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**The Poets and the Poetry
of the Nineteenth Century**



Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The Poets and the Poetry of the
Nineteenth Century.

Joanna Baillie
to
Jean Ingelow

Edited by
ALFRED H. MILES



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IN the prefatory note of the first edition of this work (1891) the Editor invited criticism with a view to the improvement of future editions. Several critics responded to this appeal, and their valuable suggestions have been considered in preparing this re-issue. In some cases the text has been revised and the selection varied; in others, additions have been made to complete the representation. The biographical and bibliographical matter has been brought up to date.—A.H.M.

PREFATORY

THE work of the Women Poets of the Nineteenth Century is a characteristic feature of its literature.^A This fact, and the interest attached to it, have suggested the treatment of the women poets in separate volumes, two in number, the first covering the period from Joanna Baillie to Jean Ingelow, and the second that from Christina Rossetti to the close of the century.

The Editor begs gratefully to acknowledge his numerous obligations to poets and publishers in this connection; to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. for the use of the latest text of the poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning; to the late Mrs. Kemble and her publishers for a selection from her poems; to Messrs. Warne & Co. for the use of several poems by Eliza Cook; to Charles L. Lewis, Esq., for permission to select from the poems of the late George Eliot, published by Messrs. Blackwood & Sons; to Messrs. Bell & Sons for the use of the selections from the poems of the late Adelaide Procter; to G. L. Craik, Esq., for a similar favour concerning the poems of the author of "John Halifax, Gentleman," and to the late Jean Ingelow and her publishers, Messrs. Longmans & Co., for selections from "Lyrical and other Poems."

A. H. M.

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Joanna Baillie
to
Jean Ingelow.

Joanna Baillie.

1762—1851.

JOANNA BAILLIE—"the immortal Joanna," Scott called her—was born in the manse of Bothwell, in Lanarkshire, on September 11th, 1762, and was sprung from an old Scottish family. She was educated in Glasgow, and in her girlhood revealed a remarkable literary faculty. Her father died in 1778, and in 1784 her mother took her to London. Her "Fugitive Verses" appeared in 1790, and in 1798 the first series of her "Plays on the Passions" was published anonymously. Samuel Rogers wrote a review of the latter book, in which he spoke of it as undoubtedly the work of a man; and for a time the authorship was ascribed to Sir Walter Scott. When the true writer's name was revealed, Sir Walter formed an acquaintance with Miss Baillie, an acquaintance which grew into a lasting friendship. John Kemble thought so highly of one of the plays, namely, "De Montfort," that he produced it at Drury Lane. The caste included himself and his sister, Mrs. Siddons; nevertheless, the piece proved a failure. On the death of her mother in 1806, Miss Baillie took a house at Hampstead, where she thenceforth lived until the day of her death. In 1804 she published "Miscellaneous Plays," one of which, "Constantine Palaeologus," had a fairly good run at various theatres. Miss Baillie was

present at the successful production of this piece in Edinburgh in 1820. In 1810, her drama, "The Family Legend," met with a favourable reception in Edinburgh. A third series of "Plays on the Passions," was brought out in 1812, and her "Metrical Legends," a collection of poems dealing with Scottish scenes and characters, appeared in 1821. "The Drama of the Martyr," appeared in 1826, and was followed by "Witchcraft," a tragedy in prose, a play suggested by a scene in "The Bride of Lammermoor." Three volumes of "Miscellaneous Plays" were published in 1836. Miss Baillie continued to write until she was nearly eighty. She died on February 23rd, 1851, at the age of eighty-eight.

Joanna Baillie was as simple and unaffected as she was gifted. Her work—at least her dramatic work—was no doubt overrated in her own day. Scott in particular spoke with characteristic, generous exaggeration of her plays. "The 'Plays on the Passions,'" he said, "have put me entirely out of conceit with my Germanised brat, *The Fall of the House of Aspen*, and should I ever again attempt dramatic composition, I would endeavour after the genuine old English model." He used even stronger terms of eulogy in speaking of her tragedy "Fear." The language of the play, he declared, was distinguished by a rich variety of fancy which was matched by Shakespeare alone. Again he asserted that she beat "male authors out of the pit in describing the higher passions that are more proper to their sex than hers." These, of course, are words born of unconscious prejudice; still, the plays with all their defects in no way merit the neglect which

has befallen them. They have been described as the best ever written by a woman—and this praise (which is far from inordinate) they probably deserve. They show considerable invention ; the blank verse is not without dignity, and the heroines are gracefully drawn. It is not, however, by her dramas that Joanna Baillie will live. It is by her lyrics. Where is the woman-poet of our days who could write such a rousing, hearty lyric as "The Chough and Crow to roost are gone," the song of the outlaw from "Orra," Act III, Scene 1.

"The chough and crow to roost are gone,
The owl sits on the tree,
The hush'd wind wails with feeble moan,
Like infant charity.
The wild-fire dances on the fen,
The red star sheds its ray,
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men !
It is our op'ning day.

Both child and nurse are fast asleep,
And clos'd is every flower,
And winking tapers faintly peep
High from my lady's bower ;
Bewilder'd hinds with shorten'd ken
Shrink on their murky way,
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men !
It is our op'ning day.

Nor board nor garner own we now,
Nor roof nor latched door,
Nor kind mate, bound by holy vow
To bless a good man's store ;
Noon lulls us in a gloomy den,
And night is grown our day,
Uprouse ye, then, my merry men !
And use it as ye may."

Of heartiness, outside of the Elizabethans, and Burns

and Scott, there is unhappily but little in the strains of our lyrists. Yet heartiness is one of the gifts most essential to a song-writer. Joanna Baillie had the gift. Of all English women-poets, she speaks in accents least easily distinguishable from a man's. The songs "Woo'd and Married an' a'," and "Saw ye Johnny comin'" (the best of them all), and "Fy let us a' to the Wedding," were, in her own phrase, "Auld Songs new Buskit." But she made them her own—even as Burns made so many an old ditty his own—by skilful verbal changes, by refining their tone without lessening their spontaneity and pith. Her fame has suffered a sad eclipse since Sir Walter deemed her "the immortal Joanna," and paid high tribute to her in the introduction to the third canto of "Marmion." But while her dramas are never to be revived and seldom, very seldom to be read, her vigorous, bracing, hearty lyrical work endures, and will endure.

WALTER WHYTE.

SONGS.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

1.—SAW YE JOHNNY COMIN'?

"SAW ye Johnny comin'?" quo' she
"Saw ye Johnny comin'?"

Wi' his blue bonnet on his head

And his doggie runnin'?

Yestreen about the gloamin' time

I chanced to see him comin',

Whistling merrily the tune

That I am a' day hummin'," quo' she,

"I am a' day hummin'."

"Fee him, faither, fee him," quo' she,

"Fee him, faither, fee him ;

A' the wark about the house

Gaes wi' me when I see him :

A' the wark about the house,

I gang sae lightly through it ;

And though ye pay some merks o' gear,

Hoot! ye winna rue it," quo' she,

"No ; ye winna rue it."

"What wad I do wi' him, hizzy ?

What wad I do wi' him ?

He's ne'er a sark upon his back,

And I hae nane to gie him."

"I hae twa sarks into my kist,

And ane o' them I'll gie him ;

And for a merk o' mair fee,

O, dinna stand wi' him," quo' she ;

"Dinna stand wi' him."

' Weel do I lo'e him," quo' she,
 " Weel do I lo'e him,
 The bravest lads about the place
 Are a' but haverels to him.
 O fee him, faither; lang I trow
 We've dull and dowie been;
 He'll haud the plough, thrash i' the barn,
 And crack wi' me at e'en," quo' she,
 "Crack wi' me at e'en."

II.—THE MAID OF LLANWELLYN.

I'VE no sheep on the mountain, nor boat on the lake,
 Nor coin in my coffer to keep me awake,
 Nor corn in my garner, nor fruit on my tree,
 Yet the Maid of Llanwellyn smiles sweetly on me.

Softly tapping at eve to her window I came,
 And loud bay'd the watch-dog, loud scolded the dame;
 For shame, silly Lightfoot! what is it to thee,
 Though the Maid of Llanwellyn smiles sweetly on me?

The farmer rides proudly to market or fair,
 The clerk at the alehouse still claims the great chair,
 But, of all our proud fellows, the proudest I'll be,
 While the Maid of Llanwellyn smiles sweetly on me.

For blythe as the urchin at holiday play,
 And meek as a matron in mantle of gray,
 And trim as a lady of gentle degree,
 Is the Maid of Llanwellyn, who smiles upon me.

III.—POVERTY PARTS GUDE COMPANIE.

WHEN my o'erlay was white as the foam o' the lin,
And siller was chinkin my pouches within,
When my lambkins were bleatin on meadow and brae,
As I went to my love in new cleeding sae gay,
Kind was she, and my friends were free,
But poverty parts good company.

How swift pass'd the minutes and hours of delight,
The piper play'd cheerly, the crusie burn'd bright,
And link'd in my hand was the maiden sae dear,
As she footed the floor in her holyday gear!
Woe is me ; and can it then be,
That poverty parts sic company ?

We met at the fair, and we met at the kirk,
We met i' the sunshine, we met i' the mirk ;
And the sound o' her voice, and the blinks o' her een,
The cheerin and life of my bosom hae been.
Leaves fiae the tree, at Martinmass flee,
And poverty parts sweet company.

At bridal and in fair, I braced me wi' pride,
The broose I hae won, and a kiss o' the bride ;
And loud was the laughter good fellows among,
As I utter'd my banter or chorus'd my song ;
Dowie and dree are jestin and glee,
When poverty spoils good company.

Wherever I gaed kindly lasses look'd sweet,
And mithers and aunties were unco discreet ;
While kebbuck and bicker were set on the board ;
But now they pass by me, and never a word !
Sae let it be, for the worldly and slee
Wi' poverty keep nae company.

But the hope of my love is a cure for its smart,
And the spae-wife has tauld me to keep up my heart,
For, wi' my last saxpence, her loof I hae crost,
And the bliss that is fated can never be lost.

Though cruelly we may ilka day see
How poverty parts dear company.

IV.—FY, LET US A' TO THE WEDDING.

FY, let us a' to the wedding,
For they will be liting there ;
For Jock's to be married to Maggy,
The lass wi' the gowden hair.

And there will be jibing and jeering,
And glancing of bonny dark een,
Loud laughing and smooth-gabbit speering
O' questions baith pawky and keen.

And there will be Bessy the beauty,
Wha raises her cockup sae hie,
And giggles at preachings and duty,
Guid grant that she gang na' ajee !

And there will be auld Geordie Taunner,
Wha coft a young wife wi' his gowd ;
She'll flaunt wi' a silk gown upon her,
But wow ! he looks dowie and cow'd.

And brown Tibby Foulter the Heiress
Will perk at the tap o' the ha',
Encircled wi' suitors, wha's care is
To catch up her gloves when they fa',—

Repeat a' her jokes as they're cleckit,
And haver and glower in her face,
When tocherless mays are negleckit,—
A crying and scandalous case.

And Mysie, wha's claverin' aunty
Wad match her wi' Laurie the Laird,
And learns the young fule to be vaunty,
But neither to spin nor to caird.

And Andrew, wha's Granny is yearning
To see him a clerical blade,
Was sent to the college for learning,
And cam' back a coof as he gaed.

And there will be auld Widow Martin,
That ca's hersel thritty and twa!
And thraw-gabbit Madge wha for certain
Was jilted by Hab o' the Shaw.

And Elspy the sewster sae genty,
A pattern of havens and sense,
Will straik on her mittens sae dainty,
And crack wi' Mess John i' the spence.

And Angus, the seer o' ferlies,
That sits on the stane at his door,
And tells about bogles, and mair lies
Than tongue ever utter'd before.

And there will be Bauldy the boaster,
Sae ready wi' hands and wi' tongue;
Proud Paty and silly Sam Foster,
Wha quarrel wi' auld and wi' young:

And Hugh the town-writer, I'm thinking,
That trades in his lawerly skill,
Will egg on the fighting and drinking
To bring after-grist to his mill:

And Maggy—na, na! we'll be civil,
And let the wee bridie a-be;
A vilipend tongue is the devil,
And ne'er was encouraged by me.

Then fy, let us a' to the wedding,
For they will be lirting there,
Frae mony a far-distant ha'ding,
The fun and the feasting to share.

For they will get sheep's-head, and haggis,
And browst o' the barley-mow ;
E'en he that comes latest, and lag is,
May feast upon dainties enow :

Veal florentines in the o'en baken,
Weel plenish'd wi' raisins and fat
Beef, mutton, and chuckies, a' taken
Het reekin frae spit and frae pat :

And glasses (I trow 'tis nae said ill),
To drink the young couple good luck,
Weel fill'd wi' a braw beechen ladle
Frae punch-bowl as big as Dumbuck.

And then will come dancing and daffing,
And reclin and crossin o' hans,
Till even auld Lucky is laughing,
As back by the aumry she stans.

Sic bobbing and flinging and whirling,
While fiddlers are making their din ;
And pipers are droning and skirling,
As loud as the roar o' the lin.

Then fy, let us a' to the wedding,
For they will be lirting there,
For Jock's to be married to Maggy,
The lass wi' the gowden hair.

V.—THE GOWAN GLITTERS ON THE SWARD.

THE gowan glitters on the sward,
The lav'rock's in the sky,
And collie on my plaid keeps ward,
And time is passing by.

Oh no ! sad and slow
And lengthen'd on the ground,
The shadow of our trysting bush,
It wears so slowly round !

My sheep-bell tinkles frae the west,
My lambs are bleating near,
But still the sound that I lo'e best,
Alack ! I canna' hear.

Oh no ! sad and slow,
The shadow lingers still,
And like a lanely ghaist I stand
And croon upon the hill.

I hear below the water roar,
The mill wi' clackling din,
And Lucky scolding frae her door,
To ca' the bairnies in.

Oh no ! sad and slow,
These are na' sounds for me,
The shadow of our trysting bush,
It creeps sae drearily !

I coft yestreen, frae Chapman Tam,
A snood of bonny blue,
And promised when our trysting cam',
To tie it round her brow.

Oh no ! sad and slow,
The mark it winna' pass ;
The shadow of that weary thorn,
Is tether'd on the grass.

O now I see her on the way,
She's past the witch's knowe,
She's climbing up the Browny's brae,
My heart is in a lowe !
Oh no ! 'tis no' so,
'Tis glam'rie I have seen ;
The shadow of that hawthorn bush,
Will move na' mair till e'en.
My book o' grace I'll try to read,
Though conn'd wi' little skill,
When collie barks I'll raise my head,
And find her on the hill ;
Oh no ! sad and slow,
The time will ne'er be gane,
The shadow of the trysting bush,
Is fix'd like ony stane.

VI.—IT WAS ON A MORN.

IT was on a morn, when we were thrang,
The kin it croon'd, the cheese was making,
And bannocks on the girdle baking,
When ane at the door chapp't loud and lang.

Yet the auld gudewife and her mays sae tight,
Of a' this bauld din took sma' notice I ween ;

For a chap at the door in braid day-light,
Is no like a chap that's heard at e'en.

But the docksy auld laird of the Warlock glen,
Wha waited without, half blate, half cheery,
And lang'd for a sight o' his winsome deary,
Raised up the latch, and cam' crouselly ben.

His coat it was new, and his o'erlay was white,
His mittens and hose were cozie and bien ;

But a wooer that comes in braid day-light,
Is no like a wooer that comes at e'en.

He greeted the carline and lasses sae braw,
And his bare lyart pow, sae smoothly he strakit,
And he looket about, like a body half glaikit,
On bonny sweet Nanny, the youngest of a'.

"Ha, laird!" quo' the carline, "and look ye that way?
Fy, let na' sic fancies bewilder you clean:

An elderlin man, in the noon o' the day,
Should be wiser than youngsters that come at e'en."

"Na, na," quo' the pawky auld wife, "I trow,
You'll no' fash your head wi' a youthfu' gilly,
As wild and as skeigh as a murland filly;
Black Madge is far better and fitter for you."

He hem'd and he haw'd, and he drew in his mouth,
And he squeezed the blue bannet his twa hands between,
For a wooer that comes when the sun's i' the south,
Is mair landward than wooers that come at e'en.

"Black Madge is sae carefu"—"What's that to me?"

"She's sober and cydent, has sense in her noddle:
She's douce and respeckit." "I care na' a bodle:
Love winna be guided, and fancy's free."

Madge toss'd back her head wi' a saucy slight,
And Nanny, loud laughing, ran out to the green;
For a wooer that comes when the sun shines bright
Is no like a wooer that comes at e'en.

Then away flung the laird, and loud mutter'd he,
"A' the daughters of Eve, between Orkney and Tweed, O!
Black or fair, young or auld, dame or damsel or widow,
May gang in their pride to the de'il for me!"

But the auld gudewife and her mays sae tight
Cared little for a' his stour banning, I ween;
For a wooer that comes in braid day-light,
Is no like a wooer that comes at e'en.

VII.—WOO'D AND MARRIED AND A'.

THE bride she is winsome and bonny,
Her hair it is snooded sae sleek,
And faithfu' and kind is her Johnny,
Yet fast fa' the tears on her cheek.
New pearlins are cause of her sorrow,
New pearlins and plenishing too,
The bride that has a' to borrow,
Has e'en right mickle ado,
Woo'd and married and a'!
Woo'd and married and a'!
Is na' she very weel aff
To be woo'd and married at a'?

Her mither then hastily spak,
"The lassie is glaikit wi' pride;
In my pouch I had never a plack
On the day when I was a bride.
E'en tak' to your wheel, and be clever,
And draw out your thread in the sun;
The gear that is gifted, it never
Will last like the gear that is won.
Woo'd and married and a'!
Wi' havins and tocher sae sma'!
I think ye are very weel aff,
To be woo'd and married at a'!"

"Toot, toot!" quo' her grey-headed faither,
"She's less o' a bride than a bairn,
She's ta'en like a cout frae the heather,
Wi' sense and discretion to learn.

Half husband, I trow, and half daddy,
As humour inconstantly leans,
The chiel maun be patient and steady,
That yokes wi' a mate in her teens.
A kerchief sae douce and sae neat,
O'er her locks that the winds used to blaw!
I'm baith like to laugh and to greet,
When I think o' her married at a'!"

Then out spak' the wily bridegroom,
Weel waled were his wordies, I ween,
"I'm rich, though my coffer be toom,
Wi' the blinks o' your bonny blue een.
I'm prouder o' thee by my side,
Though thy ruffles or ribbons be few,
Than if Kate o' the Croft were my bride,
Wi' pursles and pearlins enow.
Dear and dearest of ony!
Ye're woo'd and buikit and a'!
And do ye think scorn o' your Johnny,
And grieve to be married at a'?"

She turn'd, and she blush'd, and she smiled,
And she looket sae bashfully down;
The pride o' her heart was beguiled,
And she played wi' the sleeves o' her gown;
She twirled the tag o' her lace,
And she nipit her boddice sae blue,
Syne blinket sae sweet in his face,
And aff like a maukin she flew.
Woo'd and married and a'!
Wi' Johnny to roose her and a'!
She thinks hersel very weel aff,
To be woo'd and married at a'!

VIII.—GOOD NIGHT, GOOD NIGHT!

FROM "THE PHANTOM."

Act I., Scene 3.

THE sun is down, and time gone by,
The stars are twinkling in the sky,
Nor torch nor taper longer may
Eke out a blithe but stinted day;
The hours have pass'd with stealthy flight,
We needs must part: good night, good night!

The bride unto her bower is sent,
And ribald song and jesting spent;
The lover's whisper'd words and few
Have bid the bashful maid adieu;
The dancing floor is silent quite,
No foot bounds there: good night, good night!

The lady in her curtain'd bed,
The herdsman in his wattled shed,
The clansmen in the heather'd hall,
Sweet sleep be with you, one and all!
We part in hopes of days as bright
As this gone by: good night, good night!

Sweet sleep be with us, one and all!
And if upon its stillness fall
The visions of a busy brain,
We'll have our pleasure o'er again,
To warm the heart, to charm the sight,
Gay dreams to all! good night, good night!

Carolina, Lady Nairne.

1766—1845

THE gift of writing songs—songs which achieve a high degree of poetical merit, and, at the same time, attain permanent popularity in virtue of their deep human interest—is much rarer than is generally supposed. Even great poets have not always possessed the combination of qualities required before a really great song, exhibiting both the characteristics just named, can be produced. Probably before a poet, however great, can produce a song so universally popular as “The Land o’ the Leal,” he must possess, in addition to his other poetic endowment, that sympathy with ordinary human life, which, in some natures, amounts almost to a passion. The mere knowledge of artistic *technique*, and the mere atmosphere of the study, are not in themselves favourable to the growth of such sympathy. Perhaps this is largely the reason why children of nature like Burns and Carolina Nairne have possessed the gift of song-writing in so eminent a degree.

Scotland has been remarkable for producing a succession of songstresses whose poems have possessed that rare lyrical charm which appeals to the hearts of high and low alike. Most of them were ladies of position, and this renders their success in reaching the popular sentiment the more remarkable. It must, however, be remembered, that in Scotland

there has always been a reminiscence of the feudal relation between the upper classes and the peasantry, which has long since died out south of the Border. Besides Lady Nairne, writers like Lady Grisell Baillie, Jean Adam, Allison Cockburn, Jean Elliot, Lady Anne Barnard, Elizabeth Hamilton, Jean Glover, and Joanna Baillie form a roll of poetesses of which any country might be proud.

Much of Lady Nairne's poetical activity consisted in writing words to old Scotch airs, or else of changing and improving the words of old Scottish songs. Her verse was sometimes rugged and inartistic in form, but, on many occasions, this arose from the method of composition forced upon a writer who adapts her words to some popular air. Not unfrequently Lady Nairne used assonances for rhymes (as "ran" and "strang," in "The Rowan Tree"). Assonances in place of rhymes are common, however, in the old North Country ballads, and the influence of these ballads upon Scottish poets must always be taken into account when dealing with their work. Still it can hardly be questioned that Lady Nairne's ideas of poetry as an art were primitive. Her attempts to improve the words of old Scottish songs, which, from one reason or another, she thought defective, were generally successful. But occasionally she tried to give an ethical bias to a song which was quite unfitted to bear it. At one time she had thoughts of giving editorial assistance in the preparation of a "purified edition of Burns's songs." Burns's "Duncan Gray" had, in her opinion, a "Bacchanalian tendency," and she wrote a version of her own—a version which, though immeasurably inferior to Burns's inimit-

able song, was, nevertheless, full of humorous suggestion.

Even when she did not aspire to amend the ethics of an old song Lady Nairne did not always improve on the originals. This will be seen by comparing her version of "The Lass o' Gowrie" (p. 26) with the exquisite song by a writer unknown, which was itself an improvement on the original "Kate o' Gowrie" by William Reid, of Glasgow. Lady Nairne's song follows the old "Lass o' Gowrie" down to the end of the first two stanzas, and then, leaving the old version, takes a very much more feeble and prosaic course. In fact, her completion of "The Lass o' Gowrie" would be a somewhat serious impeachment of her art, did we not recollect how extremely difficult was the task she undertook. The idiomatic *verve* of an old song wins for it its popular vogue, and to attempt to change this elasticity is always risky. In such attempts Burns himself did not always achieve entire success.

Lady Nairne was a true poet. Her "Laird o' Cockpen" (p. 25) is full of a humour that is quite peculiar to herself; while her Jacobite songs, "Wha'll be King but Charlie" (p. 29), and "Charlie is my Darling" (p. 30), are alive with warlike spirit as sincere and earnest as though they had been written in the heat of the struggle, during the pauses of the very battles. In these poems she evidently feels every word she writes, and this quality of sincerity alone, even apart from their other conspicuous merits, causes them to reach a far higher standard of excellence than all the other Jacobite verse which was written in her time. "Caller Herrin'" (p. 24) written to a tune representing the chime of the bells

of the Tron Kirk at Edinburgh, will always be worthy of study as a fine example of words arranged to musical sounds. Her masterpiece is "The Land o' the Leal" (p. 23). This faultless poem is worthy of the pathetic situation it renders so irresistibly. We seem to hear the very accents of the dying woman as she speaks to the fond husband who was the father of her dead child. Yet "The Land o' the Leal," flawless as it is, seems as spontaneous as her more crude work. Indeed it may be said of this kind of lyric no less than of the Jacobite ballads, that Lady Nairne never wrote a line that she did not feel; and this fact gives to her poems a strength which nothing else could give.

Carolina Oliphant was born at Gask, Perthshire, on July the 16th, 1766. Her Jacobitism was inherited. On her father's side she sprang from the Oliphants (originally Ohlfards) of Gask, and on her mother's from the Robertsons of Strowan. Both families were Jacobites of the purest and most uncompromising order. And it was during the time that the Oliphants and the Robertsons were living in compulsory exile at the *soi-disant* Court of St. Germain that her father and mother married. Named after "the king over the water," there was no feature of Carolina's surroundings that was not Jacobite. And when it is remembered that she was fully eighteen years of age before her maternal grandfather and grandmother ceased to be outlaws for the "cause," and were permitted to return to Scotland, it is easy to understand her intense Jacobitism, and to see why her Jacobite songs are no mere literary exercises.

At the age of eight she lost her mother, but her

training was carefully attended to, and she became highly educated according to the measure of those days. When she was about twenty-six, her brother Lawrence, who had succeeded to the family property, gave a dinner to his tenantry. He sang to them on the occasion a new version of "The Ploughman," written by his sister. It was received with favour, and, though the authorship was not divulged, copies were multiplied, and the song became popular. Henceforward Carolina wrote songs, though preserving the strictest secrecy respecting their authorship. Probably she felt that the production of literature was hardly a fitting occupation for one who had the blue blood. Carolina was beautiful, and might have made an advantageous marriage. Influenced, however, by her Jacobite predilections, she consented to marry her cousin, Captain Nairne. As staunch a Jacobite as herself, he was half a score years her senior, and was entirely dependent on his soldier's pay. Hence the marriage had to be postponed, and did not take place until June 1806. After her marriage she resided near Edinburgh, but did not mix much in the literary society of that city: even with Sir Walter Scott, with whom she had much in common, she was never intimate. Yet she was noted for "graceful manners, and elegant accomplishments." She continued her song-writing under the pseudonym of "Mrs. Bogan, of Bogan," and not only wrote out her poems in a feigned hand, but actually, on meeting her publisher, Purdie, got herself up as a middle-class country gentlewoman of advanced years, in order to mystify him the more thoroughly. It is difficult for us in these days of feminine ambition to understand an idiosyncrasy

like this. Carolina Nairne's freedom from aspirations of a literary kind, owing to its contrast to modern ideas, lends an added interest to her name, though, of course, such shrinking from publicity was a characteristic of other Scottish poetesses, and particularly of Lady Anne Barnard, who did not divulge her authorship of "Auld Robin Gray" for fifty years.

When George IV., after his famous visit to Scotland, agreed to reverse the attainders of several Jacobite families, Major Nairne was reinstated in the Baron's rank which his ancestors had lost. The estate of Nairne, in Perthshire, however, was gone for ever, but no doubt Carolina prized the barren honour almost as much without the lands as with them. The loss of her husband in 1830 was a heavy blow to her, and this was followed by the long illness, and then the death in 1837 of her only son, whom she idolised. From this time she lived much in France, and devoted most of her energies to works of charity. Deeply and unostentatiously religious, her latter years were spent in the strictest retirement. Though writing but little verse, she did not lose her poetic faculty, for the beautiful song "Would you be Young Again" (p. 37) was written in her seventy-sixth year. She died at Gask on October the 26th, 1845. Not until after her death was a collected edition of her poems issued with her name as the author prefixed to them.

MACKENZIE BELL.

SONGS.

CAROLINA, LADY NAIRNE.

I.—THE LAND O' THE LEAL.

I'M wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John,
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.
There's nae sorrow there, John,
There's neither cauld nor care, John,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,
She was baith gude and fair, John,
And oh! we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.
But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
And joy's a-comin' fast, John,
The joy that's aye to last
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear's that joy was bought, John,
Sae free the battle fought, John,
That sinfu' man e'er brought
To the land o' the leal.
Oh! dry your glist'ning e'e, John,
My saul langs to be free, John,
And angels beckon me
To the land o' the leal.

Oh ! haud ye leal and true, John,
Your day it's wearin' through, John,
And I'll welcome you
 To the land o' the leal.
Now fare-ye-weel, my ain John,
This warld's cares are vain, John,
We'll meet, and we'll be fain,
 In the land o' the leal.

II.—CALLER HERRIN'.

WHA'LL buy my caller herrin' ?
 They're bonnie fish and halesome farin' ;
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
 New drawn frae the Forth ?

When ye were sleepin' on your pillows,
Dream'd ye aught o' our puir fellows,
Darkling as they faced the billows,
A' to fill the woven willows ?

Wha'll buy my caller herrin' ?
They're no brought here without brave daring ;
Buy my caller herrin',
Haul'd through wind and rain.

Wha'll buy my caller herrin' ?
Oh, ye may ca' them vulgar farin',
Wives and mithers maist despairing,
Ca' them lives o' men.

When the creel o' herrin' passes,
Ladies, clad in silks and laces,
Gather in their braw pelisses,
Cast their heads and screw their faces.

Caller herrin's no got lightlie,
Ye can trip the spring fu' tightlie,
Spite o' tauntin', flauntin', flingin',
Gow has set you a' a-singing.

Neebour wives, now tent my tellin':
When the bonny fish ye're sellin',
At ae word be in yere dealin'—
Truth will stand when a' thing's failin'.

Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
They're bonny fish and halesome farin';
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth?

III.—THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN.

THE laird o' Cockpen, he's proud an' he's great,
His mind is ta'en up wi' things o' the State;
He wanted a wife, his braw house to keep,
But favour wi' wooin' was fashious to seek.

Down by the dyke-side a lady did dwell,
At his table head he thought she'd look well,
M'Clish's ae daughter o' Clavers-ha' Lee,
A penniless lass wi' a lang pedigree.

His wig was weel pouther'd and as gude as new,
His waistcoat was white, his coat it was blue;
He put on a ring, a sword, and cock'd hat,
And wha could refuse the laird wi' a' that?

He took the grey mare, and rade cannily,
An' rapp'd at the yett o' Clavers-ha' Lee;
"Gae tell Mistress Jean to come speedily ben,—
She's wanted to speak to the Laird o' Cockpen."

Mistress Jean was makin' the elder-flower wine ;
 "An' what brings the laird at sic a like time ?"
 She put aff her apron, and on her silk gown,
 Her mutch wi' red ribbons, and gaed awa' down.

An' when she cam' ben he bow'd fu' low,
 An' what was his errand he soon let her know ;
 Amazed was the laird when the lady said "Na,"
 And wi' a laigh curtsie she turned awa'.

Dumfounder'd was he, nae sigh did he gie,
 He mounted his mare—he rade cannily ;
 An' aften he thought, as he gaed through the glen,
 She's daft to refuse the laird o' Cockpen."

(Stanzas added by Miss Ferrier.)

And now that the laird his exit had made,
 Mistress Jean she reflected on what she had said ;
 "Oh, for ane I'll get better, its waur I'll get ten,
 I was daft to refuse the Laird o' Cockpen."

Next time that the laird and the lady were seen,
 They were gaun' arm-in-arm to the kirk on the green ;
 Now she sits in the ha' like a weel-tappit hen,
 But as yet there's nae chickens appear'd at Cockpen.

IV.—THE LASS O' GOWRIE.

'T WAS on a simmer's afternoon,
 A wee afore the sun gaed doun,
 A lassie wi' a braw new gown
 Cam' owre the hills to Gowrie.
 The rose-bud wash'd in simmer's shower,
 Bloom'd fresh within the sunny bower ;
 But Kitty was the fairest flower
 That e'er was seen in Gowrie.

To see her cousin she cam' there,
An' oh ! the scene was passing fair ;
For what in Scotland can compare

Wi' the Carse o' Gowrie ?

The sun was setting on the Tay,
The blue hills melting into grey,
The mavis and the blackbird's lay
Were sweetly heard in Gowrie.

O lang the lassie I had woo'd,
An' truth and constancy had vow'd,
But could na speed wi' her I lo'ed,
Until she saw fair Gowrie.

I pointed to my father's ha',
Yon bonnie bield ayont the shaw,
Sae loun' that there nae blast could blaw,
Wad she no bide in Gowrie ?

Her faither was baith glad and wae ;
Her mither she wad naething say ;
The bairnies thocht they wad get play,
If Kitty gaed to Gowrie.

