond?
Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,
Malice—each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified hate!
Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses. I stood
Quivering—the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an inch from dry wood:
'Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they debate?
Thunder, thou Zeus! Athene, are Spartans a quarry beyond
Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang them "Ye must"!'

No bolt launched from Olumpos! Lo, their answer at last!
'Has Persia come—does Athens ask aid—may Sparta befriend?
Nowise precipitate judgment—too weighty the issue at stake!
Count we no time lost time which lags through respect to the Gods!
Ponder that precept of old: "No warfare, whatever the odds
In your favour, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take
Full-circle her state in the sky!" Already she rounds to it fast:
Athens must wait, patient as we—who judgment suspend.'

Athens—except for that sparkle—thy name, I had mouldered to ash!
That sent a blaze through my blood; off, off and away was I back,
Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false and the vile!
Yet 'O Gods of my land!' I cried, as each hillock and plain,
Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them again,

'Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honours we paid you erewhile?
Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome libation! Too rash
Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!

'Oak and olive and bay—I bid you cease to enwreathe
Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian's foot,
You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn a slave!
Rather I hail thee, Parnes—trust to thy wild waste tract!
Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What matter if slacked
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave
No deity deigns to drape with verdure? at least I can breathe,
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute!'

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge;
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a bar
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.

Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure across:
'Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night in the fosse?
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise!
No bridge
Better!'—when—ha! what was it I came on, of wonders that are?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he—majestical Pan!
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his hoof:
All the great God was good in the eyes grave-kindly —the curl
Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's awe,
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I saw.
'Halt, Pheidippides!'—halt I did, my brain of a whirl:
'Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?' he gracious began:
'How is it—Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof?

'Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no feast!
Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more helpful of old?

Ay, and still, and for ever her friend! Test Pan, trust me!
Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have faith
In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens: "The Goat-God saith:
When Persia—so much as strews not the soil—is cast in the sea,
Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your most and least,
Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the free and the bold!"

'Say Pan saith: "Let this, foreshowing the place, be the pledge!"'
(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear
—Fennel—I grasped it a-tremble with dew—whatever it bode)
'While, as for thee' . . . But enough! He was gone. If I ran hitherto—
Be sure that, the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but flew.
Parnes to Athens—earth no more, the air was my road:
Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor's edge!
Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon rare!

. . . . . .

Then spoke Miltiades. 'And thee, best runner of Greece,
Whose limbs did duty indeed—what gift is promised thyself?
Tell it us straightway—Athens the mother demands of her son!'
Rosily blushed the youth: he paused: but, lifting at length
His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength
Into the utterance—'Pan spoke thus: "For what thou hast done
Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee release
From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf!"

'I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind!
Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may grow—
Pound—Pan helping us—Persia to dust, and, under the deep,
Whelm her away for ever; and then—no Athens to save—
Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave—

Hie to my house and home: and, when my children shall creep
Close to my knees—recount how the God was awful yet kind,
Promised their sire reward to the full—rewarding him—so!'

. . . . .

Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day:
So, when Persia was dust, all cried: 'To Akropolis!
Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!
"Athens is saved, thank Pan," go shout!' He flung down his shield,
Ran like fire once more: and the space 'twixt the Fennel-field
And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through,
Till in he broke: 'Rejoice, we conquer!' Like wine through clay,
Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died—the bliss!

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute
Is still 'Rejoice!'—his word which brought rejoicing indeed.

So is Pheidippides happy for ever—the noble strong man
Who could race like a God, bear the face of a God, whom a God loved so well;
He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell
Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,
So to end gloriously—once to shout, thereafter be mute:
'Athens is saved!'—Pheidippides dies in the shout for his meed.

ROBERT BROWNING.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

I

O YOUNG Mariner,
You from the haven
Under the sea-cliff,
You that are watching
The grey Magician
With eyes of wonder,
I am Merlin,

And *I* am dying,
I am Merlin
Who follow The Gleam.

II

Mighty the Wizard
Who found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learn'd me Magic!
Great the Master,
And sweet the Magic,
When over the valley,
In early summers,
Over the mountain,
On human faces,
And all around me,
Moving to melody,
Floated The Gleam.

III

Once at the croak of a Raven who crost it,
A barbarous people,
Blind to the magic,
And deaf to the melody,
Snarl'd at and cursed me.
A demon vext me,

The light retreated,
The landskip darken'd,
The melody deaden'd,
The Master whisper'd
'Follow The Gleam.'

IV

Then to the melody,
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at
Elf of the woodland,
Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant,
And dancing of Fairies
In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,
And rolling of dragons
By warble of water,
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,
Flitted The Gleam.

V

Down from the mountain
And over the level,
And streaming and shining on

Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,
Horses and oxen,
Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labour,
Slided The Gleam.—

VI

Then, with a melody
Stronger and statelier,
Led me at length
To the city and palace
Of Arthur the king;
Touch'd at the golden
Cross of the churches,
Flash'd on the Tournament,
Flicker'd and bicker'd
From helmet to helmet,
And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested The Gleam.

VII

Clouds and darkness
Closed upon Camelot;
Arthur had vanish'd
I knew not whither,
The king who loved me,
And cannot die;
For out of the darkness
Silent and slowly
The Gleam, that had waned to a wintry glimmer
On icy fallow
And faded forest,
Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow,
And slowly brightening
Out of the glimmer,
And slowly moving again to a melody
Yearningly tender,
Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with The Gleam.

VIII

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,

Sang thro' the world;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom;
And to the land's
Last limit I came—
And can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers The Gleam.

IX

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!

O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow The Gleam.

LORD TENNYSON.

RABBI BEN EZRA

I

GROW old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith 'A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all nor be afraid!'

II

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed 'Which rose make ours,

Which lily leave and then as best recall?'
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned 'Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!'

III

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

IV

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

V

Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide

And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

VI

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

VII

For thence—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

VIII

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,

Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

IX

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once 'How good to live and learn'?

X

Not once beat 'Praise be Thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now love perfect too:
Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete—I trust what Thou shalt do!'

XI

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh

Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest;
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute—gain most, as we did best!

XII

Let us not always say
'Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry 'All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!'

XIII

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a god though in the germ.

XIV

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armour to indue.

XV

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

XVI

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the grey:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—'Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day.'

XVII

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
'This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past.'

XVIII

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved

To act to-morrow what he learns to day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

XIX

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedest age: wait death nor be afraid!

XX

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

XXI

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,

Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

XXII

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

XXIII

Not on the vulgar mass
Called 'work,' must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

XXIV

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,

So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

XXV

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

XXVI

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
'Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!'

XXVII

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;

Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

XXVIII

He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

XXIX

What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Scull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

XXX

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,

The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips a-glow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou
with earth's wheel?

XXXI

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colours rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst:

XXXII

So, take and use Thy work:
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in Thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the
same!

ROBERT BROWNING.

EPILOGUE TO ASOLANDO

AT the midnight in the silence of the sleep time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
—Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
—Being—who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's worktime,
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
'Strive and thrive!' cry 'Speed—fight on, fare ever
There as here!'

ROBERT BROWNING.

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