She whiles did smile, she whiles did greet,
The blush and tear were on her cheek—
She naething said, an' hung her head ;
But now she's Leddy Gowrie.

V.—HUNTINGTOWER.

“**W**HEN ye gang awa', Jamie,
When ye gang awa', laddie,
What will ye gi'e my heart to cheer,
When ye are far awa', Jamie ? ”
“ I'll gi'e ye a braw new gown, Jeanie,
I'll gi'e ye a braw new gown, lassie,
An' it will be a silken ane,
Wi' Valenciennes trimm'd round, Jeanie.”

"O, that's nae luv at a', laddie,
That's nae luv at a', Jamie ;
How could I bear braw gowns to wear,
When ye are far awa', laddie !

"But mind me when awa', Jamie,
Mind me when awa', laddie,
For out o' sicht is out o' mind
Wi' mony folk, we ken, Jamie."

"Oh, that can never be, Jeanie,
Forgot ye ne'er can be, lassie ;
Oh gang wi' me to the north countrie,
My bonny bride to be, Jeanie.

"The hills are grand and hie, Jeanie,
The burnies rinnin' clear, lassie,
'Mang birks and braes, where the wîld deer strays
Oh cum wi' me and see, lassie."

"I winna gang wi' thee, laddie,
I tell't ye sae afore, Jamie ;
Till free consent my parents gi'e,
I canna gang wi' thee, Jamie."

"But when ye're wed to me, Jeanie,
Then they will forgi'e, lassie ;
How can ye be sae cauld to me,
Wha's lo'ed ye weel and lang, lassie ? "

"No sae lang as them, laddie,
No sae lang as them, Jamie ;
A grief to them I wadna be,
No for the Duke himsel', Jamie.

"We'll save our penny fee, laddie,
To keep frae poortith free, Jamie;
An' then their blessing they will gi'e,
Baith to you an' me, Jamie."

"Huntingtower is mine, lassie,
Huntingtower is mine, Jeanie;
Huntingtower, an' Blairnagower,
An' a' that's mine is thine, Jeanie!"

VI.—WHA'LL BE KING BUT CHARLIE?

THE news frae Moidart cam' yestreen,
Will soon gar mony ferlie;
For ships o' war hae just come in,
And landit Royal Charlie.

Come thro' the heather, around him gather,
Ye're a' the welcomer early;
Around him cling wi' a' your kin;
For wha'll be king but Charlie?
Come thro' the heather, around him gather,
Come Ronald, come Donald, come a' thegither
And crown your rightfu', lawfu' king!
For wha'll be king but Charlie?

The Heiland clans, wi' sword in hand,
Frae John o' Groats to Airlie,
Hae to a man declared to stand
Or fa' wi' Royal Charlie.

The Lowlands a', baith great an' sma,,
Wi' mony a lord and laird, hae
Declar'd for Scotia's king an' law,
An' speir ye wha but Charlie.

There's ne'er a lass in a' the lan',
But vows baith late an' early,
She'll ne'er to man gie heart nor han',
Wha wadna fecht for Charlie.

Then here's a health to Charlie's cause,
And be't complete an' early ;
His very name our heart's blood warms ;
To arms for Royal Charlie !

Come thro' the heather, around him gather,
Ye're a' the welcomer early ;
Around him cling wi' a' your kin ;
For wha'll be king but Charlie ?
Come thro' the heather, around him gather,
Come Ronald, come Donald, come a' thegether,
And crown your rightfu', lawfu' king !
For wha'll be king but Charlie ?

VII.—CHARLIE IS MY DARLING.

'TWAS on a Monday morning,
Right early in the year,
When Charlie came to our toun,
The young Chevalier.

Oh, Charlie is my darling,
My darling, my darling ;
Oh, Charlie is my darling,
The young Chevalier.

As he came marching up the street,
The pipes play'd loud and clear,
And a' the folk came running out
To meet the Chevalier.

Wi' Hieland bonnets on their heads,
And claymores bright and clear,
They came to fight for Scotland's right,
And the young Chevalier.

They've left their bonnie Hieland hills,
Their wives and bairnies dear,
To draw the sword for Scotland's lord,
The young Chevalier.

Oh, there were mony beating hearts,
And mony a hope and fear,
And mony were the prayers put up
For the young Chevalier.

Oh, Charlie is my darling,
My darling, my darling,
Oh, Charlie is my darling,
The young Chevalier.

VIII.—MY AIN KIND DEARIE, O.

WILL ye gang owre the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O ?
Will ye gang ower the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O ?
Gin ye'll tak' heart, and gang wi' me,
Mishap will never steer ye, O ;
Gude luck lies owre the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.

There's walth owre yon green lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O ;
There's walth owre yon green lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O ;

It's neither land, nor gowd, nor braws,
Let them gang tapsie teerie, O ;
It's walth o' peace, o' love, and truth,
My ain kind dearie, O.

IX.—KIND ROBIN LO'ES ME.

ROBIN is my ain gudeman,
Now match him, carlins, gin ye can,
For ilk ane whitest thinks her swan,
But kind Robin lo'es me.
To mak' my boast I'll e'en be bauld,
For Robin lo'ed me young and auld,
In simmer's heat, and winter's cauld,
My kind Robin lo'es me.

Robin he comes hame at e'en,
Wi' pleasure glancin' in his een ;
He tells me a' he's heard and seen,
And syne how he lo'es me.
There's some ha'e land, and some ha'e gowd,
Mair wad ha'e them gin they cou'd,
But a' I wish o' warld's gude
Is Robin aye to lo'e me.

X.—CAULD KAIL IN ABERDEEN.

THERE'S cauld kail in Aberdeen,
There's castocks in Stra'bogie,
And, morn and e'en, they're blythe and bein,
That haud them frae the cogie.
Now haud ye frae the cogie, lads,
O bide ye frae the cogie,
I'll tell ye true, ye'll never rue
O passin' by the cogie.

Young Will was braw and weel put on,
Sae blythe was he and vogie,
And he got bonnie Mary Don,
The flower o' a' Stra'bogie.
Wha wad hae thought, at wooin' time,
He'd e'er forsaken Mary !
And ta'en him to the tipplin' trade,
Wi' boozin' Rob and Harry.

Sair Mary wrought, sair Mary grat,
She scarce could lift the ladle,
Wi' pithless feet, 'tween ilka greet,
She'd rock the borrow'd cradle
Her weddin' plenishin' was gane,
She never thought to borrow ;
Her bonnie face was waxin' wan,
And Will wrought a' the sorrow.

He's reelin' hame ae winter's night,
Some later than the gloamin' ;
He's ta'en the rig, he's miss'd the brig,
And Bogie's owre him foamin'.
Wi' broken banes, out owre the stanes
He creepit up Stra'bogie,
And a' the nicht he prayed wi' micht,
To keep him frae the cogie.

Now Mary's heart is light again,
She's neither sick nor silly ;
For, auld or young, nae sinfu' tongue
Could e'er entice her Willie
And aye the sang thro' Bogie rang,
O haud ye frae the cogie ;
The weary gill's the sairest ill
On bracs o' fair Stra'bogie.

XI.—SAW YE NE’ER A LANELY LASSIE?

SAW ye ne’er a lanely lassie,
Thinkin’ gin she were a wife,
The sun o’ joy wad ne’er gae down,
But warm and cheer her a’ her life ?
Saw ye ne’er a wearie wifie,
Thinkin’ gin she were a lass,
She wad aye be blythe and cheerie,
Lightly as the day wad pass ?

Wives and lasses, young and aged,
Think na on each ither’s state ;
Ilka ane it has its crosses,
Mortal joy was ne’er complete.
Ilka ane it has its blessings.
Peevish dinna pass them bye,
But like choicest berries seek them,
Tho’ amang the thorns they lie.

XII.—THE AULD HOUSE.

OH, the auld house, the auld house,
What tho’ the rooms were wee !
Oh ! kind hearts were dwelling there,
And bairnies fu’ o’ glee ;
The wild rose and the jessamine
Still hang upon the wa’,
How mony cherish’d memories
Do they, sweet flowers, reca’ !

Oh, the auld laird, the auld laird,
Sae canty, kind, and crouse,
How mony did he welcome to
His ain wee dear auld house !

And the leddy too, sae genty,
There shelter'd Scotland's heir,
And clipt a lock wi' her ain hand
Frae his lang yellow hair.

The mavis still doth sweetly sing,
The bluebells sweetly blaw,
The bonnie Earn's clear winding still
But the auld house is awa'.
The auld house, the auld house,
Deserted tho' ye be,
There ne'er can be a new house
Will seem sae fair to me.

Still flourishing the auld pear tree
The bairnies liked to see,
And oh, how often did they speir
When ripe they a' wad be !
The voices sweet, the wee bit feet
Aye rinnin here and there,
The merry shout—oh ! whiles we greet
To think we'll hear nae mair !

For they are a' wide scatter'd now,
Some to the Indies gane,
And ane, alas ! to her lang hame ;
Not here we'll meet again.
The kirkyaird, the kirkyaird !
Wi' flowers o' every hue,
Shelter'd by the holly's shade
An' the dark sombre yew.

The setting sun, the setting sun,
How glorious it gaed doon !
The cloudy splendour raised our hearts
To cloudless skies aboon !

The auld dial, the auld dial,
It tauld how time did pass ;
The wintry winds ha'e dung it doon,
Now hid 'mang weeds and grass.

XIII.—GUDE NICHT, AND JOY BE WI' YE A'.

THE best o' joys maun ha'e an end,
The best o' friends maun part, I trow ;
The langest day will wear away,
And I maun bid fareweel to you.
The tear will tell when hearts are fu' ;
For words, gin they hae sense ava,
They're broken, faltering, and few ;
Gude nicht, and joy be wi' you a'.

O we hae wandered far and wide,
O'er Scotia's lands o' firth and fell,
And mony a simple flower we've pu'd,
And twined it wi' the heather bell.
We've ranged the dingle and the dell,
The cot-house and the baron's ha' ;
Now we maun tak' a last farewell,
Gude nicht, and joy be wi' you a'.

My harp, fareweel, thy strains are past,
Of gleefu' mirth, and heartfelt wae ;
The voice of song maun cease at last,
And minstrelsy itsel' decay.
But, oh ! whare sorrow canna win,
Nor parting tears are shed ava,
May we meet neighbour, kith and kin,
And joy for aye be wi' us a' !

XIV—WOULD YOU BE YOUNG AGAIN?

WOULD you be young again ?
So would not I—
One tear to memory giv'n,
Onward I'd hie.
Life's dark flood forded o'er,
All but at rest on shore,
Say, would you plunge once more,
With home so nigh ?

If you might, would you now
Retrace your way ?
Wander through thorny wilds,
Faint and astray ?
Night's gloomy watches fled,
Morning all beaming red,
Hope's smiles around us shed,
Heavenward—away.

Where are they gone, of yore
My best delight ?
Dear and more dear, tho' now
Hidden from sight.
Where they rejoice to be,
There is the land for me ;
Fly, time, fly speedily ;
Come life and light.

XV.—REST IS NOT HERE.

WHAT'S this vain world to me ?—
Rest is not here ;
False are the smiles I see,
The mirth I hear.

Where is youth's joyful glee ?
Where all once dear to me ?
Gone as the shadows flee—
Rest is not here.

Why did the morning shine
Blythely and fair ?
Why did those tints so fine
Vanish in air ?
Does not the vision say,
Faint lingering heart, away,
Why in this desert stay ?
Dark land of care !

Where souls angelic soar,
Thither repair ;
Let this vain world no more
Lull and ensnare.
That Heaven I love so well
Still in my heart shall dwell ;
All things around me tell,
Rest is found there.

Caroline (Bowles) Southey.

1787—1854.

CAROLINE BOWLES, the daughter of Captain Charles Bowles, of Buckland, near Lymington, Hants, was born on the 6th of December, 1787. Her first serious attempt at literature was a poem entitled "Ellen Fitz Arthur," written while the century was in its teens, and submitted to Robert Southey for opinion and advice. The laureate is said to have recommended its publication, and it was issued in 1820. "Ellen Fitz Arthur" was followed in 1822 by "The Widow's Tale, and Other Poems"; in 1836 by "The Birthday, and Other Poems," and in 1839 by "Solitary Hours." Caroline Bowles also contributed a series of "Chapters on Churchyards" to *Blackwood's Magazine*, "pathetic novelettes," which were gathered together and issued in two volumes in 1829. Her poem of "The Birthday" contains some touching pictures of her delicate and solitary childhood. To quote one :—

"My father loved the patient angler's art ;
And many a summer day, from early morn
To latest evening, by some streamlet's side
We two have tarried ; strange companionship !
A sad and silent man ; a joyous child—
Yet were those days, as I recall them now,
Supremely happy. Silent though he was,
My father's eyes were often on his child
Tenderly eloquent—and his few words

Were kind and gentle. Never angry tone
Repulsed me, if I broke upon his thoughts
With childish question. But I learnt at last—
Learnt intuitively to hold my peace
When the dark hour was on him, and deep sighs
Spoke the perturbed spirit—only then
I crept a little closer to his side,
And stole my hand in his, or on his arm
Laid my cheek softly ; till the simple wile
Won on his sad abstraction, and he turned
With a faint smile, and sighed, and shook his head,
Stooping toward me : So I reached at last
Mine arm about his neck, and clasped it close,
Printing his pale brow with a silent kiss.”

Early in life Caroline Bowles sustained a violent attack of small-pox, which disfigured her, and before she attained maturity, lost both her mother and father. These circumstances tended to strengthen her nervous if not morbid desire for retirement and seclusion. Henceforward, to quote her own words, all her adventures were by the fireside ; all her migrations “from the blue bed to the brown.”

Her earlier work was anonymous, and may be fairly said to have attained its reputation on its merits. Southey, who was ever ready to help any one who appealed to him, assisted her in the *Quarterly*, and Moir, the Delta of *Blackwood*, gave her high if not extravagant praise. The whirligig of time has reversed this, and the writer, who was called “the Cowper of poetesses,” and declared to be equal to Mrs. Hemans in her own day, is now denied all praise, and treated with but scant courtesy. Southey, whose powers of letter writing were not the least remarkable of his qualities, kept up correspondence with her from the first, and, losing his wife Edith after a period of severe mental

affliction in 1837, he married Caroline Bowles, at Boldre Church, near Keswick, on June 5th, 1839. Widowed in 1843, Mrs. Southey retired into Hampshire, and died at Buckland, Lymington, on July 20th, 1854. The *Athenæum* (August 5th, 1854), in recording her decease, paid a powerful tribute to her character in connection with her marriage to Robert Southey, whose subsequent mental condition involved her in such assiduous devotion. "No sacrifice could have been greater than the one she was induced to make on the occasion. It can be placed beyond all doubt by those who survive her, that she was fully prepared for the distressing calamity that impended over both. She could have had no mercenary motives, for she resigned a larger income on her marriage than she knew she could receive at her husband's death; indeed, the sum bequeathed to her in his will did not amount to anything like the income she had sacrificed. She consented to unite herself with him with a sure prevision of the awful condition of mind to which he would shortly be reduced, with a certain knowledge of the injurious treatment to which she might be exposed from the purest motive that could actuate a woman in forming such a connection—namely, the faint hope that her devotedness and zeal might enable her, if not to avert the catastrophe, to acquire at least a legal title to minister to the sufferer's comforts, and watch over the few sad years of existence that might remain to him."

Mrs. Southey's verse had a greater charm for her own generation than it can ever have again. There is a natural simplicity about it which gives it a certain affinity with the so-called "Lake school," and

which was much newer in her day than it is in ours. And yet, after the lapse of so many years, like flowers that have been preserved, her work still emits a sweet mild fragrance, and recalls a tender, sympathetic personality. One can scarcely read her general poems without feeling that they came from a true, loving heart, nor peruse the poems which with an almost morbid recurrence she wrote upon the subject of death, without feeling that she had a true sense of the sublime. Faulty in form, she possessed a spontaneity which some masters of form never show, besides in some degree that magic touch which invests a subject with the nameless environment which for want of a better term we call atmosphere. This may not always be in evidence, nor obtain to a very large degree, but in such poems as "The Pauper's Death-bed," and "The Christian Mariner's Hymn," short as they are, there is a something conveyed beyond that which is expressed, which is incapable of definition, but which counts for much in poetry. She was the earliest of her sex to follow Wordsworth's lead, if indeed she followed any lead at all, and had a far better idea of the difference between true and false sentiment than most of the women poets of her time.

ALFRED H. MILES.

POEMS.

CAROLINE (BOWLES) SOUTHEY.

I.—THE PRIMROSE.

I SAW it in my evening walk,
A little lonely flower !
Under a hollow bank it grew,
Deep in a mossy bower.

An oak's gnarl'd root, to roof the cave
With Gothic fretwork sprung,
Whence jewell'd fern, and arum leaves,
And ivy garlands hung.

And from beneath came sparkling out
From a fallen tree's old shell,
A little rill, that clipt about
The lady in her cell.

And there, methought, with bashful pride,
She seem'd to sit and look
On her own maiden loveliness
Pale imaged in the brook.

No other flower—no rival grew
Beside my pensive maid ;
She dwelt alone, a cloister'd nun,
In solitude and shade.

No sunbeam on that fairy well
Darted its dazzling light—
Only, methought, some clear, cold star
Might tremble there at night.

No ruffling wind could reach her there—
No eye, methought, but mine,
Or the young lamb's that came to drink,
Had spied her secret shrine.

And there was pleasantness to me
In such belief. Cold eyes
That slight dear Nature's lowliness,
Profane her mysteries.

Long time I looked and linger'd there,
Absorb'd in still delight—
My spirit drank deep quietness
In, with that quiet sight.

II.—THE PAUPER'S DEATH-BED.

TREAD softly—bow the head—
In reverent silence bow—
No passing bell doth toll—
Yet an immortal soul
Is passing now.

Stranger! however great,
With lowly reverence bow;
There's one in that poor shed—
One by that paltry bed—
Greater than thou.

Beneath that beggar's roof,
Lo! Death doth keep his state:
Enter—no crowds attend—
Enter—no guards defend
This palace gate.

That pavement damp and cold
No smiling courtiers tread ;
One silent woman stands
Lifting with meagre hands
A dying head.

No mingling voices sound—
An infant wail alone ;
A sob suppressed—again
That short deep gasp, and then
The parting groan.

Oh, change ! oh, wondrous change !
Burst are the prison bars :
This moment *there*, so low,
So agonised, and now
Beyond the stars !

Oh, change ! stupendous change !
There lies the soulless clod ;
The Sun eternal breaks—
The new Immortal wakes—
Wakes with his God !

III.—THE MARINER'S HYMN.

LAUNCH thy bark, Mariner !
Christian, God speed thee !
Let loose the rudder-bands—
Good angels lead thee !
Set thy sails warily,
Tempests will come ;
Steer thy course steadily,
Christian, steer home !

Look to the weather-bow,
Breakers are round thee ;
Let fall the plummet now,
Shallows may ground thee.
Reef in the fore-sail, there !
Hold the helm fast !
So—let the vessel wear—
There swept the blast.

“What of the night, watchman ?
What of the night ?”
“Cloudy—all quiet—
No land yet—all’s right !”
Be wakeful, be vigilant—
Danger may be
At an hour when all seemeth
Securest to thee.

How ! gains the leak so fast ?
Clear out the hold—
Hoist up thy merchandise,
Heave out thy gold ;—
There—let the ingots go—
Now the ship rights ;
Hurrah ! the harbour’s near—
Lo, the red lights !

Slacken not sail yet
At inlet or island ;
Straight for the beacon steer,
Straight for the high land ;
Crowd all thy canvas on,
Cut through the foam—
Christian ! cast anchor now—
HEAVEN IS THY HOME !

IV.—TO A DYING INFANT.

SLEEP, little Baby! sleep!
Not in thy cradle bed,
Not on thy mother's breast
Henceforth shall be thy rest,
But with the quiet dead.

Yes, with the quiet dead,
Baby! thy rest shall be—
Oh! many a weary wight,
Weary of life and light,
Would fain lie down with thee!

Flee, little tender nursling!
Flee to thy grassy nest—
There the first flowers shall blow,
The first pure flake of snow
Shall fall upon thy breast.

Peace! peace! the little bosom
Labours with shortening breath.
Peace! peace! that tremulous sigh
Speaks his departure nigh—
Those are the damps of Death.

I've seen thee in thy beauty,
A thing all health and glee;
But never then wert thou
So beautiful, as now,
Baby! thou seem'st to me.

Thine upturned eyes glazed over
Like harebells wet with dew—
Already veiled and hid
By the convulsèd lid,
Their pupils darkly blue.

Thy little mouth half open,
Thy soft lip quivering,
As if, like summer air,
Ruffling the rose leaves, there
Thy soul were fluttering.

Mount up, immortal essence !
Young spirit ! hence—depart !
And is *this* Death ?—Dread thing !
If such thy visiting,
How beautiful thou art !

Oh ! I could gaze for ever
Upon that waxen face,
So passionless ! so pure !
The little shrine was sure
An angel's dwelling-place.

Thou weepest, childless Mother !
Ay, weep—'twill ease thine heart ;
He was thy first-born son—
Thy first, thine only one ;
'Tis hard from him to part.

'Tis hard to lay thy darling
Deep in the damp cold earth,
His empty crib to see,
His silent nursery,
Late ringing with his mirth.

To meet again in slumber
His small mouth's rosy kiss,
Then—waken'd with a start
By thine own throbbing heart—
His twining arms to miss.

And then to lie and weep,
And think the live-long night—
Feeding thine own distress
With accurate greediness—
Of every past delight ;

Of all his winning ways,
His pretty, playful smiles,
His joy at sight of thee,
His tricks, his mimicry,
And all his little wiles.

Oh! these are recollections
Round mothers' hearts that cling!
That mingle with the tears
And smiles of after years,
With oft awakening.

But thou wilt then, fond Mother,
In after years look back—
Time brings such wondrous easing—
With sadness not unpleasing,
Even on this gloomy track.

Thou'lt say, " My first-born blessing !
It almost broke my heart,
When thou wert forced to go ;
And yet for thee, I know,
'Twas better to depart

"God took thee in His mercy,
A lamb untask'd—untried—
He fought the fight for thee,
He won the victory—
And thou art sanctified.

"I look around, and see
The evil ways of men,
And oh, beloved child !
I'm more than reconciled
To thy departure then.

"The little arms that clasp'd me,
The innocent lips that prest—
Would they have been as pure
Till now, as when of yore
I lull'd thee on my breast ?

"Now, like a dew-drop shrined
Within a crystal stone,
Thou'rt safe in Heaven, my dove !
Safe with the Source of Love,
The Everlasting One !

"And when the hour arrives,
From flesh that sets me free,
Thy spirit may await,
The first at Heaven's gate,
To meet and welcome me."

VI.—TO DEATH.

COME not in terrors clad, to claim
An unresisting prey :
Come like an evening shadow, Death !
So stealthily, so silently !
And shut mine eyes, and steal my breath ;
Then willingly—oh ! willingly,
With thee I'll go away.

What need to clutch with iron grasp
What gentlest touch may take ?
What need, with aspect dark, to scare,
So awfully, so terribly,
The weary soul would hardly care,
Called quietly, called tenderly,
From thy dread power to break ?

'Tis not as when thou markest out
The young, the blest, the gay,
The loved, the loving—they who dream
So happily, so hopefully ;
Then harsh thy kindest call may seem,
And shrinkingly, reluctantly,
The summoned may obey.

But I have drunk enough of life—
The cup assigned to me
Dashed with a little sweet at best,
So scantily, so scantily—
To know full well that all the rest,
More bitterly, more bitterly,
Drugged to the last will be.

And I may live to pain some heart
That kindly cares for me—
To pain, but not to bless. O Death!
Come quietly—come lovingly,
And shut mine eyes, and steal my breath;
Then willingly—oh ! willingly,
With thee I'll go away.

Felicia Dorothea Hemans.

1793—1835.

AN interesting essay might be written on what has been well called "the rise and fall of the sentimental in English poetry." At the head of those who, in the earlier decades of the present century, cultivated the sentimental Muse, stands Mrs. Hemans. But, when (with present-day dislike of sentimentality) we are prone to judge her too harshly on this account, we must not forget how largely poets are influenced by the fashions of their own time. Not only did her own poems win universal popularity, but her influence over the less prominent poets of her epoch was comparable to that of Byron himself. And foolish and even ridiculous as was sometimes the excess of sentiment exhibited by her followers, it was less foolish, less ridiculous, and less harmful than the excesses of Byronism.

Felicia Hemans's claims to attention, however, rest on a far more substantial basis than the mere fact of having been able to catch the public ear at a time when immeasurably greater poets than herself were first coming into repute. Her strength and originality of mind enabled her to discard the fantastic mannerisms of the Della Cruscan school. Her verse at its best was spontaneous, simple, and direct. Her descriptions of nature, though, of course, lacking the profound insight

and sense of communion which are the chief attributes of Wordsworth's descriptions, were true to fact and free from any touch of pedantry. Wordsworth called her—

"That holy spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep."

Such an epithet is well deserved, and is more worthy of note as coming from one so little inclined to praise his contemporaries.

It is not too much to say that some, at least, of the very qualities which recommended Felicia Hemans to her poetical constituency of sixty years ago, have caused the decrease of her reputation in our own day. For now that a higher conception of the scope and mission of poetry is gaining an ever-widening acceptance, mere sentimentality does not find favour. Sir Walter Scott aptly defined the chief deficiency of her poetry when he remarked that it exhibited "too many flowers" and "too little fruit." Doubtless this deficiency arose, in a considerable degree, from her astonishing facility in the mere act of versification—a facility greater probably than that possessed by any other poet of her time except Lætitia Elizabeth Landon. This rapidity in production could not fail to result in diffuseness and weakness, not only in thought, but also in technical qualities. Nevertheless, after every reasonable deduction has been made from the value of her work, we find it fraught with fancy, melodious, and, beneath its sentimental trappings, often sincere, while such touching and beautiful poems as "*Casabianca*" (p. 83), "*The Graves of a Household*" (p. 79), and "*Gertrude; or, Fidelity Till Death*" (p. 62) escape

from sentimentality altogether. Such poems, together with the ballad of Roncesvalles from "The Siege of Valencia" (p. 59), "England's Dead" (p. 77), "The Better Land" (p. 86), and some others will live. Felicia Hemans has now ceased to be a poet for poets. Her diffuseness alone would prevent her from being this. She not only rarely achieved concentration: she seems rarely to have tried to achieve it. Diffuseness such as hers is fatal to the life of poetry. Concentration may, no doubt, as I have said in another essay in the present work, be carried too far; but no body of verse ever survived that was as diffuse as is much of Felicia Hemans's poetry. Her name will still be held in honour however because of a few of her poems. For so universal is the human interest of some of her themes that it is difficult to believe a time will come when she will cease to be read by the people. Sometimes we are inclined to forget that the greatest poet is rarely the poet who is most read.

The powers of Felicia Hemans were not of a kind to fit her for success in sustained poetical efforts. Hence none of her long poems except, perhaps, "The Siege of Valencia," were altogether successful; though two of them, "The Vespers of Palermo," and "The Forest Sanctuary," contain many fine passages. She was strongest as a lyrist. Her picturesqueness was considerable, and she undoubtedly possessed, within certain narrow limits, a dramatic touch which enabled her to bring a scene before the mental vision of her readers. Many of the vivid episodes in the two excellent series of brief poems entitled respectively "Lays of Many Lands" and "Records of Woman" are examples of

what is here meant. "The Sceptic," a didactic poem of considerable length, which, at the time of its publication, gained both wide popularity and no small influence, suffers from confusion of metaphor. Her genius was derivative, not creative; while never a plagiarist, she came somewhat under the sway of the greater poets of her time. Perhaps she owed, in a large measure, the subdued romanticism which pervades, like an atmosphere, her finest poems, to that spirit which Scott caught from the German poets. We must not forget, however, that she herself was highly cultured, and, as a German scholar, had not only read, but appreciatively studied the originals.

Felicia Dorothea Browne was born in Liverpool on September 25th, 1793. Her father, a native of Ireland, was a merchant. Her mother, who was of mingled Italian and German descent, and whose family name was Wagner, was the daughter of the Imperial and Tuscan Consul at Liverpool. Felicia is described as possessing beauty and displaying talent from her earliest years. Her childish fondness for reading was great. She had a passion for Shakespeare, and it was her "choicest recreation, at six years old," to pass "hours of romance in a secret haunt of her own—a seat among the branches of an old apple-tree." When she was seven years old, her father sustained some commercial reverses, chiefly owing, it is said, to the disturbed condition of the times. He quitted Liverpool, and went with his family to reside at Gwrych, an old mansion near Abergele, in North Wales. This house, not far from the sea, was surrounded by a picturesque range of hills, and here Felicia lived

until the removal of the family in 1809 from Gwrych to Bronwylfa, near St. Asaph. Such calm and happy seclusion suited well her highly imaginative temperament, especially as she had the further advantage of a free access to an extensive library.

Amid these surroundings was nourished a love of nature which was one of the characteristics of her mind, and it need occasion no surprise that, at an unusually early age, she began to write verse. Her mother chiefly superintended her education; when she was eleven years old she spent a winter in London with her parents, and visited it again in the year following. These were the only occasions on which she ever saw London, and she does not seem to have enjoyed the visits, preferring rather the freedom of her country home.

Her friends published in 1808 a collection of her poems, in the form of a quarto volume, dedicated to the Prince Regent, and entitled, "*Blossoms of Spring*." The publication was injudicious when we remember the extreme youth of the poet, for, very naturally, the critics resented this "large quarto by a little child," and so sensitive was Felicia that an "unkind review" made her ill for several days. "*England and Spain*," her first important poem, was written at the age of fourteen, and "*The Domestic Affections and other Poems*," her second volume of verse, appeared in 1812. Her two elder brothers had joined the British army, then serving in Spain, and the event had aroused her patriotic enthusiasm. About the same time she met Captain Hemans shortly before he embarked to join his regiment. A parting, under such circumstances, had in it an element of romance, and on his return,

in 1811, Felicia became his wife. The marriage was not a happy one. In 1818, Captain Hemans went to Rome, partly for the benefit of his health. Felicia Hemans and her children remained in England. It was not at first supposed that this separation involved permanent estrangement. Husband and wife never met again, however, though they corresponded occasionally.

The subsequent life of Felicia Hemans was outwardly quiet and uneventful. For a while she resided at Wavertree, near Liverpool. She paid a visit to Scotland, where she saw a good deal of Scott at Abbotsford, and to the Lakes, where she met Wordsworth. During the closing years of her life, when most of her best poetical work was accomplished, her health had become very fragile. This necessitated an even greater degree of seclusion than that to which she had formerly accustomed herself; and her days were largely spent in reading the chief English, German, and French poets. Probably the fine poem "Despondency and Aspiration" (p. 71), which originally appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* during 1835, belongs to these later years. When young, she was very beautiful; in disposition she was sweet-tempered, generous, and without literary envy; and her piety, though inobtrusive, was sincere. She died in Dublin, where she had gone to be near her brother, on the 16th of May, 1835. The "Lays of Many Lands" appeared in 1826, and the "Records of Woman," containing some of her best work, in 1828. Her most important publications, not hitherto mentioned, are "Songs of the Affections" (1830), and "Scenes and Hymns of Life" (1834).

MACKENZIE BELL.

THE SIEGE OF VALENCIA.

1823.

FELICIA HEMANS.

I.

BALLAD.

(SCENE I.)

“**T**HOU hast not been with a festal throng
At the pouring of the wine ;
Men bear not from the hall of song
A mien so dark as thine !
There's blood upon thy shield,
There's dust upon thy plume,
Thou hast brought from some disastrous field
That brow of wrath and gloom !”

“And is there blood upon my shield ?
Maiden, it well may be !
We have sent the streams from our battle-field
All darken'd to the sea :
We have given the founts a stain,
Midst their woods of ancient pine ;
And the ground is wet—but not with rain,
Deep dyed—but not with wine !

“The ground is wet—but not with rain—
We have been in war-array,
And the noblest blood of Christian Spain
Hath bathed her soil to-day.
I have seen the strong man die,
And the stripling meet his fate,
Where the mountain-winds go sounding by
In the Roncesvalles' Strait.

- "In the gloomy Roncesvalles' Strait
There are helms and lances cleft;
And they that moved at morn elate
On a bed of heath are left!
There's many a fair young face
Which the war-steed hath gone o'er;
At many a board there is kept a place
For those that come no more!"
- "Alas for love, for woman's breast,
If woe like this must be!
Hast thou seen a youth with an eagle-crest,
And a white plume waving free?
With his proud quick-flashing eye,
And his mien of kingly state?
Doth he come from where the swords flash'd high
In the Roncesvalles' Strait?"
- "In the gloomy Roncesvalles' Strait
I saw, and mark'd him well:
For nobly on his steed he sate,
When the pride of manhood fell.
But it is not youth which turns
From the field of spears again;
For the boy's high heart too wildly burns
Till it rests amidst the slain!"
- 'Thou canst not say that he lies low,
The lovely and the brave:
Oh, none could look on his joyous brow,
And think upon the grave!
Dark, dark perchance the day
Hath been with valour's fate;
But he is on his homeward way,
From the Roncesvalles' Strait!"

“ There is dust upon his joyous brow
And o'er his graceful head ;
And the war-horse will not wake him now,
Though it browse his greensward bed.
I have seen the stripling die,
And the strong man meet his fate,
Where the mountain-winds go sounding by
In the Roncesvalles' Strait ! ”

II.

DIRGE.

(SCENE IX.)

CALM on the bosom of thy God,
Fair spirit ! rest thee now !
E'en while with ours thy footsteps trode
His seal was on thy brow.

Dust, to its narrow house beneath !
Soul, to its place on high !
They that have seen thy look in death
No more may fear to die.

RECORDS OF WOMEN.

v. 1828.

FELICIA HEMANS.

GERTRUDE; OR, FIDELITY TILL DEATH.

[The Baron Von der Wart, accused—though it is believed unjustly—as an accomplice in the assassination of the Emperor Albert, was bound alive on the wheel, and attended by his wife Gertrude, throughout his last agonising hours, with the most heroic devotedness. Her own sufferings, with those of her unfortunate husband, are most affectingly described in a letter which she afterwards addressed to a female friend, and which was published some years ago, at Haarlem, in a book entitled *Gertrude Von der Wart; or, Fidelity unto Death.*]

“Dark lowers our fate,
And terrible the storm that gathers o’er us;
But nothing, till that latest agony
Which severs thee from nature, shall unloose
This fix’d and sacred hold. In thy dark prison-house,
In the terrific face of armed law,
Yea, on the scaffold, if it needs must be,
I never will forsake thee.”—JOANNA BAILLIE.

HER hands were clasp’d, her dark eyes raised
The breeze threw back her hair;
Up to the fearful wheel she gazed—
All that she loved was there.
The night was round her clear and cold,
The holy heaven above,
Its pale stars watching to behold
The might of earthly love.

"And bid me not depart," she cried ;
"My Rudolph ! say not so !
This is no time to quit thy side—
Peace ! peace ! I cannot go.
Hath the world aught for *me* to fear,
When death is on thy brow ?
The world ! what means it ? *Mine* is *here*—
I will not leave thee now.

"I have been with thee in thine hour
Of glory and of bliss ;
Doubt not its memory's living power
To strengthen me through *this* !
And thou, mine honour'd love and true
Bear on, bear nobly on :
We have the blessed heaven in view,
Whose rest shall soon be won."

And were not these high words to flow
From woman's breaking heart ?
Through all that night of bitterest woe
She bore her lofty part ;
But oh ! with such a glazing eye,
With such a curdling cheek—
Love, Love ! of mortal agony
Thou, only *thou*, should'st speak !

The wind rose high—but with it rose
Her voice, that he might hear :—
Perchance that dark hour brought repose
To happy bosoms near ;
While she sat striving with despair
Beside his tortured form,
And pouring her deep soul in prayer
Forth on the rushing storm.

She wiped the death-damps from his brow
With her pale hands and soft,
Whose touch upon the lute-chords low
Had still'd his heart so oft.
She spread her mantle o'er his breast,
She bathed his lips with dew,
And on his cheek such kisses pressed
As hope and joy ne'er knew.

Oh! lovely are ye, Love and Faith,
Enduring to the last!
She had her meed—one smile in death—
And his worn spirit pass'd!
While even as o'er a martyr's grave
She knelt on that sad spot,
And, weeping, blessed the God who gave
Strength to forsake it not.

DESPONDENCY AND ASPIRATION.

1835.

FELICIA HEMANS.

"Par correr mighior acqua alza le vele,
Omai la navicella del mio Intelletto."—DANTE.

MY soul was mantled with dark shadows, born
Of lonely Fear, disquieted in vain ;
Its phantoms hung around the star of morn,
A cloud-like weeping train :
Through the long day they dimmed the autumn gold
On all the glistening leaves, and wildly rolled,
When the last farewell flush of light was glowing,
Across the sunset sky,
O'er its rich isles of vaporous glory throwing
One melancholy dye.
And when the solemn night
Came rushing with her might
Of stormy oracles from caves unknown,
Then with each fitful blast
Prophetic murmurs passed,
Wakening or answering some deep Sybil-tone
Far buried in my breast, yet prompt to rise
With every gusty wail that o'er the wind-harp flies.

"Fold, fold thy wings," they cried, "and strive no more—
Faint spirit! strive no more: for thee too strong
Are outward ill and wrong,
And inward wasting fires! Thou canst not soar
Free on a starry way,
Beyond their blighting sway,
At heaven's high gate serenely to adore.
How should'st *thou* hope earth's fetters to unbind ?
O passionate, yet weak ! O trembler to the wind !

"Never shall aught but broken music flow
From joy of thine, deep love, or tearful woe—
Such homeless notes as through the forest sigh,
 From the reed's hollow shaken,
 When sudden breezes waken
 Their vague, wild symphony.
No power is theirs, and no abiding-place
In human hearts ; their sweetness leaves no trace—
 Born only so to die !
Never shall aught but perfume faint and vain,
On the fleet pinion of the changeful hour,
 From thy bruised life again
 A moment's essence breathe ;
 Thy life, whose trampled flower,
 Into the blessed wreath
Of household-charities no longer bound,
Lies pale and withering on the barren ground.

"So fade, fade on ! Thy gift of love shall cling
 A coiling sadness round thy heart and brain—
A silent fruitless yet undying thing,
 All sensitive to pain !
And still the shadow of vain dreams shall fall
O'er thy mind's world, a daily darkening pall.
Fold, then, thy wounded wing, and sink subdued
In cold and unrepining quietude !"

Then my soul yielded : spells of numbing breath
Crept o'er it heavy with a view of death—
Its powers like leaves before the night-rain closing ;
 And, as by conflict of wild sea-waves tossed
 On the chill bosom of some desert coast,
Mutely and hopelessly I lay reposing.

When silently it seemed
As if a soft mist gleamed
Before my passive sight, and slowly curling,
To many a shape and hue
Of visioned beauty grew,
Like a wrought banner, fold by fold unfurling.

Oh ! the rich scenes that o'er mine inward eye
Unrolling then swept by
With dreamy motion ! Silvery seas were there,
Lit by large dazzling stars, and arched by skies
Of southern midnight's most transparent dyes ;
And gemmed with many an island, wildly fair,
Which floated past me into orient day,
Still gathering lustre on the illumined way,
Till its high groves of wondrous flowering-trees
Coloured the silvery seas.
And then a glorious mountain-chain uprose,
Height above spiry height !
A soaring solitude of woods and snows,
All steeped in golden light !
While as it passed, those regal peaks unveiling,
I heard, methought, a waving of dread wings,
And mighty sounds, as if the vision hailing,
From lyres that quivered through ten thousand strings
Or as if waters, forth to music leaping
From many a cave, the Alpine echo's hall,
On their bold way victoriously were sweeping,
Linked in majestic anthems !—while through all
That billowy swell and fall,
Voices, like ringing crystal, filled the air
With inarticulate melody, that stirred
My being's core ; then, moulding into word

Their piercing sweetness, bade me rise and bear
In that great choral strain my trembling part,
Of tones by love and faith struck from a human heart.

Return no more, vain bodings of the night !
A happier oracle within my soul
Hath swelled to power ; a clear unwavering light
Mounts through the battling clouds that round me roll ;
And to a new control
Nature's full harp gives forth rejoicing tones,
Wherein my glad sense owns
The accordant rush of elemental sound
To one consummate harmony profound—
One grand Creation-Hymn,
Whose notes the seraphim
Lift to the glorious height of music winged and crowned.
Shall not those notes find echoes in my lyre,
Faithful though faint ? Shall not my spirit's fire,
If slowly, yet unswervingly, ascend
Now to its fount and end ?
Shall not my earthly love, all purified,
Shine forth a heavenward guide,
An angel of bright power—and strongly bear
My being upward into holier air,
Where fiery passion-clouds have no abode,
And the sky's temple-arch o'erflows with God ?

The radiant hope new-born
Expands like rising morn
In my life's life : and as a ripening rose
The crimson shadow of its glory throws

More vivid, hour by hour, on some pure stream ;
So from that hope are spreading
Rich hues, o'er nature shedding
Each day a clearer, spiritual gleam.

Let not those rays fade from me ! Once enjoyed,
Father of Spirits ! let them not depart—
Leaving the chilled earth without form and void,
Darkened by mine own heart !
Lift, aid, sustain me ! Thou, by whom alone
All lovely gifts and pure
In the soul's grasp endure ;
Thou, to the steps of whose eternal throne
All knowledge flows—a sea for evermore
Breaking its crested waves on that sole shore—
Oh, consecrate my life ! that I may sing
Of Thee with joy that hath a living spring,
In a full heart of music ! Let my lays
Through the resounding mountains waft Thy praise,
And with that theme the wood's green cloisters fill,
And make their quivering leafy dimness thrill
To the rich breeze of song ! Oh ! let me wake
The deep religion, which hath dwelt from yore
Silently brooding by lone cliff and lake,
And wildest river-shore !
And let me summon all the voices dwelling
Where eagles build, and caverned rills are welling,
And where the cataract's organ-peal is swelling,
In that one spirit gathered to adore !

Forgive, O Father ! if presumptuous thought
Too daringly in aspiration rise !
Let not Thy child all vainly have been taught
By weakness, and by wanderings, and by sighs

Of sad confession ! lowly be my heart,
And on its penitential altar spread
The offerings worthless, till Thy grace impart
The fire from heaven, whose touch alone can shed
Life, radiance, virtue !—let that vital spark
Pierce my whole being, wildered else and dark !
Thine are all holy things—oh, make me Thine !
So shall I, too, be pure—a living shrine
Unto that Spirit which goes forth from Thee,
Strong and divinely free,
Bearing Thy gifts of wisdom on its flight,
And brooding o'er them with a dove-like wing,
Till thought, word, song, to Thee in worship spring,
Immortally endowed for liberty and light.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

FELICIA HEMANS.

I.—ENGLAND'S DEAD.

SON of the Ocean Isle !
Where sleep your mighty dead ?
Show me what high and stately pile
Is reared o'er Glory's bed.

Go, stranger ! track the deep—
Free, free the white sail spread !
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

On Egypt's burning plains,
By the pyramid o'erswayed,
With fearful power the noonday reigns,
And the palm-trees yield no shade ; —

But let the angry sun
From heaven look fiercely red,
Unfelt by those whose task is done !—
There slumber England's dead.

The hurricane hath might
Along the Indian shore,
And far by Ganges' banks at night
Is heard the tiger's roar ;—

But let the sound roll on !
It hath no tone of dread
For those that from their toils are gone,—
There slumber England's dead.

Loud rush the torrent-floods
The Western wilds among,
And free, in green Columbia's woods,
The hunter's bow is strung ;—
But let the floods rush on !
Let the arrow's flight be sped !
Why should they reck whose task is done ?—
There slumber England's dead.

The mountain-storms rise high
In the snowy Pyrenees,
And toss the pine-boughs through the sky
Like rose-leaves on the breeze ;—

But let the storm rage on !
Let the fresh wreaths be shed !
For the Roncesvalles' field is won,—
There slumber England's dead.

On the frozen deep's repose
'Tis a dark and dreadful hour,
When round the ship the ice-fields close,
And the northern night-clouds lour ;—

But let the ice drift on !
Let the cold-blue desert spread !
Their course with mast and flag is done,—
Even there sleep England's dead.

The warlike of the isles,
The men of field and wave !
Are not the rocks their funeral piles,
The seas and shores their grave ?

Go, stranger ! track the deep—
Free, free the white sail spread !
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

II.—THE GRAVES OF A HOUSEHOLD.

THEY grew in beauty side by side,
They fill'd one home with glee ;—
Their graves are sever'd far and wide,
By mount, and stream, and sea.

The same fond mother bent at night
O'er each fair sleeping brow :
She had each folded flower in sight—
Where are those dreamers now ?

One, 'midst the forests of the West,
By a dark stream is laid—
The Indian knows his place of rest,
Far in the cedar-shade.

The sea, the blue lone sea, hath one—
He lies where pearls lie deep ;
He was the loved of all, yet none
O'er his low bed may weep.

One sleeps where Southern vines are drest
Above the noble slain :
He wrapt his colours round his breast
On a blood-red field of Spain.

And one—o'er *her* the myrtle showers
Its leaves, by soft winds fann'd ;
She faded 'midst Italian flowers—
The last of that bright band.

And parted thus they rest, who play'd
Beneath the same green tree ;
Whose voices mingled as they pray'd
Around one parent knee ;

They that with smiles lit up the hall,
And cheer'd with song the hearth!—
Alas, for love! if *thou* wert all,
And naught beyond, O Earth!

III.—THE TREASURES OF THE DEEP.

WHAT hidest thou in thy treasure-caves and cells,
Thou hollow-sounding and mysterious main?—
Pale glistening pearls, and rainbow-coloured shells,
Bright things which gleam unrecked of, and in vain!—
Keep, keep thy riches, melancholy sea!
We ask not such from thee.

Yet more, the depths have more!—what wealth
untold,
Far down, and shining through their stillness lies!
Thou hast the starry gems, the burning gold,
Won from ten thousand royal Argosies!—
Sweep o'er thy spoils, thou wild and wrathful main;
Earth claims not *these* again.

Yet more, the depths have more!—thy waves have
rolled
Above the cities of a world gone by:
Sand hath filled up the palaces of old,
Seaweed o'ergrown the halls of revelry:
Dash o'er them, ocean! in thy scornful play!
Man yields them to decay.

Yet more! the billows and the depths have more!
High hearts and brave are gathered to thy breast!
They hear not now the booming waters roar,

The battle thunders will not break their rest.—
Keep thy red gold and gems, thou stormy grave !
Give back the true and brave !

Give back the lost and lovely !—those for whom
The place was kept at board and hearth so long,
The prayer went up thro' midnight's breathless gloom,
And the vain yearning woke 'midst festal song !
Hold fast thy buried isles, thy towers o'erthrown—
But all is not thine own.

To thee the love of woman hath gone down,
Dark flow thy tides o'er manhood's noble head,
O'er youth's bright locks, and beauty's flowery crown
Yet must thou hear a voice—Restore the dead !
Earth shall reclaim her precious things from thee !—
Restore the dead, thou sea !

IV.—THE HOUR OF DEATH.

LEAVES have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set ; but all,
Thou hast *all* seasons for thine own, O Death !

Day is for mortal care,
Eve, for glad meetings round the joyous hearth,
Night, for the dreams of sleep, the voice of prayer ;
But all for thee, thou mightiest of the earth !

The banquet hath its hour—
Its feverish hour of mirth, and song, and wine ;
There comes a day for grief's o'erwhelming power,
A time for softer tears—but all are thine.

Youth and the opening rose
May look like things too glorious for decay,
And smile at thee—but thou art not of those
That wait the ripened bloom to seize their prey.

Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north-wind's breath,
And stars to set—but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death!

We know when moons shall wane,
When summer birds from far shall cross the sea,
When Autumn's hue shall tinge the golden grain;
But who shall teach us when to look for thee?

Is it when Spring's first gale
Comes forth to whisper where the violets lie?
Is it when roses in our paths grow pale?
They have one season—all are ours to die!

Thou art where billows foam;
Thou art where music melts upon the air;
Thou art around us in our peaceful home,
And the world calls us forth—and thou art there.

Thou art where friend meets friend,
Beneath the shadow of the elm to rest—
Thou art where foe meets foe, and trumpets rend
The skies, and swords beat down the princely crest.

Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set; but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death!

VI.—CASABIANCA.

[Young Casabianca, son to the Admiral of the Orient, remained at his post (in the Battle of the Nile) after the ship had taken fire, and all the guns had been abandoned, and perished in the explosion of the vessel.]

THE boy stood on the burning deck
Whence all but he had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead.
Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
As born to rule the storm—
A creature of heroic blood,
A proud though child-like form.
The flames rolled on. He would not go
Without his father's word;
That father, faint in death below,
His voice no longer heard.
He called aloud :—"Say, father! say
If yet my task is done!"
He knew not that the chieftain lay
Unconscious of his son.
"Speak, father!" once again he cried,
"If I may yet be gone!"
And but the booming shots replied,
And fast the flames rolled on.
Upon his brow he felt their breath,
And in his waving hair,
And looked from that lone post of death
In still yet brave despair;
And shouted but once more aloud,
"My father! must I stay?"
While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapt the ship in splendour wild,
They caught the flag on high,
And streamed above the gallant child
Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder-sound—

The boy—oh! where was he?
Ask of the winds that far around
With fragments strewed the sea!—

With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,
That well had borne their part;
But the noblest thing which perished there
Was that young faithful heart!

VII.—THE ADOPTED CHILD.

“**W**HY wouldst thou leave me, O gentle child?
Thy home on the mountain is bleak and wild,
A straw-roofed cabin with lowly wall—
Mine is a fair and a pillar'd hall,
Where many an image of marble gleams,
And the sunshine of pleasure for ever streams.”

“Oh! green is the turf where my brothers play,
Through the long bright hours of the summer day;
They find the red cup-moss where they climb,
And they chase the bee o'er the scented thyme,
And the rocks where the heath-flower blooms they know.
Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!”

“Content thee, boy! in my bower to dwell—
Here are sweet sounds which thou lovest well;
Flutes on the air in the stilly noon,
Harps which the wandering breezes tune,
And the silvery wood-note of many a bird
Whose voice was ne'er in thy mountains heard.”

"Oh! my mother sings, at the twilight's fall,
A song of the hills far more sweet than all;
She sings it under our own green tree
To the babe half slumbering on her knee:
I dream'd last night of that music low—
Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!"

"Thy mother is gone, from her cares to rest—
She hath taken the babe on her quiet breast;
Thou wouldst meet her footstep, my boy! no more,
Nor hear her song at the cabin door.
Come thou with me to the vineyards nigh,
And we'll pluck the grapes of the richest dye."

"Is my mother gone from her home away?
But I know that my brothers are there at play—
I know they are gathering the foxglove's bell,
Or the long fern-leaves by the sparkling well;
Or they launch their boats where the bright streams flow—
Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!"

"Fair child! thy brothers are wanderers now,
They sport no more on the mountain's brow;
They have left the fern by the spring's green side,
And the streams where the fairy barks were tried.
Be thou at peace in thy brighter lot,
For thy cabin home is a lonely spot."

"Are they gone, all gone from the sunny hill?—
But the bird and the blue-fly rove o'er it still;
And the red-deer bound in their gladness free,
And the heath is bent by the singing bee,
And the waters leap, and the fresh winds blow—
Lady, kind lady! oh, let me go!"

VIII.—THE BETTER LAND.

" I HEAR thee speak of the better land,
Thou call'st its children a happy band
Mother! oh, where is that radiant shore?
Shall we not seek it, and weep no more?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fire-flies glance thro' the myrtle boughs?"
"—Not there, not there, my child!"

" Is it where the feathery palm-trees rise,
And the date grows ripe under sunny skies?
Or midst the green islands of glittering seas,
Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,
And strange bright birds on their starry wings
Bear the rich hues of all glorious things?"
"—Not there, not there, my child!"

" Is it far away, in some region old,
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold,
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand?
Is it there, sweet mother! that better land?"
"—Not there, not there, my child!"

" Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy!
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy!
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair—
Sorrow and death may not enter there:
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom
For beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,
—It is there, it is there, my child!"

Mary Howitt.

1799—1888.

MARY HOWITT—one of the most graceful, versatile and voluminous writers of the earlier half of the century—was born at Coleford, in the Forest of Dean, on March 12th, 1799. Her parents were members of the Society of Friends, to which both families had belonged from an early period. Her father, Samuel Botham, had engaged in the iron-working business, but had not been successful, and soon after the birth of Mary, when affairs seemed very hopeless, he returned to Uttoxeter, where he had lived before, and became a land surveyor. By-and-by he was appointed by the Crown one of the surveyors in the disforesting of Needwood, in the county of Stafford; and it is with this district that Mary Howitt's first clear recollections were associated. Her father would often take the children with him in his rounds, and thus, even in infancy, she became acquainted, as she says, "with the spirit of nature." Of some of these rambles Mary preserved a vivid recollection; in fact, it was on one of them that the first clear consciousness that she could think dawned upon her. She was then only between five and six years old. "I remember very well," she says, "the new light, the gladness, the wealth of which I seemed suddenly possessed." The stillness of the home, and the isolation in which the children

lived combined to throw them in upon themselves; so that nature afforded an early and welcome relief from introspection. Mary was early taught to read by her mother; religious instruction was not neglected, and perhaps it lost little through the Quaker flavour imparted to it by the use of good Robert Barclay's "Catechism and Confession," though the little Mary was "much perplexed" sometimes. By-and-by she would read to her father such works as the "Imitation" of Thomas à Kempis which was a great favourite with him, but not so with her, she admits, "as I understood," she explains, "the constant exhortation to take up the Cross to refer to using the plain language and plain attire of Friends; and our peculiar garb, many degrees more ungainly than that of most strict Friends, which was already a perfect crucifixion to Anna and me." For a time a governess, Mary Parker, a strict Friend and noble woman, was engaged for the girls, but by-and-by they were transferred to the Friends' School, at York, where the utmost strictness and formality obtained. "Anna took with her Mrs. Barbauld's Hymns, as these praises of Creation and Nature were very sweet to her, but when amidst new scenes she longed to read those aspirations of a grateful and admiring heart, she sought vainly for the book amid the contents of her trunk! "It had been privately removed by our teachers." One of the few pleasures in the life at school was that each girl had her own little garden where she could grow flowers. Mary Botham was very fond of her plot, but she could not be so much beside it as she desired. "I feel," she says, "a sort of tender pity for Anna and myself when I remember how we were always

seeking and struggling after the beautiful and after artistic production, though we knew nothing of art."

In 1817, shortly after her school life was finished, she met William Howitt, at the house of some friends at Leicester. They were mutually attracted to each other by the sense of common interests, sympathies and aspirations; and on April 10th, 1821, they were married, and settled at Hanley, in Staffordshire, where he was then engaged in business. One of the notable things in their early married life was a tour in Scotland, which left its impressions in many ways on them both. The literary instincts of each were sharpened by their constant companionship, with the result not only of productions varied and extensive, but some instances of very happy and successful joint-work, revealing the characteristics of both writers in the happiest union. Scarcely elsewhere, perhaps, is to be found the record of a wedded couple who through so lengthened a life worked more assiduously and successfully together, with less loss of individuality on either side.

In 1824 the Howitts removed to Nottingham, and remained there till 1836; being not only active and productive in literature, but taking a very warm interest in many social and philanthropic movements. In 1827 appeared their first joint volume of poems, which received favourable notice from the press, and brought them many new friends and correspondents. To this period, too, belong "The History of Priestcraft" by William, "The Book of the Seasons," "Rural Life in England," and Mary Howitt's "Sketches of Natural History," one of the first effective popularisations of science in our country.

Then it began to be felt that to be able to

take advantage of all opportunities, it was necessary that they should be within easy reach of London. A house was accordingly taken at Esher, in Surrey, which they occupied till 1840. Then from 1840 to 1843 they were in Germany—the life and literature of which they studied with such success, that their visit has left record of itself in many ways in their works—notably, in William's picturesque book—"Student Life in Germany." On their return to England they settled in Clapton—a house which received many visitors of distinction; Hans Christian Andersen (whose earlier works Mary Howitt translated) and Alfred Tennyson amongst them;—Mary Howitt having preserved records of his many visits—and here they resided from 1843 to 1848. In 1846 William Howitt became editor of the *People's Journal*; but in 1848 he began to publish, on his own account, a rival serial—*Howitt's Journal*, which, however, did not run to more than three or four volumes. They lived in St. John's Wood, from 1848 to 1852; at Highgate, from 1852—1866; at the Orchard, Claygate, near Esher, from 1866—1870; in Switzerland and Italy from 1870—1871; in Rome from 1871—1879, and there William died on March 3rd, 1879.

After William's death, Mary Howitt lived either in the now famous health resort in the Tyrol, Meran, or in Rome, where she found much to engage her sympathies and interest. We have seen how her love of nature, poetry and art, developed even in her childhood, led her to fret at the restrictions of Quakerism, while her strong sense of duty and her keen realisation of the nobility of character formed under it, led her to remain for a long time in formal connection with the society in

which she had been brought up. But she was by instinct and nature very fond of symbolism,—a vein of sweet mystical fancy often appears in her verse. The presence of this element, we cannot help thinking, had much to do with one incident of her later days, which surprised many people, and was much commented on, both at the time, and later, when her daughter Margaret published her autobiography—her going over to the Church of Rome. She herself declared that she was devoted to the Pope, and not to the papacy, and indeed, stronger personal influences may well have been operative than we know for certain. She enjoyed a calm and placid old age, with "love, honour, reverence, troops of friends," and passed away on January 30th, 1888.

Mary Howitt's poetical works vary through a wide range. She treated many subjects, and essayed many styles; but one note may be found in all—a delightful naturalness, and a graceful fancy. She had the gift of vision; she clearly painted what she saw, and on fitting occasions could command apt and striking figures. She was free from one of the great faults of the earlier school—she knew no affectations. She has been most remembered by what are, in some respects, her least artistic productions, those poems which she wrote either primarily for children, or were professedly weighted with a lesson or a purpose; whereas several of her pieces are inspired by a fantastic imagination, by a nimble fancy, and an unexpected power over the weird and wonderful. Such pieces as "The Voyage with the Nautilus," and "An Old Man's Story," suffice to attest this. Then she can be very daintily fanciful, and gently, lightly humorous, as proved by a large body

of poems, of a purely playful or inventive cast—not to speak of those parables in dialogue, of which “The Spider and the Fly” may be cited as the best known illustration. She wrote many poems, too, to commend the study of nature and the practice of humanity to animals; indeed, viewed from one side, a large section of her poetic work was humanitarian: her special claim to praise is that, whatever the subject, whatever the purpose, she managed in her treatment to infuse into the work so much subdued imaginative colour, that it may well be claimed for her, that however definite her purpose or pronounced her moral aim she very rarely or, indeed, never failed to produce what has the true note of poetry, observation, fancy, and happy, figurative illustration. A rare power of raising the conventional or properly prosaic in subject to a higher level, through the divining presence of imagination,—though not perhaps of a very high order,—goes with her, gently irradiating whatever she touches. It would be wholly unjust to try many of her pieces, written with an eye to certain evils almost special to the time—by the highest standard of what we nowadays are taught to consider “high-art.” But one thing is sure. A certain number of the most successful of Mary Howitt’s poetic efforts will have the suffrage and favour and gratitude of many generations of young folks yet to come. And in the power which she will thus wield there is an assurance that she not only had a message, but conveyed that message with something of the touch that makes all men (or we may perhaps here say children) kin. That is no slight service to render; no slight fame to have

BALLADS.

MARY HOWITT.

I.—THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON LOW.

A MIDSUMMER LEGEND.

“AND where have you been, my Mary,
And where have you been from me?”

“I’ve been to the top of the Caldon Low,
The midsummer-night to see!”

“And what did you see, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Low?”

“I saw the glad sunshine come down,
And I saw the merry winds blow.”

“And what did you hear, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Hill?”

“I heard the drops of the water made,
And the ears of the green corn fill.”

“Oh! tell me all, my Mary,
All, all that ever you know;
For you must have seen the fairies,
Last night, on the Caldon Low.”

“Then take me on your knee, mother;
And listen, mother of mine.
A hundred fairies danced last night,
And the harpers they were nine.

“And their harp-strings rung so merrily
To their dancing feet so small;
But oh! the words of their talking
Were merrier far than all.”

"And what were the words, my Mary,
That then you heard them say?"

"I'll tell you all, my mother;
But let me have my way.

"Some of them played with the water,
And rolled it down the hill;
'And this,' they said, 'shall speedily turn
The poor old miller's mill:

"'For there has been no water
Ever since the first of May;
And a busy man will the miller be
At dawning of the day.

"'Oh! the miller, how he will laugh
When he sees the mill-dam rise!
The jolly old miller, how he will laugh
Till the tears fill both his eyes!'

"And some they seized the little winds
That sounded over the hill;
And each put a horn unto his mouth,
And blew both loud and shrill:

"'And there,' they said, 'the merry winds go
Away from every horn;
And they shall clear the mildew dank
From the blind, old widow's corn.

"'Oh! the poor, blind widow,
Though she has been blind so long,
She'll be blithe enough when the mildew's gone,
And the corn stands tall and strong.'

"And some they brought the brown lint-seed,
And flung it down from the Low;

'And this,' they said, 'by the sunrise,
In the weaver's croft shall grow.

" 'Oh! the poor, lame weaver,
How will he laugh outright,
When he sees his dwindling flax-field
All full of flowers by night !'

" And then outspoke a brownie,
With a long beard on his chin ;
I have spun up all the tow,' said he,
' And I want some more to spin

" 'I've spun a piece of hempen cloth,
And I want to spin another ;
A little sheet for Mary's bed,
And an apron for her mother.'

"With that I could not help but laugh,
And I laughed out loud and free ;
And then on the top of the Caldun Low
There was no one left but me.

" And all on the top of the Caldun Low
The mists were cold and grey,
And nothing I saw but the mossy stones
That round about me lay.

" But, coming down from the hill-top,
I heard afar below,
How busy the jolly miller was,
And how the wheel did go.

" And I peeped into the widow's field,
And, sure enough, were seen
The yellow ears of the mildewed corn,
All standing stout and green.

"And down by the weaver's croft I stole,
To see if the flax were sprung ;
But I met the weaver at his gate,
With the good news on his tongue.

"Now this is all I heard, mother,
And all that I did see ;
So, pr'ythee, make my bed, mother,
For I'm tired as I can be."

II.—AN OLD MAN'S STORY.

THERE was an old and quiet man,
And by the fire sate he ;
"And now," he said, "to you I'll tell
A dismal thing, which once befell
Upon the Southern Sea.

"'Tis five and fifty years gone by,
Since, from the river Plate,
A young man, in a home-bound ship,
I sailed as second mate.

"She was a trim stout-timbered ship,
And built for stormy seas ;
A lovely thing on the wave was she,
With her canvas set so gallantly
Before a steady breeze.

"For forty days, like a wingèd thing,
She went before the gale ;
Nor all that time we slackened speed,
Turned helm, or shifted sail.

"She was a laden argosy,
With gold from the Spanish Main,
And the treasure-hoards of a Portuguese
Returning home again.

" An old and silent man was he,
His face was yellow and lean ;
In the golden lands of Mexico
A miner he had been.

" His body was wasted, bent, and bowed,
And 'mid his gold he lay,
'Mid iron chests bound round with brass,
And he watched them night and day.

" No word he spoke to any on board,
His step was heavy and slow ;
And all men deemed that an evil life
He had led in Mexico.

" But list ye me ! On the lone high seas
As we went smoothly on,
It chanced, in the silent second watch,
As I sate on the deck alone,
That I heard from 'mong those iron chests
A sound like a dying groan.

" I started to my feet, and lo !
The captain stood by me ;
He bore a body in his arms,
And dropped it in the sea.

" I heard it drop into the sea,
With a heavy splashing sound ;
I saw the captain's bloody hands
As quickly he turned round.
He drew in his breath when me he saw,
Like one whom the sudden withering awe
Of a spectre doth astound :

"But I saw his white and palsied lips,
And the stare of his wild eye,
As he turned in hurried haste away,
Yet had no power to fly;
He was chained to the deck by his heavy guilt,
And the blood that was not dry.

"'Twas a cursèd thing,' said I, 'to kill
That old man in his sleep.
The curse of blood will come from him
Ten thousand fathoms deep.

"'The plagues of the sea will follow us,
For Heaven his groans hath heard.'
The captain's white lips slowly moved,
And yet he spoke no word.

"And slowly he lifted his bloody hands,
As if his eyes to shade;
But the blood that was wet did freeze his soul,
And he shrieked like one afraid.

"And even then, that very hour,
The wind dropped; and a spell
Was on the ship, was on the sea;
And we lay for weeks, how wearily!
Where the old man's body fell.

"I told no one within the ship
That horrid deed of sin;
For I saw the hand of God at work,
And punishment begin.

“And, when they spoke of the murdered man
And the El-Dorado hoard,
They all surmised he had walked in dreams,
And fallen overboard.

“But I alone, and the murderer,
That dreadful thing did know,
How he lay in his sin, a murdered man,
A thousand fathoms low.

“And many days, and many more,
Came on, and lagging sped ;
And the heavy waves of the sleeping sea
Were dark, like molten lead.

“But not a breeze came east or west,
And burning was the sky,
And stifling was each breath we drew ;
The air was hot and dry.

“Oh me ! a very smell of death
Hung round us night and day ;
Nor dared I look into the sea,
Where the old man's body lay.

“The captain in his cabin kept,
And bolted fast the door ;
The seamen, they walked up and down,
And wished the calm was o'er.

“The captain's son was on board with us,
A fair child, seven years old,
With a merry face that all men loved,
And a spirit kind and bold.

“I loved the child ; and I took his hand
And made him kneel, and pray

That the crime for which the calm was sent
Might clean be purged away.

“For I thought that God would hear his prayer,
And set the vessel free :
’Twas a dreadful curse, to lie becalmed
Upon that charnel sea.

“Yet I told him not wherefore he prayed,
Nor why the calm was sent ;
I could not give that knowledge dark
To a soul so innocent.

“At length I saw a little cloud
Rise in that sky of flame,
A little cloud, that grew and grew,
And blackened as it came.

“We saw the sea beneath its track
Grow dark as was the sky ;
And waterspouts, with rushing sound,
Like giants passed us by.

“And all around, ’twixt sky and sea,
A hollow wind did blow ;
The sullen waves swung heavily ;
The ship rocked to and fro.

“I knew it was that fierce death-calm
Its horrid hold undoing ;
I saw the plagues of wind and storm
Their missioned work pursuing.

“There was a yell in the gathering winds
A groan in the heaving sea :
The captain rushed from his place below,
But durst not look on me.

"He seized each rope with a madman's haste,
And set the helm to go,
And every sail he crowded on
As the furious winds did blow.

"Away they went, like autumn leaves
Before the tempest's rout ;
The naked masts came crashing down,
The wild ship plunged about.

"The men to spars and splintered boards
Clung, till their strength was gone ;
And I saw them from their feeble hold
Washed over, one by one ;

"And 'mid the creaking timber's din,
And the roaring of the sea,
I heard the dismal, drowning cries
Of their last agony.

"There was a curse in the wind that blew,
A curse in the boiling wave ;
And the captain knew that vengeance came
From the old man's ocean-grave.

"I heard him say, as he sate apart,
In a hollow voice and low,
'Tis a cry of blood doth follow us,
And still doth plague us so !'

"And then those heavy iron chests
With desperate strength took he,
And ten of the strongest mariners
Did cast them into the sea.

"And out from the bottom of the sea
There came a hollow groan ;—

The captain by the gunwale stood,
And looked like icy stone,
With a gasping sob he drew in his breath,
And spasms of death came on.

“And a furious boiling wave rose up,
With a rushing thundering roar ;
I saw him fall before its force,
But I never saw him more.

“Two days before, when the storm began,
We were forty men and five,
But ere the middle of that night
There were but two alive—

“The child and I : we were but two ;
And he clung to me in fear.
Oh ! it was pitiful to see
That meek child in his misery,
And his little prayers to hear.

“At length, as if his prayers were heard,
’Twas calmer ; and anon
The clear sun shone ; and, warm and low
A steady wind from the west did blow,
And drove us gently on.

“And on we drove, and on we drove,
That fair young child and I ;
His heart was as a man’s in strength,
And he uttered not a cry.

“There was no bread within the wreck,
And water we had none,
Yet he murmured not, and talked of hope,
When my last hopes were gone.

- I saw him waste and waste away,
And his rosy cheek grow wan.
- " Still on we drove, I know not where,
For many nights and days,
We were too weak to raise a sail,
Had there been one to raise.
- " Still on we went, as the west wind drove,
On, o'er the pathless tide ;
And I lay in sleep, 'twixt life and death,
With the young child at my side.
- " And, as we thus were drifting on
Amid the Great South Sea,
An English vessel passed us by
That was sailing cheerily.
Unheard by me that vessel hailed,
And asked what we might be.
- " The young child at the cheer rose up,
And gave an answering word ;
And they drew him from the drifting wreck,
As light as is a bird.
- " They took him gently in their arms,
And put again to sea :—
' Not yet ! not yet ! ' he feebly cried ;
' There was a man with me ! '
- " Again unto the wreck they turned,
Where, like one dead, I lay ;
And a ship-boy small had strength enough
To carry me away.
- " Oh ! joy it was, when sense returned,
That fair warm ship to sec,
And to hear the child within his bed
Speak pleasant words to me !

"I thought at first that we had died ;
That all our pain was o'er,
And in a blessed ship of Heaven
We voyaged to its shore :

"But they were human forms that knelt
Beside our bed to pray,
And men with hearts most merciful
That watched us night and day.

"'Twas a dismal tale I had to tell
Of wreck and wild distress ;
But, even then, I told to none
The captain's wickedness.

"For I loved the boy, and could not cloud
His soul with sense of shame ;
'Twere an evil thing, thought I, to blast
A sinless orphan's name !
So he grew to be a man of wealth
And honourable fame.

"And in after years, when he had ships,
I sailed with him the sea,
And in all the sorrows of my life
He was a friend to me ;
And God hath blessed him everywhere
With a great prosperity."

III.—THE VOYAGE WITH THE NAUTILUS.

I MADE myself a little boat,
As trim as trim could be ;
I made it of a great pearl shell
Found in the Indian Sea.

I made my masts of wild sea-rush
That grew on a secret shore,
And the scarlet plume of the halcyon
Was the pleasant flag I bore.

For my sails I took the butterfly's wings ;
For my ropes the spider's line ;
And that mariner old, the Nautilus,
To steer me over the brine.

For he had sailed six thousand years,
And knew each isle and bay ;
And I thought that we, in my little boat,
Could merrily steer away.

The stores I took were plentiful :
The dew as it sweetly fell ;
And the honey that was hoarded up
In the wild bee's summer cell.

" Now steer away, thou helmsman good,
Over the waters free ;
To the charmed Isle of the Seven Kings,
That lies in the midmost sea."

He spread the sail, he took the helm ;
And, long ere ever I wist,
We had sailed a league, we had reached the isle
That lay in the golden mist.

The charmed Isle of the Seven Kings,
'Tis a place of wondrous spell ;
And all that happed unto me there
In a printed book I'll tell.

Said I, one day, to the Nautilus,
As we stood on the strand,
"Unmoor my ship, thou helmsman good
And steer me back to land ;

"For my mother, I know, is sick at heart,
And longs my face to see.
What ails thee now, thou Nautilus ?
Art slow to sail with me ?
Up I do my will ; the wind is fresh,
So set the vessel free."

He turned the helm ; away we sailed
Towards the setting sun :
The flying-fish were swift of wing,
But we outsped each one.

And on we went for seven days,
Seven days without a night ;
We followed the sun still on and on,
In the glow of his setting light.

Down and down went the setting sun,
And down and down went we ;
'Twas a splendid sail for seven days
On a smooth, descending sea.

On a smooth, descending sea we sailed,
Nor breeze the water curled :
My brain grew sick, for I saw we sailed
On the down-hill of the world.

"Good friend," said I to the Nautilus,
"Can this the right course be ?
And shall we come again to land ?"

But answer none made he ;
And I saw a laugh in his fishy eye
As he turned it up to me.

So on we went ; but soon I heard
A sound as when winds blow,
And waters wild are tumbled down
Into a gulf below.

And on and on flew the little bark,
As a fiend her course did urge ;
And I saw, in a moment, we must hang
Upon the ocean's verge.

I snatched down the sails, I snapped the ropes,
I broke the masts in twain ;
But on flew the bark and 'gainst the rocks,
Like a living thing did strain.

"Thou'st steered us wrong, thou helmsman vile !"
Said I to the Nautilus bold ;
"We shall down the gulf ; we're dead men both !
Dost know the course we hold ?"

I seized the helm with a sudden jerk,
And we wheeled round like a bird ;
But I saw the Gulf of Eternity,
And the tideless waves I heard.

"Good master," said the Nautilus,
"I thought you might desire
To have some wondrous thing to tell
Beside your mother's fire.

"What's sailing on a summer sea ?
As well sail on a pool ;

Oh, but I know a thousand things
That are wild and beautiful !

"And if you wish to see them now,
You've but to say the word."

"Have done !" said I to the Nautilus,
"Or I'll throw thee overboard.

"Have done !" said I, "thou mariner old,
And steer me back to land."

No other word spake the Nautilus,
But took the helm in hand.

I looked up to the lady moon,
She was like a glow-worm's spark ;
And never a star shone down to us
Through the sky so high and dark.

We had no mast, we had no ropes,
And every sail was rent ;
And the stores I brought from the charmed isle
In the seven days' sail were spent.

But the Nautilus was a patient thing,
And steered with all his might
On the up-hill sea ; and he never slept,
But kept the course aright.

And for thrice seven nights we sailed and sailed ;
At length I saw the bay
Where I built my ship, and my mother's house
'Mid the green hills where it lay.

"Farewell !" said I to the Nautilus,
And leaped upon the shore ;
"Thou art a skilful mariner,
But I'll sail with thee no more !"

Lætitia Elizabeth Maclean.

(“*L. E. L.*”)

1802—1838.

LANDOR, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Professor Wilson spoke well of Lætitia Landon's poems. Nevertheless it has become so much the custom to disparage them, and not without reason, that we are almost inclined to forget that, after all, they possess some good qualities. It is true they do not exhibit strength of thought, and that they show little or nothing of the higher imagination. It is also true that they are diffuse—that they lack concreteness, and are marred by a greater degree of sentimentality than is present even in the poetry of Felicia Hemans. And, if we examine their poetic *technique* (a quality which, in judging of a poet's work, is only less important than grandeur of thought or force of imagination) we find them often exceedingly deficient in melody and frequently halting in metre.

Even those who might be disposed to condone the blemishes in “*L. E. L.*’s” work on the technical side must admit that the unvarying sentimentality of her poems tends to give a false view of life. Probably the best defence that can be made for her in this respect is made by herself in the preface to “*The Venetian Bracelet*,” in which she says:—
“Aware that to elevate I must first soften, and that if I wished to purify I must first touch, I have ever endeavoured to bring forward grief, disappoint-

ment, the fallen leaf, the faded flower, the broken heart, and the early grave. Surely we must be less worldly, less interested, from this sympathy with the sorrow in which our unselfish feelings alone can take part."

But, despite their many faults, the poems of "L. E. L." show powers of language, a facile and graceful fancy, some lyrical faculty, and, within certain narrow limits, a real dramatic instinct. When Wordsworth said about Scott's poems that they were novels in verse, the remark, though unjust to Scott, would have been a fair criticism of the poems of Scott's imitators. As novels in verse, "L. E. L.'s" poems are undoubtedly interesting: in them the reader's attention is often aroused and sustained almost as much as in a prose romance. Lætitia Landon was ignorant of German and Italian, and therefore unacquainted with the fine poetical literature contained in these languages. She had never visited Italy or Germany or the South of France, or, indeed, travelled at all; and, when we remember these facts, and recollect the vivid, if idealised, descriptions of these countries in some of her best work, we shall find it impossible to deny to her the possession of considerable, though somewhat undisciplined, imaginative powers.

Perhaps it need not occasion surprise that "L. E. L.'s" long poems, such as "The Improvisatrice" (1824), "The Troubadour" (1825), and "The Golden Violet" (1826) should more especially be full of the faults mentioned above. For a long poem to be altogether satisfactory its author must possess some of the very qualities in which "L. E. L." was most deficient. Her longer efforts are not, however

without merit, though it is in her shorter poems that we find her highest excellence. "The Moorish Romance," an episode of "The Improvisatrice," is a good specimen of "L. E. L.'s" work; so is "The Bayadere," which appeared in the same volume, though it suffers by comparison with Goethe's masterpiece. The brief pictures comprising the poem called "St. George's Hospital" are remarkable when we learn from the "Life" of "L. E. L." that they were produced "in a space of time that seems scarcely sufficient for transcribing the lines legibly." "The Deserter," also, shows dramatic qualities, while the lines entitled "Mont Blanc" (p. 113) have some lyrical vigour. "Erinna," and "The Venetian Bracelet" (1829) are two of her best poems. They are too long for quotation here in full. The following brief extract from the latter, however, has a personal interest, and exhibits her increasing command over metrical resources:—

"Another tale of thine! fair Italie—
 What makes my lute, my heart, aye turn to thee?
 I do not know thy language,—that is still
 Like the mysterious music of the rill;—
 And neither have I seen thy cloudless sky,
 Where the sun hath his immortality;
 Thy cities crown'd with palaces, thy halls
 Where art's great wonders light the storied walls;
 Thy fountains' silver sweep; thy groves, where dwell
 The rose and orange, summer's citadel;
 Thy songs that rise at twilight on the air,
 Wedding the breath thy thousand flowers sigh there;
 Thy tales of other times; thy marble shrines,
 Lovely though fallen,—for the ivy twines
 Its graceful wreath around each ruin'd fane,
 As still in some shape beauty would remain.
 I know them not, yet, Italie, thou art
 The promised land that haunts my dreaming heart."

Indeed, the fact that "The Venetian Bracelet" is not only one of her latest poems in point of date, but also one of her best stories told in verse, proves that she was learning more of her art as she grew older. "St. Valerie" (p. 111) is full of picturesqueness. One of "L. E. L.'s" chief defects is diffuseness of expression, but here the picture is concisely rendered. It is in these short poems with a distinct dramatic motive that "L. E. L." is seen at her best. Her series of poems, called "Subjects for Pictures," show a marked ability in the grouping of details for pictorial purposes. Doubtless her talent in this respect grew out of the dramatic instinct previously referred to. "The Moorish Maiden's Vigil" (p. 118), one of the series just named, has real feeling and pathos. Some of her most excellent work is to be found in "Poetical Sketches of Modern Pictures." Of these, "Juliet after the Masquerade" (p. 115) is a good example. It appeared in the *Literary Souvenir* of 1828, the same volume in which Coleridge's *Youth and Age* first appeared, and described a picture by Henry Thomson, R.A. She was afterwards ill-advised enough to recast it, and her failure to improve it shows how entirely improvisatorial was her power. She turned a lyric of much sweetness of movement into a poem in heroic couplets. The version given here is that which was first written. "Felicia Hemans" (p. 109) is a graceful and tender tribute to a greater poet than herself, and one who shared with "L. E. L." her faults rather than her merits.

Lætitia Elizabeth Landon, the daughter of an army agent, was born at Hans Place, Chelsea, London, on the 14th of August, 1802. As a child

she was unusually apt at learning, and, when very young, was in the habit of amusing her father and mother for an hour or two in the evening by telling them about the "wonderful castles she had built in her imagination." She became very fond of reading. The books that engaged her attention were miscellaneous in character, but during her childhood she read with her little brother nearly one hundred and fifty volumes of Cooke's "Poets and Novelists." Though she soon began to compose verses, she found, curiously enough, no small difficulty in acquiring the mechanical part of the art of writing. Mr. Jerdan, editor of the *Literary Gazette*,—then newly established—happened to be a neighbour of the Landons. Lætitia received from him advice and encouragement, and soon her poetical efforts appeared regularly in his journal. Her first long poem, "The Fate of Adelaide" (1820) is noticeable only as an indication of the direction which her poetical powers were afterwards to take. Besides the poems already named, and constant contributions to the literary annuals of the day, with much anonymous criticism in the *Literary Gazette*, she wrote novels entitled, "Romance and Reality" (1831), "Francesca Carrara" (1834), "Ethel Churchill" (1837), and "Lady Anne Granard," which last-mentioned story was published posthumously in 1842. Her best prose work is to be found in a series of essays upon Scott's female characters contributed to the *New Monthly Magazine*. A poem entitled "The Vow of the Peacock," suggested by Maclise's picture, appeared in 1835.

It is a striking instance of the power of fashions over literary art, that personally "L. E. L." had

nothing of the false sentimentality we find in her work; on the contrary, the chief characteristic of her talk and manner was a natural cheerfulness. Her biographer describes her face as one which, "though not regular in any feature, became beautiful by expression." She early became her own mistress. Sought after in society, she was not always sufficiently discreet in her conduct. Hence, by-and-by, scandal grew busy with her name, and, though there was no real stain on her character, her happiness was diminished. Strangely enough, although very fond of London where she had lived all her life, she had always cherished dreams of Africa. Partly from this cause, but mainly to be relieved, in a great measure, from the ceaseless annoyance caused by the calumnies respecting her, she married in 1838 Mr. George Maclean, Governor of Cape Coast Castle. She accompanied her husband on his return to Africa, leaving England full of hope for the future, and full of curiosity respecting the new scenes amid which her life was now to be passed. She had also many literary schemes in contemplation. But she died at Cape Coast Castle on the 15th of October, 1838, from the effects, it is believed, of poison, under circumstances which have never been satisfactorily explained. So tragica conclusion gives to "L. E. L.'s" career more pathetic interest than it would otherwise possess.

MACKENZIE BELL.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

LÆTITIA E. MACLEAN.

I.—FELICIA HEMANS.

NO more, no more—oh, never more returning,
Will thy beloved presence gladden earth ;
No more wilt thou with sad, yet anxious yearning
Cling to those hopes which have no mortal birth.
Thou art gone from us, and with thee departed,
How many lovely things have vanished too ;
Deep thoughts that at thy will to being started,
And feelings, teaching us our own were true.
Thou hast been round us, like a viewless spirit,
Known only by the music on the air ;
The leaf or flowers which thou hast named inherit
A beauty known but from thy breathing there :
For thou didst on them fling thy strong emotion,
The likeness from itself the fond heart gave ;
As planets from afar look down on ocean,
And give their own sweet image to the wave.

And thou didst bring from foreign lands their treasures
As floats thy various melody along ;
We know the softness of Italian measures,
And the grave cadence of Castilian song.
A general bond of union is the poet,
By its immortal verse is language known,
And for the sake of song do others know it—
One glorious poet makes the world his own.

And thou—how far thy gentle sway extended !
The heart's sweet empire over land and sea ;
Many a stranger and far flower was blended
In the soft wreath that glory bound for thee.
The echoes of the Susquehanna's waters
Paused in the pine-woods words of thine to hear ;
And to the wide Atlantic's younger daughters
Thy name was lovely, and thy song was dear.

Was not this purchased all too dearly ?—never
Can fame atone for all that fame hath cost.
We see the goal, but know not the endeavour,
Nor what fond hopes have on the way been lost.
What do we know of the unquiet pillow,
By the worn cheek and tearful eyelid prest,
When thoughts chased thoughts, like the tumultuous billow.
Whose very light and foam reveals unrest ?
We say, the song is sorrowful, but know not
What may have left that sorrow on the song ;
However mournful words may be, they show not
The whole extent of wretchedness and wrong.
They cannot paint the long sad hours, passed only
In vain regrets o'er what we feel we are.
Alas ! the kingdom of the lute is lonely—
Cold is the worship coming from afar.

Yet what is mind in woman, but revealing
In sweet clear light the hidden world below,
By quicker fancies and a keener feeling
Than those around, the cold and careless, know ?
What is to feed such feeling, but to culture
A soil whence pain will never more depart ?
The fable of Prometheus and the vulture
Reveals the poet's and the woman's heart.

Unkindly are they judged—unkindly treated—
By careless tongues and by ungenerous words;
While cruel sneer, and hard reproach, repeated,
Jar the fine music of the spirit's chords.
Wert thou not weary—thou whose soothing numbers
Gave other lips the joy thine own had not?
Didst thou not welcome thankfully the slumbers
Which closed around thy mourning human lot?

What on this earth could answer thy requiring,
For earnest faith—for love, the deep and true,
The beautiful, which was thy soul's desiring,
But only from thyself its being drew.
How is the warm and loving heart requited
In this harsh world, where it awhile must dwell.
Its best affections wronged, betrayed, and slighted—
Such is the doom of those who love too well.
Better the weary dove should close its pinion,
Fold up its golden wings and be at peace:
Enter, O ladye, that serene dominion
Where earthly cares and earthly sorrows cease.
Fame's troubled hour has cleared, and now replying,
A thousand hearts their music ask of thine.
Sleep with a light, the lovely and undying
Around thy grave—a grave which is a shrine.

II.—ST. VALERIE.

RAISED on the rocky barriers of the sea,
Stands thy dark convent, fair St. Valerie!
Lone like an eagle's nest, the pine-trees tall
Throw their long shadows on the heavy wall,
Where never sound is heard, save the wild sweep
Of mountain waters rushing to the deep,
The tempest's midnight song, the battle-cry

Of warring winds, like armies met on high,
And in a silent hour the convent chime.
And sometimes, at the quiet evening time
A vesper song—those tones, so pure so sweet,
When airs of earth and words of heaven do meet !
Sad is the legend of that young Saint's doom !
When the Spring Rose was in its May of bloom
The storm was darkening ; at that sweet hour
When hands beloved had reared her nuptial bower,
The pestilence came o'er the land, and he
 With whom her heart was, died that very morn—
Her bridal morn ! Alas, that there should be
 Such evil ever for affection born !
She shrank away from earth, for solitude
 Is the sole refuge for the heart's worst pain ;
Life had no ties,—she turned her unto heaven,
 And on the steep rock reared her holy fane.
It has an air of sadness, as just meet
For the so broken heart's last lone retreat !
A portrait here has still preserved each charm :
I saw it one bright evening, when the warm
Last glow of sunset shed its crimson ray
Over the lovely image. She was fair
As those most radiant spirits of the air
Whose life is amid flowers ! like the day,
The golden summer day, her glossy hair
Fell o'er a brow of Indian ivory ;
Her cheek was pale, and in her large dark eye
There was a thought of sorrow, and her brow
Upon one small snow hand leaned pensively,
As if to hide her tears ;—the other pressed
A silver crucifix upon her breast.
I ne'er saw sadness touching as in thee
And thy lorn look, oh fair St. Valerie !

III.—MONT BLANC.

Heaven knows our travellers have sufficiently alloyed the beautiful, and profaned the sublime, by associating these with themselves, the common-place, and the ridiculous; but out upon them, thus to tread on the grey hairs of centuries,—on the untrodden snows of Mont Blanc. (*L. E. L.*)

THOU monarch of the upper air,
Thou mighty temple given

For morning's earliest of light,
And evening's last of heaven.

The vapour from the marsh, the smoke
From crowded cities sent,
Are purified before they reach
Thy loftier element.

Thy hues are not of earth but heaven;
Only the sunset rose
Hath leave to fling a crimson dye
Upon thy stainless snows.

Now out on those adventurers
Who scaled thy breathless height,
And made thy pinnacle, Mont Blanc,
A thing for common sight.

Before that human step had left
Its sully on thy brow,
The glory of thy forehead made
A shrine to those below :

Men gaz'd upon thee as a star,
And turned to earth again,
With dreams like thine own floating clouds,
The vague but not the vain.

No feelings are less vain than those
That bear the mind away,
Till blent with nature's mysteries

It half forgets its clay.
It catches loftier impulses;
And owns a nobler power ;—
The poet and philosopher
Are born of such an hour.

But now where may we seek a place
For any spirit's dream ;
Our steps have been o'er every soil,
Our sails o'er every stream,
Those isles, the beautiful Azores,
The fortunate, the fair !
We looked for their perpetual spring
To find it was not there,
Bright El Dorado, land of gold,
We have so sought for thee,
There's not a spot in all the globe
Where such a land can be.

How pleasant were the wild beliefs
That dwelt in legends old,
Alas ! to our posterity
Will no such tales be told.
We know too much, scroll after scroll
Weighs down our weary shelves ;
Our only point of ignorance
Is centred in ourselves.
Alas ! for thy past mystery,
For thine untrodden snow,
Nurse of the tempest, hast thou none
To guard thy outraged brow ?
Thy summit, once the unapproached,
Hath human presence owned,
With the first step upon thy crest
Mont Blanc, thou wert dethroned.

IV.—JULIET AFTER THE MASQUERADE.

(FROM "THE LITERARY SOUVENIR," 1828.)

Those fond, vague dreams, that make love's happiness
Its first—and oh, its last !

SHE has left the lighted hall,
She has flung down cap and plume,
Her eye wears softer light,
And her cheek a tenderer bloom :

And her hair in sunny showers
Falls o'er her marble brow,
From its midnight bonds of pearl,
Free as her thoughts are now.—

She has left the yet glad dance,
O'er those gentle thoughts to brood,
That haunt a girl's first hour
Of love-touched solitude.

Music's sweet and distant sound
Comes floating on the air,
From the banquet-room it tells
The dancers still are there :

But she, their loveliest one,
Has left the festal scene,
To dream on what may be,
To muse o'er what has been,

To think on low, soft words,
Her ear had drunk that night,
While her heart beat echo-like,
And her cheek burnt ruby bright.

How beautiful she looks
Beneath that moonlit sky,
With her lip of living rose,
Her blue and drooping eye !

Spell-like, the festal scene
Rises on heart and brain ;
Not a word, and not a look,
But she lives them o'er again.

Well, dream thy dream, fair girl !
Tho' ne'er did morning close,
With its cold and waking light,
Dreams fair and false as those :

They are like the mists that rise
At day-break to the sky,
There, touched by all bright hues,
On its breast awhile they lie ;

But the darker hour draws on,
The rose-tint disappears,
And the falling cloud returns
To its native earth in tears.—

Yet dream thy dream, fair girl !
Tho' away it will be driven,
'Tis something to have past
A single hour in heaven.

Tho' thine eye has April light,
Tho' thy cheek has April bloom
There is that upon them both
Which marks an early tomb.

So young, so fair, to die—
And can those words be true ?
Ah ! better far ' to die,'
Than live as some must do ;

With a heart that will not break,
Though every nerve be strained,
Whether won to be betrayed,
Or discovered and disdained :—

For Love to watch Hope's grave,
And yet itself breathe on,
Like the blighted flower which lives,
Tho' scent and bloom be gone.

But this watching each last leaf,
Green on the fading tree,
The while we see it wither,
Is maiden not for thee.

One hour of passionate joy,
And one of passionate grief—
A morning and a midnight—
Fill up thy life's short leaf !

Short, sad, but still how much
Of death's bitterness is past,
Thy last sigh breathed upon the heart,
Beating thine unto the last !

V.—THE MOORISH MAIDEN'S VIGIL.

(FROM "SUBJECTS FOR PICTURES.")

DOES she watch him, fondly watch him,
Does the maiden watch in vain ?
Do her dark eyes strain to catch him
Riding o'er the moonlit plain,
Stately, beautiful, and tall ?
Those long eyelashes are gleaming
With the tears she will not shed ;
Still her patient hope is dreaming
That it is his courser's tread,
If an olive leaf but fall.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side ;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Scarlet is the turban folded
Round the long black plaits of hair ;
And the pliant gold is moulded
Round her arms that are as fair
As the moonlight which they meet.
Little of their former splendour
Lingereth in her large dark eyes ;
Ever sorrow maketh tender,
And the heart's deep passion lies
In their look so sad and sweet.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side ;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Once the buds of the pomegranate
Paled beside her cheek's warm dye,
Now 'tis like the last sad planet
Waning in the morning sky—
She has wept away its red.

Can this be the Zegri maiden,
Whom Granada named its flower,
Drooping like a rose rain-laden?—
Heavy must have been the shower,
Bowing down its fragrant head.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

To the north her fancies wander,
There he dwells, her Spanish knight;
'Tis a dreadful thing to ponder,
Whether true love heard aright.
Did he say those gentle things
Over which fond memories linger,
And with which she cannot part?
Still his ring is on her finger,
Still his name is in her heart—
All around his image brings.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Can the fond heart be forsaken
By the one who sought that heart?
Can there be who will awaken
All of life's diviner part,
For some vanity's cold reign.

Heavy is the lot of woman—
Heavy is her loving lot—
If it thus must share in common
Love with those who know it not—
With the careless and the vain.
Woe for thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's side;
Better, than this weary watching,
Better thou hadst died.

Faithless Christian!—ere the blossom,
Hanging on the myrtle bough,
Float on the clear fountain's bosom,
She who listened to thy vow—
She will watch for thee no more!
'Tis a tale of frequent sorrow
Love seems fated to renew;
It will be again to-morrow
Just as bitter and as true,
As it aye has been of yore,
Woe to thee, my poor Zorayda,
By the fountain's wave;
But the shade of rest is round thee—
And it is the grave!

VI.—LINES OF LIFE.

Orphan in my first years, I early learnt
To make my heart suffice itself, and seek
Support and sympathy in its own depths.

WELL, read my cheek, and watch my eye,—
Too strictly school'd are they,
One secret of my soul to show,
One hidden thought betray.

I never knew the time my heart
Look'd freely from my brow ;
It once was check'd by timidity,
'Tis taught by caution now.

I live among the cold, the false,
And I must seem like them
And such I am, for I am false
As those I most condemn.

I teach my lip its sweetest smile,
My tongue its softest tone ;
I borrow others' likeness, till
Almost I lose my own.

I pass through flattery's gilded sieve,
Whatever I would say ;
In social life, all, like the blind,
Must learn to feel their way.

I check my thoughts like curbed steeds
That struggle with the rein ;
I bid my feelings sleep, like wrecks
In the unfathom'd main.

I hear them speak of love, the deep,
The true, and mock the name ;
Mock at all high and early truth,
And I too do the same.

I hear them tell some touching tale,
I swallow down the tear ;
I hear them name some generous deed,
And I have learnt to sneer.

I hear the spiritual, the kind,
The pure, but named in mirth ;
Till all of good, ay, even hope,
Seems exiled from our earth.

And one fear, withering ridicule,
Is all that I can dread ;
A sword hung by a single hair
For ever o'er the head.

We bow to a most servile faith,
In a most servile fear ;
While none among us dares to say
What none will choose to hear.

And if we dream of loftier thoughts,
In weakness they are gone ;
And indolence and vanity
Rivet our fetters on.

Surely I was not born for this !
I feel a loftier mood
Of generous impulse, high resolve,
Steal o'er my solitude !

I gaze upon the thousand stars
That fill the midnight sky ;
And wish, so passionately wish,
A light like theirs on high.

I have such eagerness of hope
To benefit my kind ;
And feel as if immortal power
Were given to my mind.

I think on that eternal fame,
The sun of earthly gloom,
Which makes the gloriousness of death,
The future of the tomb—

That earthly future, the faint sign
Of a more heavenly one ;
—A step, a word, a voice, a look,—
Alas! my dream is done !

And earth, and earth's debasing stain,
Again is on my soul ;
And I am but a nameless part
Of a most worthless whole.

Why write I this ? because my heart
Towards the future springs,
That future where it loves to soar
On more than eagle wings.

The present, it is but a speck
In that eternal time,
In which my lost hopes find a home,
My spirit knows its clime.

Oh ! not myself,—for what am I ?—
The worthless and the weak,
Whose every thought of self should raise
A blush to burn my cheek.

But song has touch'd my lips with fire,
And made my heart a shrine
For what, although alloy'd, debased,
Is in itself divine.

I am myself but a vile link
Amid life's weary chain ;
But I have spoken hallow'd words,
Oh do not say in vain !

My first, my last, my only wish,
Say will my charmed chords
Wake to the morning light of fame,
And breathe again my words ?

Will the young maiden, when her tears
Alone in moonlight shine—
Tears for the absent and the loved—
Murmur some song of mine ?

Will the pale youth by his dim lamp,
Himself a dying flame,
From many an antique scroll beside,
Choose that which bears my name ?

Let music make less terrible
The silence of the dead ;
I care not, so my spirit last
Long after life has fled.

VII.—THE UNKNOWN GRAVE.

THERE is a little lonely grave
Which no one comes to see,
The foxglove and red orchis wave
Their welcome to the bee.
There never falls the morning sun,
It lies beneath the wall,
But there when weary day is done
The lights of sunset fall,
Flushing the warm and crimson air,
As life and hope were present there.

There sleepeth one who left his heart
Behind him in his song;
Breathing of that diviner part
Which must to heaven belong,
The language of those spirit chords,
But to the poet known,
Youth, love, and hope yet use his words,
They seem to be his own:
And yet he has not left a name,
The poet died without his fame.

How many are the lovely lays
That haunt our English tongue;
Defrauded of their poet's praise,
Forgotten he who sung.
Tradition only vaguely keeps
Sweet fancies round his tomb;
Its tears are what the wild flower weeps,
Its record is that bloom;
Ah, surely Nature keeps with her
The memory of her worshipper.

One of her loveliest mysteries
Such spirit blends at last,
With all the fairy fantasies
Which o'er some scenes are cast :
A softer beauty fills the grove,
A light is in the grass,
A deeper sense of truth and love
Comes o'er us as we pass ;
While lingers in the heart one line
The nameless poet hath a shrine.

Sara Coleridge.

1802—1850.

THERE is little to recount respecting the life of Sara Coleridge. Born December 22nd, 1802, she was brought up under the roof of her uncle, Southey, and owed nothing to her father except the inheritance of his mental power, of which she gave proof at a surprisingly early age, by her translation of Dobrizhofer's "History of the Abipones," a feat requiring an equal mastery of Latin and English. With Dora Wordsworth and her cousin, Edith Southey, she is the subject of Wordsworth's beautiful poem, "The Triad." Shortly after its composition she married her cousin, Henry Nelson Coleridge, who became her father's literary executor, a duty soon devolved upon her by his premature death. Her entire devotion to it is probably the chief cause of her having missed the supreme literary distinction which her correspondence shows to have been entirely within her reach. She died in 1850.

After George Eliot's, we should pronounce Sara Coleridge's the most powerful female mind which has as yet addressed itself to English literature. While deficient in no feminine grace, she is intellectually distinguished by a quality for which we can find no better name than manliness. She displays the strongest, massiest common sense, goes direct to the root of a matter, sweeps antagonism

from her path in a twinkling, and exhibits a refreshing liberality, despite a burden of hereditary and conventional prejudice. Circumstances forced her learning and her reasoning faculty into prominence, her pious labours as her father's editor and annotator leaving her but little opportunity for the exercise of the imaginative gift which she had equally inherited from him. "Phantasmion," though too unsubstantial a work to create a permanent impression, shows that she possessed this endowment in rich measure, and the little lyrics scattered through its pages confer upon her a secure though a modest place among English poetesses.

RICHARD GARNETT.

PHANTASMION.

A FAIRY TALE.

1837.

SARA COLERIDGE.

I—SYLVAN STAG, SECURELY PLAY.

(FROM CHAPTER VIII.)

Phantasmion advanced into the forest, and, looking from behind an oak tree, beheld the slender damsel caressing the stag, whose white hide was dappled with minute shadows from a branch of aspen, the sunbeams finding their way through the interstices of its delicate foliage. The lady had intermitted her melody, but now resumed it, addressing thus her happy comrade, who seemed to be conscious he was the subject of the strain:—

SYLVAN stag, securely play,
'Tis the sportful month of May,
Till her music dies away

Fear no huntsman's hollo;
While the cowslip nods her head,
While the fragrant blooms are shed
O'er the turf which thou dost tread,
None thy traces follow.

In the odours wafted round,
Those that breathe from thee are drowned;
Echo voices not a sound,

Flect one, to dismay thee;
On the budding beeches browse,
None shall come the deer to rouse;
Scattered leaves and broken boughs
Shall not now betray thee

Sylvan deer, on branches fed,
 'Mid the countless branches bred,
 Mimic branches on thy head
 With the rest are springing ;
 Smooth them on the russet bark,
 Or the stem of cypress dark,
 From whose top the woodland lark
 Soars to heaven singing.

Here a livelier voice from another quarter of the forest, where the ground dipped into a dell, took up the strain and continued the song thus, as if in a spirit of gay mimicry.—

Bound along, or else be still,
 Sportive roebuck, at thy will ;
 Wilding rose and woodbine fill
 All the grove with sweetness,
 Safely may thy gentle roe
 O'er the piny hillocks go,
 Every white-robed torrent's flow
 Rivalling in fleetness.

Peaceful breaks for thee the dawn,
 While thou lead'st thy skipping fawn,
 Gentle hind, across the lawn
 In the forest spreading ;
 Morn appears in sober vest,
 Nor hath eve in roses drest,
 By her purple hues exprest
 Aught of thy blood-shedding.

The damsel was by this time seated on the projecting roots of a large tree, finishing a long wreath of flowers, while the stag lay beside her and seemed to watch her motions. She continued to murmur in a low key, but in unison with the voice which proceeded from the dell, and which was joined by one of deeper tone, in these latter verses:—

Milk-white doe, 'tis but the breeze
Rustling in the alder trees ;
Slumber thou while honey-bees
 Lull thee with their humming ;
Though the ringdove's plaintive moan
Seems to tell of pleasure flown,
On thy couch with blossoms sown,
 Fear no peril coming.

Thou amid the lilies laid,
Seem'st in lily vest array'd
Fann'd by gales which they have made
 Sweet with their perfuming ;
Primrose tufts impearl'd with dew ;
Bells which heav'n has steep'd in blue
Lend the breeze their odours too,
 All around thee blooming.

None shall come to scare thy dreams,
Save perchance the playful gleams ;
Wake to quaff the cooling streams
 Of the sunlit river ;
Thou across the faithless tide
Needest not for safety glide,
Nor thy panting bosom hide
 Where the grasses shiver.

When the joyous months are past,
Roses pine in autumn's blast,
When the violets breathe their last,
 All that's sweet is flying :
Then the sylvan deer must fly,
'Mid the scatter'd blossoms lie,
Fall with falling leaves and die
 When the flow'rs are dying.

II.—ONE FACE ALONE.

(FROM CHAPTER VIII.)

ONE face alone, one face alone,
These eyes require ;
But, when that longed-for sight is shown,
What fatal fire
Shoots through my veins a keen and liquid flame,
That melts each fibre of my wasting frame.
One voice alone, one voice alone,
I pine to hear ;
But, when its meek mellifluous tone
Usurps mine ear,
Those slavish chains about my soul are wound,
Which ne'er, till death itself, can be unbound.
One gentle hand, one gentle hand,
I fain would hold ;
But, when it seems at my command,
My own grows cold ;
Then low to earth I bend in sickly swoon,
Like lilies drooping 'mid the blaze of noon.

III.—GRIEF'S HEAVY HAND.

(FROM CHAPTER XIII.)

GRIEF'S heavy hand hath sway'd the lute ;
'Tis henceforth mute :
Though pleasure woo, the strings no more respond
To touches light as fond,
Silenced as if by an enchanter's wand.
Do thou brace up each slackened chord,
Love, gentle lord ;
Then shall the lute pour grateful melodies
On every breeze,
Strains that celestial choristers may please.

IV.—O SLEEP, MY BABE.

(FROM CHAPTER XVI.)

O SLEEP, my babe, hear not the rippling wave,
Nor feel the breeze that round thee lingering strays
To drink thy balmy breath,
And sigh one long farewell.

Soon shall it mourn above thy wat'ry bed,
And whisper to me, on the wave-beat shore,
Deep murm'ring in reproach,
Thy sad untimely fate.

Ere those dear eyes had opened on the light,
In vain to plead, thy coming life was sold,
O! wakened but to sleep,
Whence it can wake no more!

A thousand and a thousand silken leaves
The tufted beech unfolds in early spring,
All clad in tenderest green,
All of the self-same shape:

A thousand infant faces, soft and sweet,
Each year sends forth, yet every mother views
Her last not least beloved
Like its dear self alone.

No musing mind hath ever yet foreshaped
The face to-morrow's sun shall first reveal,
No heart hath e'er conceived
What love that face will bring.

O sleep, my babe, nor heed how mourns the gale
To part with thy soft locks and fragrant breath,
As when it deeply sighs
O'er autumn's latest bloom.

V.—I TREMBLE WHEN WITH LOOK BENIGN.

(FROM CHAPTER XVIII.)

I TREMBLE when with look benign
 Thou tak'st my offer'd hand in thine,
 Lest passion-breathing words of mine
 The charm should break :
 And friendly smiles be forced to fly,
 Like soft reflections of the sky,
 Which, when rude gales are sweeping by,
 Desert the lake.

Of late I saw thee in a dream ;
 The day-star pour'd his hottest beam,
 And thou, a cool refreshing stream,
 Did'st brightly run :
 The trees where thou wert pleased to flow,
 Threw out their flowers, a glorious show,
 While I, too distant doomed to grow,
 Pined in the sun.

By no life-giving moisture fed,
 A wasted tree, I bow'd my head,
 My sallow leaves and blossoms shed
 On earth's green breast :
 And silent pray'd the slumbering wind,
 The lake, thy tarrying place, might find,
 And waft my leaves, with breathings kind,
 There, there, to rest.

VI.—HOW HIGH YON LARK.

(FROM CHAPTER XX.)

HOW high yon lark is heavenward borne !
 Yet, ere again she hails the morn,
 Beyond where birds can wing their way
 Our souls may soar to endless day,

May hear the heavenly choirs rejoice,
While earth still echoes to her voice.

A waveless flood, supremely bright,
Has drown'd the myriad isles of light ;
But ere that ocean ebb'd away,
The shadowy gulf their forms betray,
Above the stars our course may run,
'Mid beams unborrow'd from the sun.

In this day's light what flowers will bloom,
What insects quit the self-made womb !
But ere the bud its leaves unfold,
The gorgeous fly his plumes of gold,
On fairer wings we too may glide,
Where youth and joy no ills betide.

Then come, while yet we linger here,
Fit thoughts for that celestial sphere,
A heart which under keenest light,
May bear the gaze of spirits bright,
Who all things know, and nought endure
That is not holy, just and pure.

*VII.—FALSE LOVE, TOO LONG THOU HAST
DELAYED.*

(FROM CHAPTER XXII.)

FALSE Love, too long thou hast delay'd,
Too late I make my choice ;
Yet win for me that precious maid,
And bid my heart rejoice :
Then shall mine eyes shoot youthful fire,
My cheek with triumph glow,
And other maids that glance desire,
Which I on one bestow.

Make her with smile divinely bland
Beam sunshine o'er my face,
And Time shall touch with gentlest hand
What she hath deigned to grace ;
O'er scanty locks full wreaths I'll wear ;
No wrinkled brow to shade,
For joy will smooth the furrows there,
Which earlier griefs have made.

Though sports of youth be tedious toil,
When youth has pass'd away,
I'll cast aside the martial spoil
With her light locks to play ;
Yea, turn, sweet maid, from tented field
To rove where dew-drops shine,
Nor care what hand the sceptre wield,
So thou wilt grant me thine.

VIII.—HE CAME UNLOOKED FOR.

(FROM CHAPTER XXVI.)

HE came unlook'd for, undesir'd
A sun-rise in the northern sky :
More than the brightest dawn admir'd,
To shine and then for ever fly.

His love, conferr'd without a claim,
Perchance was like the fitful blaze,
Which lives to light a steadier flame,
And, while that strengthens, fast decays.

Glad fawn along the forest springing,
Gay birds that breeze-like stir the leaves,
Why hither haste, no message bringing,
To solace one that deeply grieves ?

Thou star that dost the skies adorn
So brightly heralding the day,
Bring one more welcome than the morn,
Or still in night's dark prison stay.

IX.—YON CHANGEFUL CLOUD.

(FROM CHAPTER XXVII.)

YON changeful cloud will soon thy aspect wear—
So bright it grows :—and now, by light winds shaken
O ever seen yet ne'er to be o'ertaken !
Those waving branches seem thy billowy hair.
The cypress glades recall thy pensive air ;
Slow rills, that wind like snakes amid the grass,
Thine eye's mild sparkle fling me as they pass,
Yet murmuring cry, This fruitless quest forbear !

Nay e'en amid the cataract's loud storm,
Where foamy torrents from the crags are leaping,
Methinks I catch swift glimpses of thy form,
Thy robe's light folds in airy tumult sweeping ;
Then silent are the falls : 'mid colours warm
Gleams the bright maze beneath their splendour sleeping.

X.—I WAS A BROOK.

(FROM CHAPTER XXVIII.)

I WAS a brook in straitest channel pent,
Forcing 'mid rocks and stones my toilsome way,
A scanty brook in wandering well-nigh spent ;
But now with thee, rich stream, conjoin'd I stray,
Through golden meads the river sweeps along,
Murmuring its deep full joy in gentlest undersong.

I crept through desert moor and gloomy glade,
My waters ever vex'd, yet sad and slow,
My waters ever steep'd in baleful shade :
But, whilst with thee, rich stream, conjoined I flow,
E'en in swift course the river seems to rest,
Blue sky, bright bloom and verdure imag'd on its
breast.

And, whilst with thee I roam through regions bright
Beneath kind love's serene and gladsome sky,
A thousand happy things that seek the light,
Till now in darkest shadow forc'd to lie,
Up through the illumin'd waters nimbly run,
To show their forms and hues in the all revealing sun.

XI.—I THOUGHT BY TEARS.

(FROM CHAPTER XXXI.)

I THOUGHT by tears thy soul to move
Since smiles had proved in vain ;
But I from thee no smiles of love,
Nor tears of pity gain :
Now, now I could not smile perforce
A sceptred queen to please :
Yet tears will take th' accustom'd course
Till time their fountain freeze.

My life is dedicate to thee,
My service wholly thine ;
But what fair fruit can grace the tree
Till suns vouchsafe to shine ?
Thou art my sun, thy looks are light,
O cast me not in shade
Beam forth ere summer takes its flight,
And all my honours fade.

When torn by sudden gusty flaw,
The fragile harp lies mute,
Its tenderest tones the wind can draw
From many another lute ;
But when this beating heart lies still,
Each chord relax'd in death,
What other shall so deeply thrill,
So tremble at thy breath ?

*XII.—FULL OFT BEFORE SOME GORGEOUS
FANE*

(FROM CHAPTER XXXIX.)

FULL oft before some gorgeous fane
The youngling heifer bleeds and dies ;
Her life-blood issuing forth amain,
While wreaths of incense climb the skies.

The mother wanders all around,
Through shadowy grove and lightsome glade ;
Her foot-marks on the yielding ground
Will prove what anxious quest she made.

The stall where late her darling lay
She visits oft with eager look :
In restless movements wastes the day,
And fills with cries each neighbouring nook.

She roams along the willowy copse,
Where purest waters softly gleam :
But ne'er a leaf or blade she crops,
Nor crouches by the gliding stream.

No youthful kine, though fresh and fair,
Her vainly searching eyes engage ;
No pleasant fields relieve her care,
No murmuring streams her grief assuage.

XIII.—SEE YON BLITHE CHILD.

(FROM CHAPTER XXXIX.)

SEE yon blithe child that dances in our sight ?
Can gloomy shadows fall from one so bright ?

Fond mother, whence these fears ?

While buoyantly he rushes o'er the lawn,
Dream not of clouds to stain his manhood's dawn,
Nor dim that sight with tears.

No cloud he spies in brightly glowing hours,
But feels as if the newly vested bowers
For him could never fade :

Too well we know that vernal pleasures fleet,
But having him, so gladsome, fair, and sweet,
Our loss is overpaid.

Amid the balmiest flowers that earth can give
Some bitter drops distil, and all that live

A mingled portion share ;

But, while he learns these truths which we lament,
Such fortitude as ours will sure be sent,
Such solace to his care.

XIV.—L'ENVOY OF PHANTASMION.

GO, little book, and sing of love and beauty,
To tempt the worldling into fairy land ;
Tell him that airy dreams are sacred duty,
Bring better wealth than aught his toils command—
Toils fraught with mickle harm.

But if thou meet some spirit high and tender,
On blessed works and noblest love intent,
Tell him that airy dreams of nature's splendour,
With graver thoughts and hallowed musings blent,
Prove no too earthly charm.

Sarah Flower Adams.

1805—1848.

THE authoress of "*Vivia Perpetua*," was the daughter of Benjamin Flower, a well-known politician and martyr for the liberty of the press in Pitt's day; and the sister of Eliza Flower, one of the most gifted of English female composers. She was born Feb. 22nd, 1805; married William Bridges Adams, engineer, in 1834, and died of decline in August 1848. Her life, so far as known to the world, is summed up in the authorship of her drama "*Vivia Perpetua*" (1841) and her connection with the congregation of Finsbury Unitarian Chapel, under the pastorate of William Johnson Fox. The musical service was organised, and a large proportion of the hymns set to music, by Mrs. Adams's sister; while she herself enriched the collection with many original and translated pieces. Among them was "*Nearer, my God, to thee*," which divides with Cardinal Newman's "*Lead, kindly Light*," the distinction of being at once the most popular and the most poetical modern hymn. One is reminded of Dryden's famous lines; but the feats of the male and the female minstrel were in this instance reversed; for it is Mrs. Adams who "*raises the mortal to the skies*," and Cardinal Newman who "*draws the angel down*."

NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE.

"Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee,
Even though it be a cross
That raiseth me ;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

Though like the wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone ;
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

Then let the way appear
Steps unto heaven ;
All that thou send'st to me
In mercy given ;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

Then, with my waking thoughts
Bright with thy praise,
Out of those stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise ;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

Or, if on joyful wing,
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upward I fly,
Still all my song shall be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee !

An unsigned translation from Luis de Leon,
almost equally beautiful, may be safely attributed

to Mrs. Adams; nor less exquisite is the following little known piece, the quintessence of pure devotional feeling:—

“ He sendeth sun, he sendeth shower,
Alike they're needful to the flower,
And joys and tears alike are sent
To give the soul fit nourishment:
As comes to me or cloud or sun,
Father, thy will, not mine, be done.

Can loving children e'er reprove
With murmurs, whom they trust and love
Creator, I would ever be
A trusting, loving child to thee
As comes to me or cloud or sun,
Father, thy will, not mine, be done.

O ne'er will I at life repine,
Enough that thou hast made it mine.
When falls the shadow cold of death
I yet will sing with parting breath
As comes to me or cloud or sun,
Father, thy will, not mine, be done.”

The above will suffice for Mrs. Adams's character and eulogy as a writer of devotional poetry; and her dramatic attempt also is essentially lyrical. “Vivia Perpetua” is unsatisfactory as a play, but has deep human interest as an idealised representation of the authoress's mind and heart. In the character of Vivia she has shadowed forth her own moral affections and intellectual convictions, and the intensity of her feelings frequently exalts her diction, else artless and slightly conventional, into genuine eloquence. The moral charm, however, takes precedence of the artistic, as is to be expected in the work of a true woman. Lyrical enthusiasm atones in no small measure for the lack of the

constructive faculty, and "*Vivia Perpetua*" fulfils better than many more ambitious works Milton's demand that poetry should be "simple, sensuous, and passionate." The authoress would probably have left a higher reputation if she had given freer scope to her natural instinct for lyrical poetry, instead of devoting her most strenuous endeavour to the difficult undertaking of reviving the poetical drama. But her love of the theatre, which at one time led her to contemplate adopting it as a profession, was fostered by the friendship of Browning and Macready, as well as by her affection and reverence for W. J. Fox, the best critic of acting in his day. Her occasional lyrics on political and social subjects have not been collected; one, a very spirited poem on the opening of the Royal Exchange, is preserved in Fox's "*Lectures to the Working Classes.*"

RICHARD GARNETT.

VIVIA PERPETUA.

1841.

SARAH FLOWER ADAMS.

(FROM ACT V., SCENE II.)

Vivia.

CÆCILIUS, go not thou.—Gaoler, give leave.
Nay, quench the lights,—my lamp will serve ; and
ere

The prison-rounds are o'er, this youth shall meet thee
At the outer gate.

Pudens. Thy time, how long soe'er. [*Exit.*

Vivia.

I have not spoke with thee to-night, Cæcilius ;
The slightest word had made the ready tears
Brim o'er their boundaries. Said I not ?—weep on !
Thou hast wept to me before, and I with thee.
Ease thy full heart ; then be thou strong to listen.
I need thee ;—thou canst help me, if thou wilt.

Cæcil. Help thee ?—and if I will !

Vivia.

But ere I speak
Of the one only thought 'twixt me and heaven,
Tell me of Nola ; for my heart is yearning
To see her once again before I die.

Cecil. She stays within her chamber ; was forbid
To haste to you. She stays in sure belief
That you will be releas'd, will come to her.

Vivia. Releas'd I shall be ! She must come to me.

[She takes a golden arrow from her hair.

Give her this token. Say, our early love
Is fresh with me, as though 'twere yesterday
We wander'd, arm-encircl'd, gathering shells.—
Could it be yesterday she talk'd of it ?—
Tell her, that He for whom I die was one
Who taught all love to hope : so bid her thought
Soar up, to meet my blessing on the way.
Sure, unforgotten as she is in death,
I still may be her friend in heav'n !—Your thoughts ?—
They wander.

Cecil. They are still with thee !—with thee
And with the morrow.

Vivia. Mark me ! many thoughts
In many morrows I now ask of thee.
Much has been said—too much—of loving kindness
Render'd to one who was left motherless ;—
This time to-morrow—Thascius—wilt thou—

Cecil. Will I ? oh, find thy words to tell me what !

Vivia. Thou'rt young ; hast many years—and be
they blest—

Before thee. I have mark'd a strength in thee,
Seen most within these latter days of trial ;
And Heav'n hath prosper'd so the thought that thou
Wilt come to hold the faith ; I unto thee,
Commit in trust this child, my Thascius,—
In trust unto thy thought. It may be years—
Never, perchance—ere act of thine may serve ;
Still let him have a home within thy thought.
And thy good strength, and youth, and years to come

And fate alike, so oft a loving bond,
 And something for his mother's memory,—
 No, no, there needs no word of thine, Cæcilius
 That look has laid an answer at my heart !
 Blessing of Heav'n descend on thee and him !

Cæcil. I would I were your God, to give you wings
 Now, now to bear you up ! I would not stay you,
 Though they would take you quite away from me
 But, oh, that morrow's doom !

Vivia. Why fear it thus ?
 The pain of martyrdom dwells not in death.
 Think'st thou the love that dares it hath not joy
 In loving, to make light the keenest pangs
 That touch the body ? No !—the torture comes
 And sharpen'd fangs are busiest at the heart,
 When all the old affections are dragg'd forth,
 And torn upon the rack. What is't to die ?

Cæcil. To sink in quiet 'neath a sighing tree,
 Like to the warrior in the song you lov'd ;
 To die like him, lapsing in quiet shadow,
 Were peace : but, oh, the death that waits for thee !—
 The glare—the tumult !

Vivia. What are they ? since I
 Have sat alone, girt with the dreadful dark,
 The never-ceasing night, with that one image
 In terrible light, stern, pale, and palpable,—
 The image of my father in his grief :
 Eyes shut—the same—or staring wide again,
 Still would it come—look, look, now while I speak !

*[Vivius appears with a lamp at the
 opposite side of the quadrangle. He
 comes slowly forward. The father
 and daughter gaze at each other for
 some time without speaking.]*

Vivius. Do ye know me, who I am?—no, no—
no wonder!

I am older many years since yester morn.
I was before that time a man nam'd Vivius,
A happy father, who did read his hopes
Upon the noble brows, and, as he thought,
The most true brows, of a beloved daughter!
I am—I know not what. And when I ask
Help of the outward universe to bring
Back to myself the former consciousness,
The sun shuts up the while I look on him;
The stars all hurry past me while I pray;
The earth sinks from my feet: all false! all false!

Vivia. No bitterness now!

Vivius. No bitterness?—gods,
No bitterness! [He weeps.

Vivia. My father, that thou couldst
Crowd all thyself at once into one thought!
Think of the faith—look on me as I stand,
A creature anguished at thy agony,—
How far beyond the morrow's suffering!—
One who hath lost even the few brief hours
She reckoned as her own, to tend her child;—
Then think upon the faith that bids my heart
Have yet beneath it all, a hope as calm
As were his lids, when last I parted from him.
Whence comes such miracle—of whom such faith?

Vivius.

Faith! faith!—is that the word?—and miracle!
Yes!—that thy tongue would stir to speak the word!
What is thy faith?—a lie. What are its fruits?
What made thee false to me? What made thee thus
Shew forth fine joys to woo me in thy face,—
A black'ning plague-spot hidden in thy breast;—

Lur'd me to build my trust on thee for rock,
While thou wert rotten as the poisonous heap
The sea throws up for waste ? And this is faith !
A lie !—it is a lie !

Vivia. No more ! forbear !

I see, though thou dost not, God's angel stand
Shelt'ring my hope in thee ! Thou shalt not speak,
Lest he be moved to stretch a ruffled wing
Up to the Lord, with those accusing words.
I will not have thee less before the Lord
When I shall plead for thee—as plead I will—
Plead for the earthly father, who once taught
His child in youth to love the truth, so led
Unto the heav'nly. Hath it been gainsay'd ?
Thou know'st it hath not. Thou dost know 'twas love,
And love alone, that, fearful of thy grief,
Delay'd to bring it on thee, hoping still
A way might show to mitigate the pang.
And I will not be lesser than I am,
Unworthy as I am for this emprise ;—
For thy sake, not. 'Twas thou who mad'st me true,
And true I am ; 'twas thou who mad'st me dare,
And I have dar'd. Who was it in my youth
Did crown our Dido empress of my soul,
For that she gave her blood for double worth,—
A faith unbroken, and her people's good ?
Did tell me of the wife of Asdrubal,
How that she lov'd the honour of her Carthage
More than her life, and leapt from off the walls
Giving herself, her children, to the flames ?
My Carthage is the world ! I do but stretch
The line they held—Christ guiding still my hand,
Who first did point the way.

Vivius.

And can it be

Thou art that very child so oft hath stood
Between my knees to listen those old tales ?
Oh for that child again !

Vivia.

I am that child

In all that's simple truth. It was your wont
To question, that an answering lisp might come
Of names, of things, almost too large for one
Of infant speech. Ask me of this,—what is it ?
Why, I should say, it is a water-cruise ;
I know it that, and could not say it other.
I could no more deny to those who ask
Of me, what am I ;—I do know myself
A Christian, and must say I am a Christian.

Vivius.

Thy breath comes to me like the sharpen'd air
To cut my heart in twain ; cold,—cold. But, no !
Here's fire enough. And I will shew the world
White ashes yet may cover glowing heat !
You had a boy.

Vivia.

Dead ?

Vivius.

To you !

Vivia.

Oh, cruel !

Oh, spare me, for 'tis here that I am weak.
No, no, spare not ; 'tis here I would be strong,
And, trust Christ's mercy, he will guard a child
Blest by such love as mine hath had upon him.
Such love, sure am I, it can never perish.
E'en now doth comfort, like a flower, spring up
Sudden within my breast. You—you,—I know
That you will nourish him—will cherish him,—
Will teach his tongue the truth you taught to mine ;
(And hath not Christ abundant for the rest ?)
And when that he and time have smil'd down sorrow,
Oft, will you, while you sit and gaze on him,

See his dead mother live from out his eyes,—
His loving eyes ; and then,—dear child ! dear father !
Vivius (*falling at her feet*). You weep !—you
weep ! Oh let those tears at once
Revive my dying hopes like dew, and quench
The fire that's smouldering in a tortur'd brain.
Once more ; yet save me—save thyself ;—thou canst ;
'Tis not too late. Although the storm hangs black,
A word can wave it off, and bring us heaven !
Oh save me from a poison'd, livid past !
Oh save me from a future, that doth yawn
A flaming gulf of hell before my feet !
These are thy father's hands that clasp thy knees ;
These are his lips, that on thy very feet
Now print their hope for mercy. Save me !—save me !
Vivia. Oh that my blood had double tide, that I
Might die another death for thy salvation !
Up—up, my father !—my own noble father !
It is thyself in me that stands erect ;—
Claim kindred with thine own.

Vivius. Thou teachest well.
I thank thee for thy counsel,—this the last
That we shall take together. I am up ;
But not to claim. Utterly I disclaim
All kindred with thee ! Blood thou'rt none of mine.
Blood thou hast none in thee ; thy heart is stone.
Weakness in me to pray, to weep to it ;
Weakness in thee, that thou dost blindly scan
The doom that darkly gathers o'er our house.
E'en now the Fates begin with busy fingers
To weave the dusky web shall dimly shroud
Him, the devoted of a mother's shame !
Where is the hope that I should cherish him,
Poor sickly sapling, 'neath a blasted tree ?

All wreck'd, near mad, 'tis like they may decree
That I, my brain on fire, my senses gone,
Wild with an agony of memory,
Taking him for my grief, should swing him thus,
And dash the life from out him !

Vivia.

Oh for mercy !

Cæcil.

The trust will hold, although no word was said

Vivius.

Thou here ? Come, I must have a vow of thee.
Hearken, young sir ! Swear by thy mother's dust—
Or hath this *faith* made it but rottenness ?
Good boy ! good boy !—truer unto dead bones
Than others unto living quivering flesh.
Yet swear !—that if in after-life you cross
The path of him was yesterday her child—
For he must live in double orphanage,
Unbless'd with e'en the memory of a mother—
Ne'er to make known to him—to him or any,
That he did hold communion with her blood.

Cæcil. I will not take such oath !

Vivius. How ! (*seizing him*) Let me feel it
Come up thy throat—Speak ! or—

Vivia.

Cæcilus, do it

Cæcil. I swear !

Vivius. 'Tis well. And now, farewell to all—
To thee, who art the corpse of all my hopes—
Unurned, unburied, ever so to be.
O hell ! my very words do twist their sense
Like tortuous snakes, to sting me as I speak.
Curses on Carthage !—curses on her people !
Would that to-morrow's crowds might find the earth,
Treacherous as they, give way beneath them all,
And, with one gape of its devouring jaws,

Swallow them quick. 'Twill come, or soon or late,
The flame, the sword, and mighty desolation.
The Goth shall trample where your gardens flourish'd
Scattering your children like the weeds they grew.

Vivia. O Christ, who wept over Jerusalem!

Vivius.

Weep thou, and for thine own—no longer thine—
(Of little heed). Let me but have the pow'r
To fix these loosen'd wits, I'll make of him
One, who would turn thy love into a curse.
Hope quickens with the thought—there's much to do :
Time narrows in, and I stay here ! Away !
Thascius shall be a conqueror—shall hew
His path through this thy faith. Thou sacrifice
Hast chosen ;—mark me ! sacrifice shall be
His very end of life ; his highest triumph
Won by the sword ; and Fame, with crimson hands,
Shall steep in blood the wreath that crowns his brow.
Away ! away ! [*Exit* VIVIVUS.

Vivia. Cæcilius, follow him !

My hope lives in thee, as thou wert Christ's angel.
To-morrow, at the last, bring me thy tidings.

Cæci. To-morrow !

Vivia. Speak not word (nor look) to mar
My trust in thee. [*Exit* CÆCILIVS.
My trust, O God, in thee !— [*She kneels.*

So sure, I have no words that come as prayer.
Thou who dost all things well, shall I of thee
Crave other than thou dost ? And, blessed Christ,
'Twas thou who bad'st us visit in their need
The widow and the fatherless, I know
Thou wilt take pity on a childless father.
Thou, the good Shepherd, who didst gently fold
Those little ones, with blessing, in thine arms,

Wilt care for him, my tender one—my yearling,
Else all bereft.—One prayer—but one—the last :
That in the final hours of this frail life,
With love and praise triumphant over all,
We may show forth thy glory, blessed Lord.

[*She rises.*

Now to my rest. Not yet—a little while. [*Exit.*

END OF SCENE II.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

1806—1861.

CURIOSLY enough, both the time and the place of the birth of Mrs. Browning have been made subjects of an unnecessarily heated controversy. That controversy need not be revived here. Mrs. Browning herself, in a letter to R. H. Horne, says distinctly that she was born in the county of Durham, and better authority we could not well have. Further investigation, moreover, confirms this statement, and it may now be accepted as established that Mrs. Browning was born at Coxoe Hall, Durham, on the 6th of March, in the year 1806. Her father was Mr. Edward Barrett Moulton, who, during his daughter's infancy, inherited an estate from his maternal grandfather, and assumed the additional surname of Barrett. While Elizabeth was still a very young child the family removed from Durham to Herefordshire, where, at Hope End, near Ledbury, Mr. Barrett had built a country house—a picturesque place with Moorish turrets and windows, looking out upon an extensive and beautiful park. Here the little maiden played, cultivated white roses, rode her pony, and when eight years old, read Homer in the original, holding her book in one hand and nursing her doll upon her other arm. The doll comes pleasantly into the picture. Homer without it would have been rather

awful, but the doll subdues his awfulness and makes the vision a thing of unalloyed beauty. Still, even Homer was not a task but a childish passion. Agamemnon and her pony shared her dream-chambers of imagery, but the king's apartments were oftenest occupied. In these days, too, she began to write poetry—mainly about her friends the Greeks—and her epic, "The Battle of Marathon" in four books, produced about the age of eleven or twelve, was printed by the proud father. "Papa," she writes, "was bent upon spoiling me;" but some people are not easily spoiled, and the little Elizabeth was one of them.

She was about fifteen when she stepped over the outer edge of the shadow in which so much of her after life was spent. In attempting to saddle her pony she fell with the saddle upon her and received injuries to the spine, which condemned her to years of recumbency and disablement from all physical activities. Then, at twenty, came the death of her mother and an enforced migration from the beloved Hope End, two years at Sidmouth, and a second removal to Gloucester Place, London. Still a constant invalid, she was taken for her health's sake to Torquay, and here the shadow darkened into blackness, for a beloved brother who had come to see her was drowned while boating, and thenceforward the sea-music in which she had rejoiced was to her a dirge. Then came more years of weakness and seclusion, made bearable only by her books, her pen,—busy always when the tired hand could hold it—and by the visits of a very few friends, chief among whom were Miss Mitford and her cousin John Kenyon, to whom in after years

"Aurora Leigh" was dedicated. It was in 1846, when Elizabeth Barrett would be in her forty-first year that she, whose romance had heretofore been of imagination all compact, stepped into the enchanted ground, for Mr. Kenyon brought to Gloucester Place a new visitor in the person of Mr. Robert Browning. Browning's work was already known and loved by her; she had paid a fine tribute to the rich humanity of "Bells and Pomegranates" in a well-known stanza of "Lady Geraldine's Courtship;" and there is a pretty but apparently unauthenticated story that Mr. Browning in the first instance sought the acquaintance of Miss Barrett in order to thank her for the words of gracious recognition. However this may have been, Mr. Browning came under Mr. Kenyon's friendly wing,—came, saw, and became at once conqueror and conquered. The unyielding antagonism of Mr. Barrett—not it would seem to Mr. Browning in particular, but to any suitor whatever—rendered necessary a secret betrothal and marriage, and the latter event took place in the church of St. Marylebone on the 12th of September, 1846.

Miss Barrett's physician had declared that her life depended upon absence from England during the winter; and so the newly-wedded pair sped southward, taking Paris, Avignon, Vaucluse, and Pisa on their way to Florence, where Mrs. Browning was to find her final home; where in 1849 her boy, now Robert Barrett Browning the painter, was to be born to her; where she was to sing of sights seen from "Casa Guidi Windows," to tell the story of "Aurora Leigh" and to write the "Poems before Congress," in praise of the heroes of the fight for

Italian liberty and unity, among whom her enthusiasm which, like charity, was able to believe all things, classed the Emperor Napoleon III. After her marriage, Mrs. Browning's health perceptibly improved. She was still a fragile creature, but she was no longer a confirmed invalid; and her fifteen Italian years were fuller of intense vitality than all the years that had preceded them, except perhaps those of her bright childhood at Hope End, when she had felt her life in every limb. She and her husband were now encompassed by troops of friends; and it would be difficult to find pleasanter reading than some of their descriptions of the two poets and their surroundings, which Mrs. Richmond Ritchie quotes freely in the delightful memoir of Mrs. Browning contributed by her to the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

But though love and Italy had done much for Mrs. Browning, they were powerless to prolong to its natural term her hold upon the life of earth. She was very ill when she received the news of the death of the patriot statesman Cavour, and the shock hastened the end, which came on the 30th of June, 1861. Like Dürer's knight she had long held companionship with Death; and though the things from which he beckoned her were sweet and dear, she had learned to regard the beckoning face as not unkindly. It called to a short severance from love, but to an eternal severance from the weariness which had often made musical moan.

“Enough! we're tired, my heart and I.
 We sit beside the headstone thus,
 And wish that name were carved for us.
 The moss reprints more tenderly

The hard types of the mason's knife
 As heaven's sweet life renews earth's life
 With which we're tired, my heart and I."

Perhaps the first and the last, the strongest and most enduring impression stamped upon the mind by the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning is that it is the poetry of instinct, or—to use a word which has of late become somewhat unfashionable—of inspiration. We feel that to her the measured but incalculable music of verse was what the common prose of the street or the drawing-room is to most of us, a natural and inevitable vehicle of expression,—that she saw and felt herself truly when she wrote in "Aurora Leigh"—

"My joy and pain,
 My thought and aspiration, like the stops
 Of flute or pipe, are absolutely dumb
 Unless melodious."

The word "inspiration" I have said has become unfashionable, it has given place to that much smaller word *technique*; and it may frankly be admitted that in those qualities of exquisite and flawless rendering which contribute to technical literary perfection Mrs. Browning's work is frequently deficient. It may indeed be said that she is more obviously faulty than any poet who is equally distinguished; but, after all, faultiness in every kind of work is too common to stand in need of being laboriously pointed out, while distinction in any kind of work is somewhat rare; and where the latter is present the added presence of the former is of comparatively little moment. In any brief estimate it would indeed be foolish to waste space in dwelling upon the heresies of rhyme, the fantastic epithets,

the incoherencies of phrase which are to be found by all who care to seek them in the books of the poet, to whom we owe "The Sleep," "The Cry of the Children," "Aurora Leigh," and the "Sonnets from the Portuguese."

If, as it is sometimes contended, the highest art must be art in which distinctively masculine and feminine characteristics disappear in some transcendental human synthesis which knows no sex, then assuredly the place of Mrs Browning is below the highest, for she was pre-eminently a great woman poet, and not simply a woman who wrote great poetry. Though her work was in external form, sometimes narrative and sometimes dramatic, it was always in essence the poetry of self-expression—the poetry in which the treatment of external things, howsoever admirable in itself, is always subsidiary to the imaginative utterance of personal thought and emotion. In poetry of this kind typical masculine work and typical feminine work are distinguished from each other by the fact that in the former the thought comes first and inspires the emotion, while in the latter the emotion comes first and suggests the thought. "As I was musing the fire burned";—that is an adequate description of the genesis of masculine poetry. In the poetry of womanhood the fire burns first and the musings, the thoughts, are generated by the warmth. It is thus in the work of Mrs. Browning. It has no lack of intellectual substance; on the contrary, it has been held by some that in "Aurora Leigh," and elsewhere this intellectual substance is inartistically obtrusive; but the thought is always the child and vassal of emotion:—the brain is as alert as the pulse is strong, yet

everywhere, in "Aurora Leigh," in "Casa Guidi Windows," and in the "Poems before Congress," not less than in such intimately personal utterances as "A Denial," "Inclusions," and the Portuguese Sonnets "the heart still overrules the head."

This last wonderful, indeed unique series of poems—the noblest anthology for noble lovers which any literature has to show—provides striking illustrations both of the close combination of the passionate and the reflective element in Mrs. Browning's verse, and of the dominance of the former over the latter. Take for example the well-known fourteenth number of the sequence,—a poem born of the strongest emotion in the heart of one beloved—the all-powerful desire to be loved for her very self, for what she *is*, not for what she *has*. "If thou must love me, let it be for love's sake only,"—the fiery heart of the sonnet is in that first line: love me because I am I, not for my smile, my look, my way of gentle speech, my thought in accord with yours. And then as the fire burns the musing begins, the thought is born, the intellect supplies a justification for the emotion. These things are transient, and the love that is fixed upon them may not survive them; but the soul, the self, endures, and the love which is bound to it—to the essential not to the accidental—is therefore the love which lives on "through love's eternity."

This method, if any habit so instinctive can be called a method, may be traced through the greater part of Mrs. Browning's work; and it gives to that work an immediate charm for that majority of poetry-lovers who are one with the poet in reaching thought through feeling rather than feeling through

thought. And this majority will respond with not less ready sympathy and appreciation to the special tone of the emotion,—the prevalent pensiveness and sadness which are all the more impressive because so obviously spontaneous, so entirely free from a suspicion of affectation. The domination of the mood of melancholy, manifests itself both in the choice of themes which lend themselves readily to its expression, and by the sombre treatment of other themes which are in themselves devoid of sombre suggestions. Many of the best known and most deservedly popular of Mrs. Browning's shorter poems—"Confessions," "The Mask," "The Lay of the Brown Rosary," "Bertha in the Lane," and "The Cry of the Children"—are poems of unrelieved sadness; the hero and heroine of "Aurora Leigh," have to be taught life's lesson by the anguish of failure; and even when, as in "The Sea-Mew," she lights upon a theme which seems full of suggestions of the free joyousness of vivid life, the music is still in the minor key, for even the bright wild bird is drawn into the human shadow.

"He lay down in his grief to die,
(First looking to the sea-like sky
That hath no waves) because, alas!
Our human touch did on him pass,
And with our touch, our agony."

In spite, however, of its uniformity of emotional tone there is in Mrs. Browning's work a variety of matter and form which render detailed comment altogether impossible here. The finest of her pure lyrics have the richness and the rapture of the song of the nightingale, with now and again a certain unearthliness in the melody, as if the singer were

indeed what she was declared to be by the one who knew her best, "half-angel and half-bird." Her narrative ballads have a swift directness and an impressive pictorialism which hold the imagination and stir the blood. In her sonnets, especially in the marvellous sequence purporting to be "from the Portuguese" the poet is seen at her loftiest altitude, for here art is as victorious as inspiration. The irresistibly winning individuality is as distinct as ever; but the style has cleared itself of its dross its occasional ruggedness, and grating grotesqueness, and has, without losing force, gained ease, clearness, balance, and all the qualities which in the mass we call classical. Many a great poet has his own peculiar honour: it was given to Mrs. Browning to render in perfect verse the very apotheosis of love. Concerning "Aurora Leigh" there will always be differences of opinion and feeling, for it exhibits the poet's weakness not less manifestly than her strength. Its form is defective, its inspiration intermittent, its style unequal; it is greater in parts than as a whole; but if we regard its finest details of description and characterisation, if we weigh the nuggets of imaginative thought which we turn over on nearly every page, we may fairly pronounce it, with all its faults, one of the fullest and most opulent poems produced in this century by any English poet.

The work of Mrs. Browning appeals to us by its fervidly eloquent rendering of imaginative vision, ethical fervour, and profound passion, employing the last word not in the special sense to which usage has confined it, but as comprehending all outgoings of strong emotion towards God, or country, or human fellows, or those aspects of

nature which rouse within us love or awe, wonder or hushed delight. The sadness which utters itself in so much of her verse is the sadness of that keen sensation which brings exquisite sympathy, not the sadness of the dimmed faith which brings despair; and when the song which comes from her lips is most mournful the eye of the singer is fixed upon the far horizon with a look of hope. She lived in the shadow of human weakness, human sorrow, human disquietude, but she never failed in her witness to the light behind the cloud; and we discern the constant attitude of her nature in the tender and triumphant utterance which closes "*The Rhyme of the Duchess May*":—

"Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang
west,
And I said in underbreath,—All our life is mixed with death,
And who knoweth which is best?
Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang
west,
And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our
incompleteness,—
Round our restlessness, His rest."

JAMES ASHCROFT NOBLE.

THE ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

LITTLE Ellie sits alone
 'Mid the beeches of a meadow
 By a stream-side on the grass,
And the trees are showering down
 Doubles of their leaves in shadow
 On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by,
And her feet she has been dipping
 In the shallow water's flow :
Now she holds them nakedly
 In her hands, all sleek and dripping,
 While she rocketh to and fro.

Little Ellie sits alone,
And the smile she softly uses
 Fills the silence like a speech
While she thinks what shall be done,
And the sweetest pleasure chooses
 For her future within reach.

Little Ellie in her smile
Chooses—"I will have a lover,
 Riding on a steed of steeds :
He shall love me without guile,
And to *him* I will discover
 The swan's nest among the reeds.

"And the steed shall be red-roan,
And the lover shall be noble,
With an eye that takes the breath :
And the lute he plays upon
Shall strike ladies into trouble,
As his sword strikes men to death.

"And the steed it shall be shod
All in silver, housed in azure,
And the mane shall swim the wind ;
And the hoofs along the sod
Shall flash onward and keep measure,
Till the shepherds look behind.

"But my lover will not prize
All the glory that he rides in,
When he gazes in my face :
He will say, 'O Love, thine eyes
Build the shrine my soul abides in,
And I kneel here for thy grace !'

"Then, ay, then he shall kneel low,
With the red-roan steed anear him
Which shall seem to understand,
Till I answer, ' Rise and go !
For the world must love and fear him
Whom I gift with heart and hand.'

"Then he will arise so pale,
I shall feel my own lips tremble
With a *yes* I must not say,
Nathless maiden-brave, ' Farewell,'
I will utter, and dissemble—
'Light to-morrow with to-day!'

"Then he'll ride among the hills
To the wide world past the river,
There to put away all wrong ;
To make straight distorted wills,
And to empty the broad quiver
Which the wicked bear along.

"Three times shall a young foot-page
Swim the stream and climb the mountain
And kneel down beside my feet—
'Lo, my master sends this gage,
Lady, for thy pity's counting !
What wilt thou exchange for it ?'

"And the first time I will send
A white rosebud for a guerdon,
And the second time, a glove ;
But the third time—I may bend
From my pride, and answer—'Pardon,
If he comes to take my love.'

"Then the young foot-page will run,
Then my lover will ride faster,
Till he kneeleth at my knee :
'I am a duke's eldest son,
Thousand serfs do call me master,
But, O Love, I love but *thee* !'

"He will kiss me on the mouth
Then, and lead me as a lover
Through the crowds that praise his deeds:
And, when soul-tied by one troth,
Unto *him* I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds."

Little Ellie, with her smile
Not yet ended, rose up gaily,
Tied the bonnet, donned the shoe,
And went homeward, round a mile,
Just to see, as she did daily,
What more eggs were with the two.

Pushing through the elm-tree copse,
Winding up the stream, light-hearted,
Where the osier pathway leads,
Past the boughs she stoops—and stops.
Lo, the wild swan had deserted,
And a rat had knawed the reeds !

Ellie went home sad and slow.
If she found the lover ever,
With his red-roan steed of steeds,
Sooth I know not ; but I know
She could never show him—never,
That swan's nest among the reeds !

THE ROMAUNT OF MARGRET.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

I.

I PLANT a tree whose lea
The yew-tree leaf will suit :
But when its shade is o'er you laid,
Turn round and pluck the fruit.
Now reach my harp from off the wall
Where shines the sun aslant ;
The sun may shine and we be cold !
O harken, loving hearts and bold,
Unto my wild romaunt,
Margret, Margret.

II.

Sitteth the fair ladye
Close to the river side
Which runneth on with a merry tone
Her merry thoughts to guide :
It runneth through the trees,
It runneth by the hill,
Nathless the lady's thoughts have found
A way more pleasant still.
Margret, Margret.

III.

The night is in her hair
And giveth shade to shade,
And the pale moonlight on her forehead white
Like a spirit's hand is laid ;
Her lips part with a smile
Instead of speakings done :
I ween, she thinketh of a voice,
Albeit uttering none.
Margret, Margret.

IV.

All little birds do sit
With heads beneath their wings :
Nature doth seem in a mystic dream,
Absorbed from her living things :
That dream by that ladye
Is certes unpartook,
For she looketh to the high cold stars
With a tender human look
Margret, Margret.

V.

The ladye's shadow lies
Upon the running river ;
It lieth no less in its quietness,
For that which resteth never :
Most like a trusting heart
Upon a passing faith,
Or as upon the course of life
The steadfast doom of death.
Margret, Margret.

VI.

The ladye doth not move,
The ladye doth not dream,
Yet she seeth her shade no longer laid
In rest upon the stream :
It shaketh without wind,
It parteth from the tide,
It standeth upright in the cleft moonlight,
It sitteth at her side.
Margret, Margret.

VII.

Look in its face, ladye,
And keep thee from thy swoond ;

With a spirit bold thy pulses hold
And hear its voice's sound :
For so will sound thy voice
When thy face is to the wall,
And such will be thy face, ladye,
When the maidens work thy pall.
Margret, Margret.

VIII.

'Am I not like to thee ?
The voice was calm and low,
And between each word you might have heard
The silent forests grow ;
' *The like may sway the like ;* '
By which mysterious law
Mine eyes from thine and my lips from thine
The light and breath may draw.
Margret, Margret.

IX.

'My lips do need thy breath,
My lips do need thy smile,
And my pallid eyne, that light in thine
Which met the stars erewhile :
Yet go with light and life
If that thou lovest one
In all the earth who loveth thee
As truly as the sun,
Margret, Margret.

X.

Her cheek had waxed white
Like cloud at fall of snow ;
Then like to one at set of sun,
It waxed red also ;
For love's name maketh bold
As if the loved were near

And then she sighed the deep long sigh
Which cometh after fear.

Margret, Margret.

XI.

'Now, sooth, I fear thee not—
Shall never fear thee now!'
(And a noble sight was the sudden light
Which lit her lifted brow.)
'Can earth be dry of streams,
Or hearts of love?' she said,
'Who doubteth love, can know not love:
He is already dead.'

Margret, Margret.

XII

'I have' . . . and here her lips
Some word in pause did keep,
And gave the while a quiet smile
As if they paused in sleep,—
'I have . . . a brother dear,
A knight of knightly fame!
I broidered him a knightly scarf
With letters of my name.

Margret, Margret.

XIII.

'I fed his grey gosshawk,
I kissed his fierce bloodhound,
I sate at home when he might come
And caught his horn's far sound:
I sang him hunter's songs,
I poured him the red wine,
He looked across the cup and said,
I love thee, sister mine.'

Margret, Margret.

xiv.

IT trembled on the grass
With a low, shadowy laughter ;
The sounding river which rolled, for ever
Stood dumb and stagnant after :
' Brave knight thy brother is I
But better loveth he
Thy chaliced wine than thy chaunted song,
And better both than thee,
Margret, Margret.'

xv.

The ladye did not heed
The river's silence while
Her own thoughts still ran at their will,
And calm was still her smile.
' My little sister wears
The look our mother wore :
I smooth her locks with a golden comb,
I bless her evermore.'
Margret, Margret.

xvi.

I gave her my first bird
When first my voice it knew ;
I made her share my postes rare
And told her where they grew :
I taught her God's dear name
With prayer and praise to tell,
She looked from heaven into my face
And said, *I love thee well.*
Margret, Margret.

xvii.

IT trembled on the grass
With a low, shadowy laughter ;
You could see each bird as it woke and stared
Through the shrivelled foliage after.

'Fair child thy sister is!
But better loveth she
Thy golden comb than thy gathered flowers,
And better both than thee,
Margret, Margret.'

XVIII.

The ladye did not heed
The withering on the bough;
Still calm her smile albeit the while
A little pale her brow:
'I have a father old,
The lord of ancient halls;
An hundred friends are in his court
Yet only me he calls.

Margret, Margret.

XIX.

'An hundred knights are in his court
Yet read I by his knee;
And when forth they go to the tourney show
I rise not up to see:
'Tis a weary book to read,
My tryst's at set of sun,
But loving and dear beneath the stars
Is his blessing when I've done.'

Margret, Margret.

XX.

IT trembled on the grass
With a low, shadowy laughter;
And moon and star though bright and far
Did shrink and darken after.
'High lord thy father is!
But better loveth he
His ancient halls than his hundred friends,
His ancient halls, than thee,

Margret, Margret.'

XXI.

The ladye did not heed
That the far stars did fail ;
Still calm her smile, albeit the while . . .
Nay, but she is not pale !
' I have more than a friend
Across the mountains dim :
No other's voice is soft to me,
Unless it nameth *him* '

Margret, Margret.

XXII.

' Though louder beats my heart
I know his tread again,
And his far plume aye, unless turned **away**
For the tears do blind me then :
We brake no gold, a sign
Of stronger faith to be,
But I wear his last look in my soul,
Which said, *I love but thee !* '

Margret, Margret.

XXIII.

IT trembled on the grass
With a low, shadowy laughter ;
And the wind did toll, as a passing soul
Were sped by church-bell after ;
And shadows, 'stead of light,
Fell from the stars above,
In flakes of darkness on her face
Still bright with trusting love.

Margret, Margret.

XXIV.

' He *loved* but only thee !
That love is transient too.
The wild hawk's bill doth dabble still
I' the mouth that vowed thee true :

Will he open his dull eyes,
 When tears fall on his brow?
 Behold, the death-worm to his heart
 Is a nearer thing than *thou*,
 Margret, Margret.

xxv.

Her face was on the ground—
 None saw the agony;
 But the men at sea did that night agree
 They heard a drowning cry:
 And when the morning brake,
 Fast rolled the river's tide,
 With the green trees waving overhead
 And a white corse laid beside,
 Margret, Margret.

xxvi.

A knight's bloodhound and he
 The funeral watch did keep;
 With a thought o' the chase he stroked its face
 As it howled to see him weep.
 A fair child kissed the dead, !
 But shrank before its cold.
 And alone yet proudly in his hall
 Did stand a baron old,
 Margret, Margret.

xxvii.

Hang up my harp again!
 I have no voice for song.
 Not song but wail, and mourners pale
 Not bards, to love belong.
 O failing human love!
 O light, by darkness known!
 O false, the while thou treadest earth!
 O deaf beneath the stone!
 Margret, Margret.

BERTHA IN THE LANE.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

PUT the broidery-frame away,
For my sewing is all done :
The last thread is used to-day,
And I need not join it on.
Though the clock stands at the noon
I am weary I have sewn,
Sweet, for thee, a wedding-gown.

Sister, help me to the bed,
And stand near me, Dearest-sweet.
I do not shrink nor be afraid,
Blushing with a sudden heat !
No one standeth in the street ?—
By God's love I go to meet,
Love I thee with love complete.

Lean thy face down ; drop it in
These two hands, that I may hold
Twixt their palms thy cheek and chin,
Stroking back the curls of gold :
'Tis a fair, fair face, in sooth—
Larger eyes and redder mouth
Than mine were in my first youth.

Thou art younger by seven years—
Ah !—so bashful at my gaze,
That the lashes, hung with tears,
Grow too heavy to upraise ?
I would wound thee by no touch
Which thy shyness feels as such.
Dost thou mind me, Dear, so much ?

Have I not been nigh a mother
To thy sweetness—tell me, Dear?
Have we not loved one another
Tenderly, from year to year,
Since our dying mother mild
Said with accents undefiled,
"Child, be mother to this child"!

Mother, mother, up in heaven,
Stand up on the jasper sea,
And be witness I have given
All the gifts required of me,—
Hope that blessed me, bliss that crowned,
Love that left me with a wound,
Life itself that turneth round!

Mother, mother, thou art kind,
Thou art standing in the room,
In a molten glory shrined
That rays off into the gloom!
But thy smile is bright and bleak
Like cold waves—I cannot speak,
I sob in it, and grow weak.

Ghostly mother, keep aloof
One hour longer from my soul,
For I still am thinking of
Earth's warm-beating joy and dole!
On my finger is a ring
Which I still see glittering
When the night hides everything.

Little sister, thou art pale!
Ah, I have a wandering brain--
But I lose that fever-bale,
And my thoughts grow calm again.

Lean down closer—closer still !
I have words thine ear to fill,
And would kiss thee at my will.

Dear, I heard thee in the spring,
Thee and Robert,—through the trees,—
When we all went gathering
Boughs of May-bloom for the bees.
Do not start so ! think instead
How the sunshine overhead
Seemed to trickle through the shade.

What a day it was, that day !
Hills and vales did openly
Seem to heave and throb away
At the sight of the great sky :
And the silence, as it stood
In the glory's golden flood,
Audibly did bud, and bud.

Through the winding hedgerows green,
How we wandered, I and you,
With the bowery tops shut in,
And the gates that showed the view !
How we talked there ; thrushes soft
Sang our praises out, or oft
Bleatings took them from the croft :

Till the pleasure grown too strong
Left me muter evermore,
And, the winding road being long,
I walked out of sight, before,
And so, wrapt in musings fond,
Issued (past the wayside pond)
On the meadow-lands beyond.

I sate down beneath the beech
Which leans over to the lane,
And the far sound of your speech
Did not promise any pain ;
And I blessed you full and free,
With a smile stooped tenderly
O'er the May-flowers on my knee.

But the sound grew into word
As the speakers drew more near—
Sweet, forgive me that I heard
What you wished me not to hear.
Do not weep so, do not shake,
Oh,—I heard thee, Bertha, make
Good true answers for my sake.

Yes, and HE too! let him stand
In thy thoughts, untouched by blame.
Could he help it, if my hand
He had claimed with hasty claim ?
That was wrong perhaps—but then
Such things be—and will, again.
Women cannot judge for men.

Had he seen thee when he swore
He would love but me alone ?
Thou wast absent, sent before
To our kin in Sidmouth town.
When he saw thee who art best
Past compare, and loveliest,
He but judged thee as the rest.

Could we blame him with grave words,
Thou and I, Dear, if we might ?
Thy brown eyes have looks like birds
Flying straightway to the light

Mine are older.—Hush!—look out—
Up the street! Is none without?
How the poplar swings about!

And that hour—beneath the beech,
When I listened in a dream,
And he said in his deep speech
That he owed me all *esteem*,—
Each word swam in on my brain
With a dim, dilating pain,
Till it burst with that last strain.

I fell flooded with a dark,
In the silence of a swoon.
When I rose, still cold and stark,
There was night; I saw the moon:
And the stars, each in its place,
And the May-blooms on the grass,
Seemed to wonder what I was.

And I walked as if apart
From myself, when I could stand,
And I pitied my own heart,
As if I held it in my hand,
Somewhat coldly, with a sense
Of fulfilled benevolence,
And a "Poor thing" negligence.

And I answered coldly too,
When you met me at the door;
And I only *heard* the dew
Dripping from me to the floor:
And the flowers I bade you see,
Were too withered for the bee,—
As my life, henceforth, for me.

Do not weep so—Dear—heart-warm!

All was best as it befell.

If I say he did me harm,

I speak wild, —I am not well.

All his words were kind and good—

He esteemed me. Only, blood

Runs so faint in womanhood!

Then I always was too grave,—

Liked the saddest ballad sung,—

With that look, besides, we have

In our faces, who die young.

I had died, Dear, all the same;

Life's long, joyous, jostling game

Is too loud for my meek shame.

We are so unlike each other,

Thou and I, that none could guess

We were children of one mother,

But for mutual tenderness.

Thou art rose-lined from the cold,

And meant verily to hold

Life's pure pleasures manifold.

I am pale as crocus grows

Close beside a rose-tree's root

Whosoe'er would reach the rose,

Treads the crocus underfoot.

I, like May-bloom on thorn-tree,

Thou, like merry summer-bee,—

Fit that I be plucked for thee!

Yet who plucks me?—no one mourns,

I have lived my season out,

And now die of my own thorns

Which I could not live without.

Sweet, be merry ! How the light
Comes and goes ! If it be night,
Keep the candles in my sight.

Are there footsteps at the door ?
Look out quickly. Yea, or nay ?
Some one might be waiting for
Some last word that I might say.
Nay ? So best !—so angels would
Stand off clear from deathly road,
Not to cross the sight of God.

Colder grow my hands and feet.
When I wear the shroud I made,
Let the folds be straight and neat,
And the rosemary be spread,
That if any friend should come,
(To see *thee*, Sweet !) all the room
May be lifted out of gloom.

And, dear Bertha, let me keep
On my hand this little ring,
Which at nights, when others sleep,
I can still see glittering.
Let me wear it out of sight,
In the grave,—where it will light
All the dark up, day and night.

On that grave drop not a tear !
Else, though fathom-deep the place,
Through the woollen shroud I wear
I shall feel it on my face.
Rather smile there, blessed one,
Thinking of me in the sun,
Or forget me—smiling on !

Art thou near me ? nearer ! so—
Kiss me close upon the eyes,
That the earthly light may go
Sweetly, as it used to rise
When I watched the morning-grey
Strike, betwixt the hills, the way
He was sure to come that day.

So,—no more vain words be said !
The hosannas nearer roll.
Mother, smile now on thy Dead,
I am death-strong in my soul.
Mystic Dove alit on cross,
Guide the poor bird of the snows
Through the snow-wind above loss !

Jesus, Victim, comprehending
Love's divine self-abnegation,
Cleanse my love in its self-spending,
And absorb the poor libation !
Wind my thread of life up higher,
Up, through angels' hands of fire !
I aspire while I expire.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

DO ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their
And *that* cannot stop their tears. [mothers
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow
Why their tears are falling so?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in Long Ago;
The old tree is leafless in the forest,
The old year is ending in the frost,
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
The old hope is hardest to be lost:
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy;
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary,
"Our young feet," they say, "are very weak;

"Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek :
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children,
For the outside earth is cold,
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old."

"True," say the children, "it may happen
That we die before our time :
Little Alice died last year, her grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her :
Was no room for any work in the close clay !
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
Crying, 'Get up, little Alice ! it is day.'
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries ;
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes :
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud by the kirk-chime.
"It is good when it happens," say the children,
"That we die before our time."

Alas, alas, the children ! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have :
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do ;
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty,
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through !
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine ?

Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
 . From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,
 And we cannot run or leap;
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
 To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
 We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
 The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring
 Through the coal-dark, underground;
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
 In the factories, round and round.

"For all day, the wheels are droning, turning;
 Their wind comes in our faces,
Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses burning,
 And the walls turn in their places:
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
 Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,
 All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day, the iron wheels are droning,
 And sometimes we could pray,
'O ye wheels,' (breaking out in a mad moaning)
 'Stop! be silent for to-day!'

Ay, be silent! Let them hear each other breathing
 For a moment, mouth to mouth!
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
 Of their tender human youth!
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
 Is not all the life God fashions or reveals:

Let them prove their living souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels !
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark ;
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward
Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
To look up to Him and pray ;
So the blessed One who blesseth all the others,
Will bless them another day.
They answer, " Who is God that He should hear us,
While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred ?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.
And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door :
Is it likely God, with angels singing round him,
Hears our weeping any more ?

" Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
And at midnight's hour of harm,
' Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words except ' Our Father,'
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both within His right hand which is strong.
' Our Father ! ' If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
' Come and rest with me, my child.'

" But, no ! " say the children, weeping faster,
" He is speechless as a stone :

And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to!" say the children,—“up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving;
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind.”
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by His world's loving,
And the children doubt of each.
And well may the children weep before you!
They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man, without its wisdom;
They sink in man's despair, without its calm;
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm:
Are worn as if with age, yet unretreivingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap,—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.
Let them weep! let them weep!
They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on Deity.
“How long,” they say, “how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And your purple shows your path!
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath.”

COWPER'S GRAVE.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

IT is a place where poets crowned may feel the
heart's decaying ;

It is a place where happy saints may weep amid
their praying :

Yet let the grief and humbleness as low as silence
languish :

Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she
gave her anguish.

O poets, from a maniac's tongue was poured the
deathless singing !

O Christians, at your cross of hope a hopeless hand
was clinging !

O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths
beguiling,

Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died
while ye were smiling !

And now, what time ye all may read through dimming
tears his story,

How discord on the music fell and darkness on the
glory,

And how when, one by one, sweet sounds and
wandering lights departed,

He wore no less a loving face because so broken-hearted,

He shall be strong to sanctify the poet's high vocation,
And bow the meekest Christian down in meeker
adoration ;

Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good forsaken,
Named softly as the household name of one whom
God hath taken.

With quiet sadness and no gloom I learn to think upon him,
With meekness that is gratefulness to God whose heaven hath
 won him,
Who suffered once the madness-cloud to His own love to blind
 him,
But gently led the blind along where breath and bird could find
 him ;

And wrought within his shattered brain such quick poetic senses
As hills have language for, and stars, harmonious influences :
The pulse of dew upon the grass kept his within its number,
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a slumber.

Wild timid hares were drawn from woods to share his home-
 caresses,
Uplooking to his human eyes with sylvan tendernesses :
The very world, by God's constraint, from falsehood's ways
 removing,
Its women and its men became, beside him, true and loving.

And though, in blindness, he remained unconscious of that
 guiding,
And things provided came without the sweet sense of providing,
He testified this solemn truth, while phrenzy desolated,
—Nor man nor nature satisfies whom only God created.

Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother while she blesses
And drops upon his burning brow the coolness of her kisses,—
That turns his fevered eyes around—"My mother ! where's my
 mother ?"—
As if such tender words and deeds could come from any other!—

The fever gone, with leaps of heart he sees her bending o'er him,
Her face all pale from watchful love, the unweary love she bore
 him !—

Thus woke the poet from the dream his life's long fever gave him,
Beneath those deep pathetic Eyes which closed in death to save
him.

Thus? oh, not *thus*! no type of earth can image that awaking,
Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs, round him
breaking,
Or felt the new immortal throb of soul from body parted,
But felt those eyes alone, and knew,—“*My Saviour! not
deserted!*”

Deserted! Who hath dreamt that when the cross in darkness
rested,
Upon the Victim's hidden face no love was manifested?
What frantic hands outstretched have e'er the atoning drops
averted?
What tears have washed them from the soul, that *one* should
be deserted?

Deserted! God could separate from His own essence rather;
And Adam's sins *have* swept between the righteous Son and
Father:
Yea, once, Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe hath shaken —
It went up single, echoless, “*My God, I am forsaken!*”

It went up from the Holy's lips amid His lost creation,
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation!
That earth's worst phrenzies, marring hope, should mar not
hope's fruition,
And I, on Cowper's grave, should see his rapture in a vision.

THE CRY OF THE HUMAN.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

"**T**HERE is no God," the foolish saith,
But none, "There is no sorrow,"
And nature oft the cry of faith,
In bitter need will borrow :
Eyes, which the preacher could not school,
By wayside graves are raisèd,
And lips say, "God be pitiful,"
Who ne'er said, "God be praised."
Be pitiful, O God !

The tempest stretches from the steep
The shadow of its coming,
The beasts grow tame and near us creep,
As help were in the human ;
Yet, while the cloud-wheels roll and grind,
We spirits tremble under—
The hills have echoes, but we find
No answer for the thunder.
Be pitiful, O God

The battle hurtles on the plains,
Earth feels new scythes upon her ;
We reap our brothers for the wains,
And call the harvest - honour :
Draw face to face, front line to line,
Our image all inherit,—
Then kill, curse on, by that same sign,
Clay—clay, and spirit—spirit.
Be pitiful, O God !

The plague runs festering through the town,
And never a bell is tolling,
And corpses, jostled 'neath the moon,
Nod to the dead-cart's rolling :

The young child calleth for the cup,
The strong man brings it weeping,
The mother from her babe looks up,
And shrieks away its sleeping.

Be pitiful, O God !

The plague of gold strikes far and near,
And deep and strong it enters ;
This purple chimar which we wear,
Makes madder than the centaur's :
Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow strange,
We cheer the pale gold-diggers,
Each soul is worth so much on 'Change,
And marked, like sheep, with figures.

Be pitiful, O God !

The curse of gold upon the land
The lack of bread enforces ;
The rail-cars snort from strand to strand,
Like more of Death's White horses :
The rich preach "rights" and "future days,"
And hear no angel scoffing,
The poor die mute, with starving gaze
On corn-ships in the offing.

Be pitiful, O God !

We meet together at the feast,
To private mirth betake us ;
We stare down in the winecup, lest
Some vacant chair should shake us :
We name delight, and pledge it round—
"It shall be ours to-morrow !"

God's seraphs, do your voices sound
As sad, in naming sorrow ?

Be pitiful, O God !

We sit together, with the skies,
The steadfast skies, above us,
We look into each other's eyes,
"And how long will you love us?"
The eyes grow dim with prophecy,
The voices, low and breathless,—
"Till death us part!"—O words, to be
Our *best*, for love the deathless!
Be pitiful, O God!

We tremble by the harmless bed
Of one loved and departed :
Our tears drop on the lips that said
Last night, "Be stronger-hearted!"
O God,—to clasp those fingers close,
And yet to feel so lonely!
To see a light upon such brows,
Which is the daylight only!
Be pitiful, O God!

The happy children come to us,
And look up in our faces;
They ask us—"Was it thus, and thus,
When we were in their places?"—
We cannot speak;—we see anew
The hills we used to live in,
And feel our mother's smile press through
The kisses she is giving.
Be pitiful, O God

We pray together at the kirk
For mercy, mercy solely:
Hands weary with the evil work,
We lift them to the Holy.

The corpse is calm below our knee,
Its spirit, bright before Thee—
Between them, worse than either, we—
Without the rest or glory.
Be pitiful, O God !

We leave the communing of men,
The murmur of the passions,
And live alone, to live again
With endless generations .
Are we so brave ?—The sea and sky
In silence lift their mirrors,
And, glassed therein, our spirits high
Recoil from their own terrors.
Be pitiful, O God !

We sit on hills our childhood wist,
Woods, hamlets, streams, beholding :
The sun strikes through the farthest mist
The city's spire to golden :
The city's golden spire it was,
When hope and health were strongest,
But now it is the churchyard grass
We look upon the longest.
Be pitiful, O God !

And soon all vision waxeth dull ;
Men whisper, "He is dying ;"
We cry no more " Be pitiful !"
We have no strength for crying :
No strength, no need. Then, soul of mine,
Look up and triumph rather—
Lo, in the depth of God's Divine,
The Son adjures the Father,
BE PITIFUL, O God !

THE SLEEP.

"He giveth His beloved sleep"—PSALM cxxvii. 2.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

OF all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward into souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift or grace, surpassing this—
"He giveth His beloved, sleep"?

What would we give to our beloved?
The hero's heart to be unmoved,
The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep,
The patriot's voice to teach and rouse,
The monarch's crown to light the brows?—
He giveth His beloved, sleep.

What do we give to our beloved?
A little faith all undisproved,
A little dust to overweep,
And bitter memories to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake:
He giveth His beloved, sleep.

"Sleep soft, beloved!" we sometimes say,
Who have no tune to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep:
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber when
He giveth His beloved, sleep.

O earth, so full of dreary noises !
O men, with wailing in your voices !
O delvèd gold, the wailers heap !
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall !
God strikes a silence through you all,
And giveth His belovèd, sleep.

His dew drops mutely on the hill,
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap :
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
He giveth His belovèd, sleep.

Ay, men may wonder while they scan
A living, thinking, feeling man
Confirmed in such a rest to keep ;
But angels say, and through the word
I think their happy smile is *heard*—
“ He giveth His belovèd, sleep.”

For me, my heart that erst did go
Most like a tired child at a show,
That sees through tears the mummies leap,
Would now its wearied vision close,
Would childlike on His love repose
Who giveth His belovèd, sleep.

And friends, dear friends, when it shall be
That this low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep,
Let One, most loving of you all,
Say “ Not a tear must o'er her fall ! ”
“ He giveth His belovèd, sleep.”

THE SEA-MEW.

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO M. E. H.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

HOW joyously the young sea-mew
Lay dreaming on the waters blue
Whereon our little bark had thrown
A little shade, the only one,
But shadows ever man pursue.

Familiar with the waves and free
As if their own white foam were he,
His heart upon the heart of ocean
Lay learning all its mystic motion,
And throbbing to the throbbing sea.

And such a brightness in his eye
As if the ocean and the sky
Within him had lit up and nurst
A soul God gave him not at first,
To comprehend their majesty.

We were not cruel, yet did sunder
His white wing from the blue waves under
And bound it, while his fearless eyes
Shone up to ours in calm surprise,
As deeming us some ocean wonder.

We bore our ocean bird unto
A grassy place where he might view
The flowers that curtsy to the bees,
The waving of the tall green trees,
The falling of the silver dew.

But flowers of earth were pale to him
Who had seen the rainbow fishes swim ;
And when earth's dew around him lay
He thought of ocean's winged spray,
And his eye waxed sad and dim.

The green trees round him only made
A prison with their darksome shade ;
And dropped his wing, and mourned he
For his own boundless glittering sea—
Albeit he knew not they could fade.

Then One her gladsome face did bring,
Her gentle voice's murmuring,
In ocean's stead his heart to move
And teach him what was human love :
He thought it a strange, mournful thing.

He lay down in his grief to die,
(First looking to the sea-like sky
That hath no waves) because, alas
Our human touch did on him pass,
And with our touch, our agony

A SONG AGAINST SINGING.

To E. J. H.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THEY bid me sing to thee,
Thou golden-haired and silver-voiced child
With lips by no worse sigh than sleep's defiled —
With eyes unknowing how tears dim the sight,
And feet all trembling at the new delight
Treaders of earth to be !

Ah no ! the lark may bring
A song to thee from out the morning cloud,
The merry river from its lilies bowed,
The brisk rain from the trees, the lucky wind
That half doth make its music, half doth find,—
But I—I may not sing.

How could I think it right,
New-comer on our earth as, Sweet, thou art,
To bring a verse from out an human heart
Made heavy with accumulated tears,
And cross with such amount of weary years
Thy day-sum of delight ?

Even if the verse were said,
Thou, who wouldst clap thy tiny hands to hear
The wind or rain, gay bird or river clear,
Wouldst, at that sound of sad humanities,
Upturn thy bright uncomprehending eyes
And bid me play instead.

Therefore no song of mine,—
But prayer in place of singing ; prayer that would
Commend thee to the new-creating God
Whose gift is childhood's heart without its stain
Of weakness, ignorance, and changing vain—
That gift of God be thine !

So wilt thou aye be young,
In lovelier childhood than thy shining brow
And pretty winning accents make thee now :
Yea, sweeter than this scarce articulate sound
(How sweet !) of " father," " mother," shall be found
The ABBA on thy tongue.

And so, as years shall chase
Each other's shadows, thou wilt less resemble
Thy fellows of the earth who toil and tremble,
Than him thou seest not, thine angel bold
Yet meek, whose ever-lifted eyes behold
The Ever-loving's face.

FELICIA HEMANS.

TO L. E. L., REFERRING TO HER MONODY ON THE POETESS
(p. 109).

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

THOU bay-crowned living One that o'er the bay-
crowned Dead art bowing,
And o'er the shadeless moveless brow the vital
shadow throwing,
And o'er the sighless songless lips the wail and
music wedding,
And dropping o'er the tranquil eyes the tears not of
their shedding!—
Take music from the silent Dead whose meaning is
completer,
Reserve thy tears for living brows where all such
tears are meeter.
And leave the violets in the grass to brighten where
thou treadest,
No flowers for her! no need of flowers, albeit 'bring
flowers,' thou saigest.
Yes, flowers, to crown the 'cup and lute,' since both
may come to breaking,
Or flowers, to greet the 'bride'—the heart's own
beating works its aching;
Or flowers, to soothe the 'captive's' sight, from
earth's free bosom gathered,
Reminding of his earthly hope, then withering as it
withered:
But bring not near the solemn corse a type of human
seeming,
Lay only dust's stern verity upon the dust un-
dreaming:
And while the calm perpetual stars shall look upon
it solely,
Her spher'd soul shall look on *them* with eyes more
bright and holy.

Nor mourn, O living One, because her part in life
was mourning :

Would she have lost the poet's fire for anguish of
the burning ?

The minstrel harp, for the strained string ? the
tripod, for the afflated

Woe ? or the vision, for those tears in which it shone
dilated ?

Perhaps she shuddered while the world's cold hand
her brow was wreathing,

But never wronged that mystic breath which breathed
in all her breathing,

Which drew from rocky earth and man, abstractions
high and moving,

Beauty, if not the beautiful, and love, if not the
loving.

Such visionings have paled in sight ; the Saviour she
descrieth,

And little recks *who* wreathed the brow which on
His bosom lieth :

The whiteness of His innocence o'er all her garments,
flowing,

There learneth she the sweet 'new song' she will
not mourn in knowing.

Be happy, crowned and living One ! and as thy dust
decayeth

May thine own England say for thee what now for
Her it sayeth—

'Albeit softly in our ears her silver song was ringing,
The foot-fall of her parting soul is softer than her
singing.'

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

ELIZABETH BARRFETT BROWNING.

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river ?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan
From the deep cool bed of the river :
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river

High on the shore sat the great god Pan,
While turbidly flowed the river ;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river !)
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sat by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan,
 (Laughed while he sat by the river,)
"The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed."
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
 He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan !
 Piercing sweet by the river !
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan !
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
 Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
 To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man :
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,—
For the reed which grows nevermore again
 As a reed with the reeds in the river.

A CHILD'S GRAVE AT FLORENCE.

A. A. E. C.

Born, July 1848; died, November 1849.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

OF English blood, of Tuscan birth
What country should we give her?
Instead of any on the earth,
The civic Heavens receive her.

And here among the English tombs
In Tuscan ground we lay her,
While the blue Tuscan sky endomes
Our English words of prayer.

A little child!—how long she lived,
By months, not years, is reckoned
Born in one July, she survived
Alone to see a second.

Bright-featured, as the July sun
Her little face still played in,
And splendours, with her birth begun,
Had had no time for fading.

So, LILY, from those July hours,
No wonder we should call her;
She looked such kinship to the flowers,
Was but a little taller.

A Tuscan Lily,—only white,
As Dante, in abhorrence
Of red corruption, wished aright
The lilies of his Florence.

We could not wish her whiter,—her
Who perfumed with pure blossom
The house—a lovely thing to wear
Upon a mother's bosom !

This July creature thought perhaps
Our speech not worth assuming ;
She sate upon her parents' laps
And mimicked the gnat's humming ;

Said " father," " mother,"—then left off
For tongues celestial, fitter :
Her hair had grown just long enough
To catch heaven's jasper-glitter.

· Babes ! Love could always hear and see
Behind the cloud that hid them.
" Let little children come to Me,
And do not thou forbid them.

So, unforbidding, have we met,
And gently here have laid her,
Though winter is no time to get
The flowers that should o'er-spread her :

We should bring pansies quick with spring,
Rose, violet, daffodilly,
And also, above everything,
White lilies for our Lily.

Nay, more than flowers, this grave exacts,—
Glad, grateful attestations
Of her sweet eyes and pretty acts,
With calm renunciations.

Her very mother with light feet
Should leave the place too earthy,
Saying, "The angels have thee, Sweet,
Because we are not worthy."

But winter kills the orange-buds,
The gardens in the frost are,
And all the heart dissolves in floods,
Remembering we have lost her

Poor earth, poor heart,—too weak, too weak
To miss the July shining !
Poor heart !—what bitter words we speak
When God speaks of resigning !

Sustain this heart in us that faints,
Thou God, the self-existent !
We catch up wild at parting saints
And feel Thy heaven too distant.

The wind that swept them out of sin,
Has ruffled all our vesture :
On the shut door that let them in,
We beat with frantic gesture,—

To us, us also, open straight !
The outer life is chilly ;
Are *we* too, like the earth, to wait
Till next year for our Lily ?

—Oh, my own baby on my knees
My leaping, dimpled treasure,
At every word I write like these,
Clasped close with stronger pressure !

Too well my own heart understands,—
At every word beats fuller—
My little feet, my little hands,
And hair of Lily's colour !

But God gives patience, Love learns strength,
And Faith remembers promise,
And Hope itself can smile at length
On other hopes gone from us.

Love, strong as Death, shall conquer Death,
Through struggle, made more glorious :
This mother stills her sobbing breath,
Renouncing yet victorious.

Arms, empty of her child, she lifts
With spirit unbereaven,—
“ God will not all take back His gifts ;
My Lily's mine in heaven.

“ Still mine ! maternal rights serene
Not given to another !
The crystal bars shine faint between
The souls of child and mother.

“ Meanwhile,” the mother cries “ content !
Our love was well divided :
Its sweetness following where she went,
Its anguish stayed where I did.

“ Well done of God, to halve the lot,
And give her all the sweetness ;
To us, the empty room and cot,—
To her, the Heaven's completeness.

"To us, this grave,—to her, the rows
The mystic palm-trees spring in ;
To us, the silence in the house,—
To her, the choral singing.

"For her, to gladden in God's view,—
For us, to hope and bear on.
Grow, Lily, in thy garden new,
Beside the Rose of Sharon !

"Grow fast in heaven, sweet Lily clipped,
In love more calm than this is,
And may the angels dewy-lipped
Remind thee of our kisses !

"While none shall tell thee of our tears,
These human tears now falling,
Till, after a few patient years,
One home shall take us all in.

"Child, father, mother,—who, left out ?
Not mother, and not father !
And when, our dying couch about,
The natural mists shall gather,

"Some smiling angel close shall stand
In old Correggio's fashion,
And bear a LILY in his hand,
For death's ANNUNCIATION."

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

1850.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

(i.)

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young :
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair ;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,—
"Guess now who holds thee ?"—"Death," I said.
But, there,
The silver answer rang,—"Not Death, but Love."

(iv.)

Thou hast thy calling to some palace-floor.
Most gracious singer of high poems ! where
The dancers will break footing, from the care
Of watching up thy pregnant lips for more.
And dost thou lift this house's latch too poor
For hand of thine ? and canst thou think and bear
To let thy music drop here unaware
In folds of golden fulness at my door ?
Look up and see the casement broken in,
The bats and owlets builders in the roof !
My cricket chirps against thy mandolin.
Hush, call no echo up in further proof
Of desolation ! there's a voice within
That weeps . . . as thou must sing . . . alone, aloof.

(v.)

I lift my heavy heart up solemnly,
As once Electra her sepulchral urn,
And, looking in thine eyes, I overturn
The ashes at thy feet. Behold and see
What a great heap of grief lay hid in me,
And how the red wild sparkles dimly burn
Through the ashen greyness. If thy foot in scorn
Could tread them out to darkness utterly,
It might be well perhaps. But if instead
Thou wait beside me for the wind to blow
The grey dust up, . . . those laurels on thine head,
O my Belov'd, will not shield thee so,
That none of all the fires shall scorch and shred
The hair beneath. Stand further off then ! go.

(vi.)

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore—
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine .
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

(ix.)

Can it be right to give what I can give ?
To let thee sit beneath the fall of tears
As salt as mine, and hear the sighing years

Re-sighing on my lips renunciative
 Through those infrequent smiles which fail to live
 For all thy adjurations? O my fears,
 That this can scarce be right! We are not peers,
 So to be lovers; and I own, and grieve,
 That givers of such gifts as mine are, must
 Be counted with the ungenerous. Out, alas!
 I will not soil thy purple with my dust,
 Nor breathe my poison on thy Venice-glass,
 Nor give thee any love—which were unjust.
 Beloved, I only love thee! let it pass.

(x.)

Yet, love, mere love, is beautiful indeed
 And worthy of acceptance. Fire is bright,
 Let temple burn, or flax; an equal light
 Leaps in the flame from cedar-plank or weed:
 And love is fire. And when I say at need
I love thee . . . mark! . . . I love thee—in thy sight
 I stand transfigured, glorified aright,
 With conscience of the new rays that proceed
 Out of my face toward thine. There's nothing low
 In love, when love the lowest: meanest creatures
 Who love God, God accepts while loving so.
 And what I *feel*, across the inferior features
 Of what I *am*, doth flash itself, and show
 How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

(xiii.)

And wilt thou have me fashion into speech
 The love I bear thee, finding words enough,
 And hold the torch out, while the winds are rough,
 Between our faces, to cast light on each?—
 I drop it at thy feet. I cannot teach
 My hand to hold my spirit so far off

From myself—me—that I should bring thee proof
 In words, of love hid in me out of reach.
 Nay, let the silence of my womanhood
 Commend my woman-love to thy belief,—
 Seeing that I stand unwon, however wooed,
 And rend the garment of my life, in brief,
 By a most dauntless, voiceless fortitude,
 Lest one touch of this heart convey its grief.

(xiv.)

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
 Except for love's sake only. Do not say
 "I love her for her smile—her look—her way
 Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought
 That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
 A sense of pleasant ease on such a day"—
 For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
 Be changed, or change for thee,—and love, so wrought,
 May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
 Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,—
 A creature might forget to weep, who bore
 Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
 But love me for love's sake, that evermore
 Thou may'st love on, through love's eternity.

(xviii.)

I never gave a lock of hair away
 To a man, Dearest, except this to thee,
 Which now upon my fingers thoughtfully,
 I ring out to the full brown length and say
 "Take it." My day of youth went yesterday;
 My hair no longer bounds to my foot's glee,
 Nor plant I it from rose or myrtle-tree,
 As girls do, any more: it only may

Now shade on two pale cheeks the mark of tears,
Taught drooping from the head that hangs aside
Through sorrow's trick. I thought the funeral-shears
Would take this first, but Love is justified,—
Take it thou,—finding pure, from all those years,
The kiss my mother left here when she died.

(xx.)

Belovèd, my Belovèd, when I think
That thou wast in the world a year ago,
What time I sate alone here in the snow
And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink
No moment at thy voice, but, link by link,
Went counting all my chains as if that so
They never could fall off at any blow
Struck by thy possible hand, why, thus I drink
Of life's great cup of wonder! Wonderful,
Never to feel thee thrill the day or night
With personal act or speech,—nor ever cull
Some prescience of thee with the blossoms white
Thou sawest growing! Atheists are as dull,
Who cannot guess God's presence out of sight.

(xxi.)

Say over again, and yet once over again,
That thou dost love me. Though the word repeated
Should seem "a cuckoo-song," as thou dost treat it.
Remember, never to the hill or plain,
Valley and wood, without her cuckoo-strain
Comes the fresh Spring in all her green completed.
Belovèd, I, amid the darkness greeted
By a doubtful spirit-voice, in that doubt's pain
Cry, "Speak once more—thou lovest!" Who can fear
Too many stars, though each in heaven shall roll,
Too many flowers, though each shall crown the year?
Say thou dost love me, love me, love me—toll

The silver iterance!—only minding, Dear,
To love me also in silence with thy soul.

(xxvi.)

I lived with visions for my company
Instead of men and women, years ago,
And found them gentle mates, nor thought to know
A sweeter music than they played to me.
But soon their trailing purple was not free
Of this world's dust, their lutes did silent grow,
And I myself grew faint and blind below
Their vanishing eyes. Then THOU didst come—to be,
Belov'd, what they seemed. Their shining fronts,
Their songs, their splendours, (better, yet the same,
As river-water hallowed into fonts)
Met in thee, and from out thee overcame
My soul with satisfaction of all wants :
Because God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame.

(xxxv.)

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me ? Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessing and the common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,
When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors, another home than this ?
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change ?
That's hardest. If to conquer love, has tried,
To conquer grief, tries more, as all things prove ;
For grief indeed is love and grief beside.
Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love.
Yet love me—wilt thou ? Open thine heart wide,
And fold within the wet wings of thy dove.

(XXXVIII.)

First time he kissed me, he but only kissed
The fingers of this hand wherewith I write ;
And ever since, it grew more clean and white,
Slow to world-greetings, quick with its " Oh, list,"
When the angels speak. A ring of amethyst
I could not wear here, plainer to my sight,
Than that first kiss. The second passed in height
The first, and sought the forehead, and half missed,
Half falling on the hair. O beyond need !
That was the chrism of love, which love's own crown,
With sanctifying sweetness, did precede.
The third upon my lips was folded down
In perfect, purple state ; since when, indeed,
I have been proud and said, " My love, my own."

(XLIII.)

How do I love thee ? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace,
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right ;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life !—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

I.—THE SOUL'S EXPRESSION.

WITH stammering lips and insufficient sound
I strive and struggle to deliver right
That music of my nature, day and night
With dream and thought and feeling interwound,
And inly answering all the senses round
With octaves of a mystic depth and height
Which step out grandly to the infinite
From the dark edges of the sensual ground.
This song of soul I struggle to outbear
Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,
And utter all myself into the air :
But if I did it,—as the thunder-roll
Breaks its own cloud, my flesh would perish there,
Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

II.—BEREAVEMENT.

WHEN some Beloveds, 'neath whose eyelids lay
The sweet lights of my childhood, one by one
Did leave me dark before the natural sun,
And I astonished fell and could not pray,—
A thought within me to myself did say,
"Is God less God, that *thou* art left undone ?
Rise, worship, bless Him, in this sackcloth spun,
As in that purple !" —But I answered, Nay !
What child his filial heart in words can loose
If he behold his tender father raise
The hand that chastens sorely ? can he choose
But sob in silence with an upward gaze ?—
And *my* great Father, thinking fit to bruise,
Discerns in speechless tears both prayer and praise.

III.—CONSOLATION.

ALL are not taken ; there are left behind
Living Beloveds, tender looks to bring
And make the daylight still a happy thing,
And tender voices, to make soft the wind :
But if it were not so—if I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
Nor any path but hollowly did ring
Where “dust to dust” the love from life disjoined,
And if, before those sepulchres unmoving
I stood alone, (as some forsaken lamb
Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth)
Crying “Where are ye, O my loved and loving?”—
I know a Voice would sound, Daughter, I AM.
Can I suffice for HEAVEN and not for earth ?

IV.—GRIEF.

I TELL you, hopeless grief is passionless ;
That only men incredulous of despair,
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
Beat upward to God’s throne in loud access
Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness
In souls as countries, lieth silent-bare
Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare
Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death—
Most like a monumental statue set
In everlasting watch and moveless woe
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.
Touch it ; the marble eyelids are not wet :
If it could weep, it could arise and go.

V.—SUBSTITUTION.

WHEN some belov'd voice that was to you
Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,
And silence against which you dare not cry,
Aches round you like a strong disease and new—
What hope ? what help ? what music will undo
That silence to your sense ? Not friendship's sigh,
Not reason's subtle count ; not melody
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew ;
Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales
Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress-trees
To the clear moon ; nor yet the spheric laws
Self-chanted, nor the angels' sweet All hails,
Met in the smile of God : nay, none of these.
Speak **THOU**, availing Christ !—and fill this pause.

VI.—WORK.

WHAT are we set on earth for ? Say, to toil ;
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines
For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,
And Death's mild curfew shall from work assoil.
God did anoint thee with His odorous oil,
To wrestle, not to reign ; and He assigns
All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,
For younger fellow-workers of the soil
To wear for amulets. So others shall
Take patience, labour, to their heart and hand,
From thy hand and thy heart and thy brave cheer,
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
The least flower, with a brimming cup may stand,
And share its dew-drop with another near.

VII.—FUTURITY.

AND, O belov'd voices, upon which
Ours passionately call because ere long
Ye break off in the middle of that song
We sang together softly, to enrich
The poor world with the sense of love and witch,
The heart out of things evil,—I am strong,
Knowing ye are not lost for aye among
The hills, with last year's thrush. God keeps a niche
In Heaven to hold our idols : and albeit
He brake them to our faces and denied
That our close kisses should impair their white,
I know we shall behold them raised, complete,
The dust swept from their beauty,—glorified
New Memnons singing in the great God-light.

VIII.—WORK AND CONTEMPLATION.

THE woman singeth at her spinning-wheel
A pleasant chant, ballad or barcarole ;
She thinketh of her song, upon the whole,
Far more than of her flax ; and yet the reel
Is full, and artfully her fingers feel
With quick adjustment, provident control,
The lines, too subtly twisted to unroll,
Out to a perfect thread. I hence appeal
To the dear Christian church—that we may do
Our Father's business in these temples mirk,
Thus swift and steadfast, thus intent and strong ;
While thus, apart from toil, our souls pursue
Some high, calm, spheric tune, and prove our work
The better for the sweetness of our song.

AURORA LEIGH.

1856.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

(FROM FIRST BOOK)

WHOEVER lives true life, will love true love.
I learnt to love that England. Very oft,
Before the day was born, or otherwise
Through secret windings of the afternoons,
I threw my hunters off and plunged myself
Among the deep hills, as a hunted stag
Will take the waters, shivering with the fear
And passion of the course. And when at last
Escaped, so many a green slope built on slope
Betwixt me and the enemy's house behind,
I dared to rest, or wander, in a rest
Made sweeter for the step upon the grass,
And view the ground's most gentle dimplement,
(As if God's finger touched but did not press
In making England) such an up and down
Of verdure,—nothing too much up or down,
A ripple of land; such little hills, the sky
Can stoop to tenderly and the wheatfields climb;
Such nooks of valleys lined with orchis,
Fed full of noises by invisible streams;
And open pastures where you scarcely tell
White daisies from white dew,—at intervals
The mythic oaks and elm-trees standing out
Self-poised upon their prodigy of shade,—
I thought my father's land was worthy too
Of being my Shakespeare's. . . .

. . . . After we walked only two
If cousin Romney pleased to walk with me.
We read, or talked, or quarrelled, as it chanced.

We were not lovers, nor even friends well-matched :
Say rather, scholars upon different tracks,
And thinkers disagreed, he, overfull
Of what is, and I, haply, overbold
For what might be.

But then the thrushes sang,
And shook my pulses and the elms' new leaves ;
At which I turned, and held my finger up,
And bade him mark that, howsoe'er the world
Went ill, as he related, certainly
The thrushes still sing in it. At the word
His brow would soften,—and he bore with me
In melancholy patience, not unkind,
While breaking into voluble ecstasy
I flattered all the beauteous country round,
As poets use, the skies, the clouds, the fields.
The happy violets hiding from the roads
The primroses run down to, carrying gold ;
The tangled hedgerows, where the cows push out
Impatient horns and tolerant churning mouths
'Twixt dripping ash-boughs,—hedgerows all alive
With birds and gnats and large white butterflies
Which look as if the May-flower had caught life
And palpitated forth upon the wind ;
Hills, vales, woods, netted in a silver mist,
Farms, granges, doubled up among the hills ;
And cattle grazing in the watered vales,
And cottage-chimneys smoking from the woods,
And cottage-gardens smelling everywhere,
Confused with smell of orchards. " See," I said,
" And see! is God not with us on the earth ?
And shall we put Him down by aught we do ?
Who says there's nothing for the poor and vile
Save poverty and wickedness ? behold ! "

And ankle-deep in English grass I leaped
And clapped my hands, and called all very fair.

(FROM SEVENTH BOOK.)

THE next day we took train to Italy
And fled on southward in the roar of steam.
The marriage-bells of Romney must be loud,
To sound so clear through all: I was not well,
And truly, though the truth is like a jest.
I could not choose but fancy, half the way,
I stood alone i' the belfry, fifty bells
Of naked iron, mad with merriment,
(As one who laughs and cannot stop himself)
All clanking at me, in me, over me,
Until I shrieked a shriek I could not hear,
And swooned with noise,—but still, along my swoon,
Was 'ware the baffled changes backward rang,
Prepared, at each emerging sense, to beat
And crash it out with clangour. I was weak;
I struggled for the posture of my soul
In upright consciousness of place and time,
But evermore, 'twixt waking and asleep,
Slipped somehow, staggered, caught at Marion's eyes
A moment, (it is very good for strength
To know that some one needs you to be strong)
And so recovered what I called myself,
For that time.

I just knew it when we swept
Above the old roofs of Dijon: Lyons dropped
A spark into the night, half trodden out
Unseen. But presently the winding Rhone
Washed out the moonlight large along his banks
Which strained their yielding curves out clear and clean
To hold it,—shadow of town and castle blurred

Upon the hurrying river. Such an air
Blew thence upon the forehead,—half an air
And half a water,—that I leaned and looked,
Then, turning back on Marion, smiled to mark
That she looked only on her child, who slept,
His face toward the moon too.

So we passed
The liberal open country and the close,
And shot through tunnels, like a lightening-wedge
By great Thor-hammers driven through the rock,
Which, quivering through the intestine blackness, splits,
And lets it in at once : the train swept in
Athrob with effort, trembling with resolve,
The fierce denouncing whistle wailing on
And dying off smothered in the shuddering dark,
While we, self-awed, drew troubled breath, oppressed
As other Titans underneath the pile
And nightmare, of the mountains. Out, at last,
To catch the dawn afloat upon the land !
—Hills, slung forth broadly and gauntly everywhere,
Not cramp't in their foundations, pushing wide
Rich outspreads of the vineyards and the corn,
(As if the entertained i' the name of France)
While, down their straining sides, streamed manifest
A soil as red as Charlemagne's knightly blood,
To consecrate the verdure. Some one said,
'Marseilles !' And lo, the city of Marseilles,
With all her ships behind her, and beyond,
The scimitar of ever-shining sea
For right-hand use, bared blue against the sky !
That night we spent between the purple heaven
And purple water : I think Marian slept ;
But I, as a dog a-watch for his master's foot,
Who cannot sleep or eat before he hears,

I sate upon the deck and watched the night
And listened through the stars for Italy.
Those marriage-bells I spoke of, sounded far,
As some child's go-cart in the street beneath
To a dying man who will not pass the day,
And knows it, holding by a hand he loves.
I too sate quiet, satisfied with death,
Sate silent : I could hear my own soul speak,
And had my friend,—for Nature comes sometimes
And says, "I am ambassador for God"
I felt the wind soft from the land of souls ;
The old miraculous mountains heaved in sight,
One straining past another along the shore,
The way of grand dull Odyssean ghosts,
Athirst to drink the cool blue wine of seas
And stare on voyagers. Peak pushing peak
They stood : I watched, beyond that Tyrian belt
Of intense sea betwixt them and the ship,
Down all their sides the misty olive-woods
Dissolving in the weak congenial moon
And still disclosing some brown convent-tower
That seems as if it grew from some brown rock,
Or many a little lighted village, dropt
Like a fallen star upon so high a point,
You wonder what can keep it in its place
From sliding headlong with the waterfalls
Which powder all the myrtle and orange groves
With spray of silver. Thus my Italy
Was stealing on us. Genoa broke with day,
The Doria's long pale palace striking out,
From green hills in advance of the white town,
A marble finger dominant to ships,
Seen glimmering through the uncertain gray of dawn.

Truth, so far, in my book ! a truth which draws
From all things upward. I, Aurora, still
Have felt it hound me through the wastes of life
As Jove did Io ; and, until that Hand
Shall overtake me wholly and on my head
Lay down its large unfluctuating peace,
The feverish gad-fly pricks me up and down.
It must be. Art's the witness of what Is
Behind this show. If this world's show were all,
Then imitation would be all in Art ;
There, Jove's hand gripes us !—For we stand here, we,
If genuine artists, witnessing for God's
Complete, consummate, undivided work ;
—That every natural flower which grows on earth
Implies a flower upon the spiritual side,
Substantial, archetypal, all a-glow
With blossoming causes,—not so far away,
But we, whose spirit-sense is somewhat cleared,
May catch at something of the bloom and breath,—
Too vaguely apprehended, though indeed
Still apprehended, consciously or not,
And still transferred to picture, music, verse,
For thrilling audient and beholding souls
By signs and touches which are known to souls.
How known, they know not,—why, they cannot find,
So straight call out on genius, say, " A man
Produced this," when much rather they should say,
" 'T is insight, and he saw this." . . .

Jane Welsh Carlyle.

1806—1866.

JANE BAILLIE WELSH, afterwards wife of Thomas Carlyle, was born on July 14th, 1806. On her father's side she had descended from John Knox, on her mother's she claimed descent from William Wallace. Whether it were too fanciful to attribute some of her gifts and graces to her distant progenitors is open to discussion. Certain it is that she had an indomitable spirit, a stern, strong sense of duty, an heroic endurance of hardship, and an uncompromising love of honesty and truth, and she may have owed somewhat to heredity as well as to early education and later self-discipline. Her father was a surgeon in Dumfriesshire, who met his death by typhus fever, caught from a patient; her mother was a woman of education and culture. The widow lady and her daughter dwelt in Haddington. Jane was a clever, sprightly, mischievous creature, and when put to books made great strides in learning. As she grew up she came under the pupilage of Edward Irving and was perhaps the first to discover his genius as she was afterwards, when notoriety in London was working him harm, amongst the earliest to detect and to sadly prophesy what the end must be with him. She, however, reaped much from the young man's teaching, and there appears to be little doubt that, had circumstances permitted, she would have

taken him for her husband, and, as she wrote years afterwards, "there would have been no tongues."

When introduced to Carlyle by Irving, she was a young, beautiful, well-read, and accomplished girl, several years under twenty. Carlyle was greatly impressed by her, and they quickly formed a friendship and established a correspondence. We find her writing to him in August 1823, "I owe you much: feelings and sentiments that ennoble my character, that give dignity, interest and enjoyment to my life,—in return I can only love you, and that I do from the bottom of my heart." She was only second to Irving in appreciating the great qualities of Carlyle, beneath whose somewhat rough, uncouth manners and self-doubting, self-questioning spirit, Jane Welsh discovered the man of genius. In 1826 they twain were married, and in wedding Carlyle Jane Welsh had faith in her own insight. When fame came to him, and people were recognising the presence of a great genius amongst them, she wrote, "They tell me things, as if they were new, that I found out years ago." Nevertheless, it is a striking testimony to her originality, her insight, and her sympathy, that she, a remarkably beautiful, gifted girl, of good position and family, should dare all the inevitable struggle, the inevitable poverty, that must precede success, by marrying the rough, penniless peasant-scholar, whose position in life was so different from her own.

In order that Carlyle, in marrying her, should be under no suspicion of mercenary motives, Jane Welsh Carlyle, renounced, in her mother's favour, certain landed property, worth about £200 a year, and placed herself by her husband's side, who had

nothing but the promise, very dimly visible to most people, of distinction later on. For some years they lived at Craigenputtock, a little property belonging to the Welshes, a dreary, solitary, moorland place—"a solitude almost Druidical." Here Carlyle,—whose wife bore the solitude and submitted to much domestic drudgery for which her delicate physique was but ill-fitted, for her husband's sake,—produced, besides some of his best essays, "*Sartor Resartus*."

Leaving Craigenputtock, the Carlyles removed (in 1834) to No. 5, afterwards 24, Cheyne Row, Chelsea. "Her arrival I best of all remember. Ah me! She was clear for this poor house (which she gradually, as poverty a little withdrew after long years pushing, has made so beautiful and comfortable) in preference to all my other samples; and here we spent our two-and-thirty years of hard battle against fate; hard, but not quite unvictorious, when she left me in her car of heaven's fire."

It was here that this "singularly gifted woman who" (according to Mr. Froude), "had she so pleased, might have made a name for herself," voluntarily sacrificed ambition and fortune for his sake, and watched over and defended from care and annoyance the gifted, but desperately trying, man by her side.

Not until she had been suddenly snatched from him, on the morrow of his triumphant reception by the University of Edinburgh (April 21st, 1866), did Carlyle fully appreciate all she had been to him. "Could I be easy to live with? She flickered round me like perpetual radiance, and in spite of my glooms and my misdoings, would at no moment cease to

love me and help me. . . . Ah me! she never knew fully, nor could I show her in my heavy laden; miserable life, how much I had at all times regarded, loved, and admired her. No telling of her now."

Like other persons in this world, where even the best amongst us fall lamentably short of their ideals, the Carlyles had their hours, even their days, of estrangement; but surely far too much importance has been attached to their differences, and we shall not follow those rash, unwise, and sacrilegious people who have intruded into the griefs of Jane Carlyle. Unfortunately her marriage was not blessed with children: her fight with poverty was desperately prolonged, and she had a bitter experience of the Hope deferred which maketh the heart sick, and there were moments in her life when she craved for more tenderness and more outward displays of affection and sympathy than she obtained from her husband. If only they had been blessed with children, all might have been well. Nevertheless, they lived brave and noble lives.

In her very early days, before her marriage, Mrs. Carlyle wrote a good deal of verse; the poem here reprinted belongs to a somewhat later date. But who shall say how much of the pathos, tenderness, and poetry which abound in the writings of Thomas Carlyle is due to the gifted woman who detected his genius when none else did, who shielded him from the buffets of fortune, tended him in sickness, cheered him in despair, and was his loyal-hearted wife for forty years?

H. J. GIBBS.

TO A SWALLOW BUILDING UNDER OUR
EAVES.

1832

JANE WELSH CARLYLE

THOU too hast travelled, little fluttering thing—
Hast seen the world, and now thy weary wing
Thou too must rest.
But much, my little bird, couldst thou but tell,
I'd give to know why here thou lik'st so well
To build thy nest.

For thou hast passed fair places in thy flight;
A world lay all beneath thee where to light;
And, strange thy taste,
Of all the vari'd scenes that met thine eye—
Of all the spots for building 'neath the sky—
To choose this waste.

Did fortune try thee? was thy little purse
Perchance run low, and thou, afraid of worse,
Felt here secure?
Ah, no! thou need'st not gold, thou happy one!
Thou know'st it not. Of all God's creatures, man
Alone is poor!

What was it, then? some mystic turn of thought,
Caught under German eaves, and hither brought,
Marring thine eye
For the world's loveliness, till thou art grown
A sober thing that dost but mope and moan
Not knowing why?

Nay, if thy mind be sound, I need not ask,
Since here I see thee working at thy task

With wing and beak.

A well-laid scheme doth that small head contain,
At which thou work'st, brave bird, with might and main,
Nor more need'st seek.

In truth, I rather take it thou hast got
By instinct wise much sense about thy lot,

And hast small care

Whether an Eden or a desert be
Thy home so thou remain'st alive and free
To skim the air.

God speed thee, pretty bird ; may thy small nest
With little ones all in good time be blest.

I love thee much ;

For well thou managest that life of thine,
While I ! Oh, ask not what I do with mine !
Would I were such !

Lady Dufferin.

1807—1867.

HELEN SELINA SHERIDAN, afterwards Lady Dufferin, was the eldest daughter of Thomas Sheridan, and the granddaughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Elizabeth Linley. Born in 1807, she spent her early life at Hampton Court Palace, where, after the death of her father in 1817, her mother found asylum for herself and her children. Her younger sister, Caroline Elizabeth, afterwards became famous as the Hon. Mrs. Norton, and a third sister, Jane Georgina, as "The Queen of Beauty," and the Duchess of Somerset. These three remarkable sisters inherited a large measure of the wit and beauty which was characteristic of both their parents and their grandparents, and were known in society as "The Three Graces." Helen Selina, at the age of eighteen, married Mr. Price Blackwood, who succeeded to the title of Dufferin in 1839, and died in 1841. Lady Dufferin does not seem to have had the strong literary impulse of her sister Caroline, and happily for herself lacked the motive of necessity which drew greater efforts from the Hon. Mrs. Norton's pen, but she wrote songs which have been sung wherever the language is spoken, and which give lyric expression to some of the tenderest emotions of the Irish heart. "Terence's Farewell" and "The Irish Emigrant" have been among the most popular

songs of the century. Sung by herself they won their way in the brilliant society with which she mingled, and found echo and re-echo outside that charmed circle in countless hearts and homes. Her amiability of temperament and sweetness of manner exercised an irresistible charm upon her contemporaries, a charm which was rendered the more fascinating by the natural wit with which it was associated.

Lady Dufferin was the mother of the present Marquis, whose distinguished services to the State have won for him universal honour, and who is known to literature by his "Letters from High Latitudes," and other works. Later in life, she married Lord Gifford, who only survived the marriage two months. She died in the month of June 1867.

ALFRED H. MILES.

SONGS.

LADY DUFFERIN.

I.

LAMENT OF THE IRISH EMIGRANT.

I'M sittin' on the stile, Mary,
Where we sat side by side
On a bright May mornin' long ago,
When first you were my bride ;
The corn was springin' fresh and green,
And the lark sang loud and high—
And the red was on your lip, Mary,
And the love-light in your eye.

The *place* is little changed, Mary,
The day is bright as then,
The lark's loud song is in my ear,
And the corn is green again ;
But I miss the soft clasp of your hand,
And your breath, warm on my cheek,
And I still keep list'ning for the words
You never more will speak.

'Tis but a step down yonder lane,
And the little church stands near,
The church where we were wed, Mary,
I see the spire from here.
But the graveyard lies between, Mary,
And my step might break your rest—
For I've laid you, darling ! down to sleep,
With your baby on your breast.

I'm very lonely now, Mary,
For the poor make no new friends,
But, oh ! they love the better still,
The few our Father sends !
And you were all *I* had, Mary,
My blessin' and my pride :
There's nothin' left to care for now,
Since my poor Mary died.

Yours was the good, brave heart, Mary,
That still kept hoping on,
When the trust in God had left my soul,
And my arm's young strength was gone.
There was comfort ever on *your* lip,
And the kind look on your brow—
I bless you, Mary, for that same,
Though you cannot hear me now.

I thank you for the patient smile
When your heart was fit to break, .
When the hunger pain was gnawin' there,
And you hid it, for *my* sake !
I bless ^{you} you for the pleasant word,
When your heart was sad and sore—
Oh ! I'm thankful you are gone, Mary,
Where grief can't reach you more !

I'm biddin' you a long farewell,
My Mary—kind and true !
But I'll not forget *you*, darling !
In the land I'm goin' to ;
They say there's bread and work for all,
And the sun shines always there—
But I'll not forget old Ireland,
Were it fifty times as fair !

And often in those grand old woods
I'll sit, and shut my eyes,
And my heart will travel back again
To the place where Mary lies ;
And I'll think I see the little stile
Where we sat side by side :
And the springin' corn, and the bright May morn,
When first you were my bride.

II.

TERENCE'S FAREWELL.

SO, my Kathleen, you're goin' to leave me
All alone by myself in this place,
But I'm sure you will never deceive me,
Oh no, if there's truth in your face.
Though England's a beautiful country
Full of ilgant boys, och ! what then ?
You wouldn't forget your poor Terence,
You'll come back to ould Ireland again.

Och ! them English decavers by nature !
Though maybe you'd think them sincere,
They'll say you're a sweet charming creature,
But don't you belave them, my dear,
No, Kathleen, agra, don't be mindin'
The flatterin' speeches they'll make,
Just tell them a poor boy in Ireland
Is breakin' his heart for your sake.

It's a folly to keep you from goin',
Though, faith ! 'tis a mighty hard case ;
For, Kathleen, you know there's no knowin'
When next I may see your sweet face.

And when you come back to me, Kathleen,
None the better shall I be off then :
You'll be spakin' such beautiful English,
Sure I won't know my Kathleen again.

Eh now ! where's the need of this hurry ?
Don't fluster me so in this way ;
I've forgot, 'twixt the grief and the flurry,
Every word I was manin' to say.
Now just wait a minute, I bid ye—
Can I talk if you bother me so ?
Och, Kathleen, my blessin' go wid ye
Ev'ry inch of the way that you go.

Hon. Mrs. Norton.

1808—1876.

CAROLINE ELIZABETH SARAH SHERIDAN, afterwards the Hon. Mrs. Norton, was the second daughter of Thomas Sheridan, and the granddaughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Her mother, who was the daughter of Colonel Callendar, possessed great personal charms, and natural literary ability, which found exercise in the writing of novels. Caroline inherited many of her mother's gifts and graces, together with the more brilliant qualities belonging to her father's family, and was thus well equipped for both a fashionable and a literary career. Born in 1808, she spent some years after her father's death with her mother and sisters at Hampton Court Palace, and later at a small mansion in Great George Street, near Storey's Gate. When scarcely more than a child she was sought in marriage by Mr. George Norton, a younger brother of Lord Grantley, and in 1827 he married her. The marriage was a most unhappy one, and Mrs. Norton doubtless found some relief from her sorrows in the employment of her pen. She is said to have earned large sums by her writings, and for a long time to have provided the means for the family subsistence, as well as for her husband's extravagances. These were the days of the "Annals" with their covers of red silk and embellishments of steel engravings, and Mrs. Norton

became both a contributor and an editor in this connection. Like her mother she wrote several novels, "Old Sir Douglas," "Lost and Found," etc., etc., novels which, in some instances, ran to several editions, and to these she added four volumes of verse: "The Sorrows of Rosalie" (1829); "The Undying One" (1831); "The Child of the Islands" (1845); "The Lady of la Garaye" (1861-2). Mrs. Norton's work was not conceived in any dilettante spirit. It shows from first to last, that steady progress which only comes of conscientious application and continuous study. Her longer works lack the sustained interest which can alone make such poems permanently popular, but they contain stanzas which give felicitous expression to genuine feeling and ennobling thought. Lockhart, in the *Quarterly*, called her "the Byron of poetesses," but, except for the connubial infelicity which withered both their lives, and the occasional expression of the emotions stirred by their common experience, the analogy cannot be said to hold good. Each, like Wordsworth's nightingale, was "a creature of a fiery heart;" but Mrs. Norton was chastened and refined by the sufferings that irritated and degraded Byron.

Mrs. Norton's tender womanly feeling was everywhere evident in her life and work. Her sympathy with the poor and the suffering was keen and constant.

ALFRED H. MILES.

SONGS AND BALLADS.

HON. MRS. NORTON.

I.—LOVE NOT.

LOVE not, love not, ye hapless sons of clay !
Hope's gayest wreaths are made of earthly flow'rs—
Things that are made to fade and fall away,
When they have blossomed but a few short hours.
Love not, love not !

Love not, love not ! The thing you love may die—
May perish from the gay and gladsome earth ;
The silent stars, the blue and smiling sky,
Beam on its grave as once upon its birth.
Love not, love not !

Love not, love not ! The thing you love may change,
The rosy lip may cease to smile on you ;
The kindly beaming eye grow cold and strange ;
The heart still warmly beat, yet not be true.
Love not, love not !

Love not, love not !—Oh, warning vainly said
In present years, as in the years gone by :
Love flings a halo round the dear one's head,
Faultless, immortal,—till they change or die.
Love not, love not !

II.—THE KING OF DENMARK'S RIDE.

WORD was brought to the Danish king,
 (Hurry!)
That the love of his heart lay suffering,
And pined for the comfort his voice would bring;
 (Oh! ride as though you were flying!)
Better he loves each golden curl
On the brow of that Scandinavian girl
Than his rich crown jewels of ruby and pearl:
 And his Rose of the Isles is dying!

Thirty nobles saddled with speed;
 (Hurry!)
Each one mounting a gallant steed
Which he kept for battle and days of need;
 (Oh! ride as though you were flying!)
Spurs were struck in the foaming flank;
Worn-out chargers staggered and sank;
Bridles were slackened and girths were burst;
But ride as they would, the king rode first,
 For his Rose of the Isles lay dying!

His nobles are beaten, one by one;
 (Hurry!)
They have fainted and faltered and homeward gone;
His little fair page now follows alone,
 For strength and for courage trying.
The king looked back at that faithful child;
Wan was the face that answering smiled;
They passed the drawbridge with clattering din,
Then he dropped; and only the king rode in
 Where his Rose of the Isles lay dying!

The king blew a blast on his bugle horn ;
 (Silence !)
No answer came ; but faint and forlorn
An echo returned on the cold grey morn,
 Like the breath of a spirit sighing.
The castle portal stood grimly wide ;
None welcomed the king from that weary ride ;
For dead in the light of the dawning day,
The pale sweet form of the welcomer lay
 Who had yearned for his voice while dying !

The panting steed, with a drooping crest,
 Stood weary
The king returned from her chamber of rest,
The thick sobs choking in his breast,
 And that dumb companion eyeing,
The tears gushed forth which he strove to check
He bowed his head on his charger's neck ;
"O steed, that every nerve didst strain,
Dear steed, our ride hath been in vain
 To the halls where my love lay dying ! "

III.—DREAMS.

SURELY I heard a voice—surely my name
Was breathed in tones familiar to my heart !
I listened—and the low wind stealing came,
In darkness and in silence to depart.

Surely I saw a form, a proud bright form,
Standing beside my couch ! I raised mine eyes :
'Twas but a dim cloud, herald of a storm,
That floated through the grey and twilight skies.

Surely the brightness of the summer hour
Hath suddenly burst upon the circling gloom !
I dream ; 'twas but the perfume of a flower,
Which the breeze wafted through the silent room.

Surely a hand clasped mine with greetings fond !
A name is murmured by my lips with pain ;
Woe for that sound—woe for love's broken bond.
I start—I wake—I am alone again !

IV.—I DO NOT LOVE THEE !

I DO not love thee !—no ! I do not love thee !
And yet when thou art absent I am sad ;
And envy even the bright blue sky above thee,
Whose quiet stars may see thee and be glad.

I do not love thee !—yet, I know not why,
Whate'er thou dost seems still well done, to me—
And often in my solitude I sigh—
That those I *do* love are not more like thee !

I do not love thee !—yet, when thou art gone
I hate the sound (though those who speak be dear)
Which breaks the lingering echo of the tone
Thy voice of music leaves upon my ear.

I do not love thee !—yet thy speaking eyes,
With their deep, bright, and most expressive blue—
Between me and the midnight heaven arise,
Often than any eyes I ever knew.

I *know* I do not love thee ! yet, alas !
Others will scarcely trust my candid heart ;
And oft I catch them smiling as they pass,
Because they see me gazing where thou art.

V.—BINGEN ON THE RHINE.

A SOLDIER of the Legion lay dying in Algiers—
There was lack of woman's nursing, there was
dearth of woman's tears ;
But a comrade stood beside him, while his life-blood
ebbed away,
And bent, with pitying glances, to hear what he
might say.
The dying soldier faltered, as he took that comrade's
hand,
And he said: "I never more shall see my own, my
native land ;
Take a message and a token to some distant friends
of mine,
For I was born at Bingen—at Bingen on the Rhine !
" Tell my brothers and companions, when they meet
and crowd around
To hear my mournful story, in the pleasant vineyard
ground,
That we fought the battle bravely—and, when the
day was done,
Full many a corse lay ghastly pale, beneath the
setting sun.
And 'midst the dead and dying were some grown
old in wars,—
The death-wound on their gallant breasts, the last
of many scars ;
But some were young,—and suddenly beheld life's
morn decline,—
And one had come from Bingen—fair Bingen on the
Rhine !

"Tell my mother that her other sons shall comfort
her old age,
And I was aye a truant bird, that thought his home
a cage ;
For my father was a soldier, and, even as a child,
My heart leaped forth to hear him tell of struggles
fierce and wild ;
And when he died, and left us to divide his scanty
hoard,
I let them take whate'er they would—but kept my
father's sword ;
And with boyish love I hung it where the bright
light used to shine,
On the cottage wall at Bingen—calm Bingen on the
Rhine!

"Tell my sister not to weep for me, and sob with
drooping head,
When the troops are marching home again, with
glad and gallant tread ;
But to look upon them proudly, with a calm and
steadfast eye,
For her brother was a soldier, too—and not afraid
to die.
And, if a comrade seek her love, I ask her, in my
name,
To listen to him kindly, without regret or shame ;
And to hang the old sword in its place (my father's
sword and mine),
For the honour of old Bingen—dear Bingen on th
Rhine!

"There's another—not a sister,—in the happy days
gone by,
You'd have known her by the merriment that sparkled
in her eye :
Too innocent for coquetry ! too fond for idle scorn-
ing ;—
Oh friend ! I fear the lightest heart makes sometimes
heaviest mourning !
Tell her, the last night of my life (for, ere this moon
be risen,
My body will be out of pain—my soul be out of
prison),
I dreamed I stood with *her*, and saw the yellow sun-
light shine
On the vine-clad hills of Bingen—fair Bingen on the
Rhine !

"I saw the blue Rhine sweep along—I heard, or
seemed to hear,
The German songs we used to sing, in chorus sweet
and clear ;
And down the pleasant river, and up the slanting
hill,
That echoing chorus sounded, through the evening
calm and still ;
And her glad blue eyes were on me, as we passed
with friendly talk,
Down many a path beloved of yore, and well-
remembered walk ;
And her little hand lay lightly, confidingly in mine . . .
But we'll meet no more at Bingen—loved Bingen on
the Rhine !"

His voice grew faint and hoarser,—his grasp was
childish weak,—
His eyes put on a dying look,—he sighed and ceased
to speak :
His comrade bent to lift him, . . . but the spark of
life had fled !
The soldier of the Legion, in a foreign land was
dead !
And the soft moon rose up slowly, and calmly she
looked down
On the red sand of the battle-field, with bloody
corpses strown ;
Yea, calmly on that dreadful scene her pale light
seemed to shine,
As it shone on distant Bingen—fair Bingen on the
Rhine !

VI.—CRIPPLED JANE.

THEY said she might recover, if we sent her down
to the sea,
But that is for rich men's children, and we knew it
could not be :
So she lived at home in the Lincolnshire Fens, and
we saw her, day by day,
Grow pale, and stunted, and crooked ; till her last
chance died away.
And now *I'm* dying ; and often, when you thought
that I moaned with pain,
I was moaning a prayer to Heaven, and thinking of
Crippled Jane.
Folks will be kind to Johnny ; his temper is merry
and light ;
With so much love in his honest eyes, and a sturdy
sense of right.

And no one could quarrel with Susan; so pious,
and meek, and mild,
And nearly as wise as a woman, for all that she looks
such a child!
But Jane will be weird and wayward; fierce, and
cunning, and hard;
She won't believe she's a burden, be thankful, nor
win regard,—
God have mercy upon her! God be her guard and
guide;
How will strangers bear with her, when, at times,
even *I* felt tried?
When the ugly smile of pleasure goes over her
sallow face,
And the feeling of health, for an hour, quickens her
languid pace;
When with dwarfish strength she rises, and plucks,
with a selfish hand,
The busiest person near her, to lead her out on the
land;
Or when she sits in some corner, no one's com-
panion or care,
Huddled up in some darksome passage, or crouched
on a step of the stair;
While far off the children are playing, and the birds
singing loud in the sky,
And she looks through the cloud of her headache,
to scowl at the passers-by
I die—God have pity upon her!—how happy rich
men must be!—
For they said she might have recovered—if we sent
her down to the sea.

THE CHILD OF THE ISLANDS.

1845.

HON. MRS. NORTON.

A MOTHER'S LOVE.

THE Mother looketh from her latticed pane—
Her Children's voices echoing sweet and clear :
With merry leap and bound her side they gain,
Offering their wild field-flow'rets : all are dear,
Yet still she listens with an absent ear :
For, while the strong and lovely round her press,
A halt uneven step sounds drawing near :
And all she leaves, that crippled child to bless,
Folding him to her heart, with cherishing caress.

Yea, where the Soul denies illumined grace,
(The last, the worst, the fatallest defect ;)
SHE, gazing earnest in that idiot face,
Thinks she perceives a dawn of Intellect :
And, year by year, continues to expect
What Time shall never bring, ere Life be flown :
Still loving, hoping,—patient, though deject,—
Watching those eyes that answer not her own,—
Near him, and yet how far ! with him, but still alone

Want of attraction *this* love cannot mar :
Years of Rebellion cannot blot it out :
The Prodigal, returning from afar,
Still finds a welcome, giv'n with song and shout !
The Father's hand, without reproach or doubt,
Clasps his,—who caused them all such bitter fears .
The Mother's arms encircle him about :
That long dark course of alienated years,
Marked only by a burst of reconciling tears !

Frances Anne Kemble.

1809—1893.

FANNY KEMBLE, to call her by the name by which she was most familiarly known, was born on the 27th November, 1809, in Newman Street, Oxford Street, London. Her father was Charles Kemble, the famous actor, her mother was the offspring of a French officer, who had married the daughter of a farmer from the neighbourhood of Berne. Fanny Kemble was always proud to think that there was as much of her mother's as of her father's blood in her veins;—"I sometimes wonder," she wrote, "whether it is her blood in my veins that so loves and longs for those supremely beautiful mountains." Fanny Kemble confessed that she was a rebellious child, prone to defy all authority, and in her "Records of Girlhood," she tells in a half-humorous tone, how her famous great-aunt, Mrs. Siddons, who lived next door, had often to be called in to admonish her.

"Melpomene took me upon her lap, and, bending upon me her 'controlling frown,' discoursed to me of my evil ways, in those accents which curdled the blood of the poor shopman, of whom she demanded if the printed calico she purchased of him 'would wash.' The tragic tones pausing, in the midst of the impressed and impressive silence of the assembled family, I tinkled forth, 'What beautiful eyes you

have!' all my small faculties having been absorbed in the steadfast upward gaze I fixed upon those magnificent orbs. Mrs. Siddons set me down with a smothered laugh, and I trotted off, apparently uninjured by my great-aunt's solemn moral suasion."

Fanny Kemble early showed unmistakable proofs of genius, and was carefully educated with a view to the stage. She was sent to several schools, and finally to Paris; and of the school there she gives a very graphic account, describing the great difficulty the dancing teacher had in giving her a good deportment. She soon showed her superiority in acting, however, and, though she essayed somewhat ambitious parts, generally carried herself well through them. She returned home when sixteen; and had to confess that, though a pretty-looking girl with fine eyes, teeth and hair, a clear vivid complexion, and rather good features, she suffered from the results of small-pox. She says this rendered her complexion at times thick and muddy, the features heavy and coarse, leaving her so moderate a share of good looks then as quite to warrant her mother's satisfaction in saying when she went on the stage, "Well, my dear, they can't say we've brought you out to exhibit your beauty!" "Plain I certainly was," she adds, "but I by no means looked so; and so great was the variation in my appearance at different times, that my comical old friend, Mrs. Fitzhugh, once exclaimed, 'Fanny Kemble, you are the ugliest and the handsomest woman in London!'"

While still very young, Fanny Kemble began to write for the stage, composing her drama of "Francis I.," at the age of seventeen; a play in which she herself personated one of the leading char-

acters. It was successful also as a book, reaching a seventh edition. At Covent Garden Theatre, then under the management of her father, she acted many leading characters while yet young: Portia, Isabella, Lady Townley, Calista, Bianca, Beatrice Constance, Lady Teazle, Lady Macbeth, and Julia in the *Hunchback* being amongst them.

In 1832 with her father, she visited America, and performed with *éclat* at the principal theatres there. She has given an account of her experiences during this tour in her "Journal of a Residence in America" (1835). Whilst in America, she married a planter of South Carolina, Mr. Pierce Butler; but her marriage did not prove a happy one, and she obtained a divorce from him in 1839. She resumed her maiden name, and settled in Lenox, Massachusetts, where she resided for twenty years, with the exception of one year spent in Italy, of which she has given a vivacious account in her book entitled, "A Year of Consolation: Travels in Italy" (1847). She also wrote an account of her "Residence in America," and published a volume of "Residence on a Georgia Plantation" (1863). She has been a constant writer, and has published much. She translated some of Schiller's dramas, among them "Mary Stuart," and wrote many novels and tales; "Notes on Shakespeare's Plays" (1882); "Records of Girlhood," 3 vols. (1878); "Records of Later Life," 3 vols. (1882), besides two volumes of Poems. She also appeared at intervals as a public reader. From 1869 to 1873 she resided in Europe, and for a time returned to America, afterwards making her abode in London. She died January 15th, 1893.

Her poems are marked by thought, by fancy, and

great love of nature and art. She has written in many metres and almost always with a sense of distinction and of ease. Her sonnets are very finished—some of them, indeed, will compare with the most successful of those written by any, save the half-dozen or so who stand supreme in this department of poetry. Much of her work is autobiographical and bears the impress of her changeful life. The following sonnet could only have been written by one who united the poet's feeling and the actor's experience:—

TO SHAKESPEARE.

OFF, when my lips I open to rehearse
Thy wondrous spells of wisdom, and of power,
And that my voice, and thy immortal verse,
On listening ears, and hearts, I mingled pour,
I shrink dismayed—and awful doth appear
The vain presumption of my own weak deed;
'Thy glorious spirit seems to mine so near,
That suddenly I tremble as I read—
Thee an invisible auditor I fear:
Oh, if it might be so, my master dear!
With what beseeching would I pray to thee,
To make me equal to my noble task,
Succor from thee, how humbly would I ask,
Thy worthiest works to utter worthily.

Our selection aims at representing something of her varied range and her fresh and often felicitous treatment of ordinary themes.

ALEX. H. JAPP

POEMS.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

I.—THE YEAR'S PROGRESS.

I LOOK along the dusty dreary way,
So lately strew'd with blossoms fresh and gay,—
The sweet procession of the year is past,
And wither'd whirling leaves run rattling fast,
Like throngs of tatter'd beggars following
Where late went by the pageant of a king.

First came the forward darlings of the Spring,
Snowdrops, and violets, and daisies white,
And hanging cowslips, and each pageant thing
Whose waking wakes the season of delight,—
The year's faint smiles before its burst of mirth,
The soft sweet breathing babies of the earth,
Close to her warm brown bosom nestling in,
That the wild winds take laughing by the chin;
Then flush'd the silver glory of the May,
And like a bride the Spring was led away.
Summer's lithe daughters followed flaunting gay,
Mingling their odours with the new mown hay,
The rosy eglantine, smooth, silken-cheek'd,
And amber honeysuckle, crimson-streak'd;
Then the prim privet with her ivory bloom,
Like a pale maiden sister, filled their room
With blue-green leaves, and almond bitter breath,
Thrusting her dainty spices up underneath.
Brown thorny arches sprinkled with the rose,
Whiter than chalk that on the wild briar grows,

And the cream-colour'd crumbling elder flower,
Garlanded o'er with starry virgin's bow'r,
Piled the green hedgerows with their heaps of bloom,
And buried the deep lanes in pageant gloom.

Autumn, with shining berries black and red,
And glossy curl'd clematis bound his head ;
Over his russet cloak the wild hops pale
With golden corn and scarlet poppies trail,
And waving down his mane of tawny hair,
Hangs purple poison-flow'r, the Lady Fair.

Of all the lovely train he was the last,
And with him all the pageant bright hath past,
And in its path, scour'd by the whimpering wind,
Grey shapeless Winter shuffles close behind.

II.—EXPOSTULATION.

WHAT though the sun must set, and darkness
come,

Shall we turn coldly from the blessed light,
And o'er the heavens call an earlier gloom,
Because the longest day must end in night ?
What though the golden summer flies so fast,
Shall we neglect the rosy wreaths she brings,
Because their blooming sweetness may not last,
And winter comes apace with snowy wings ?
What though this world be but the journeying land
Where those who love but meet to part again ;
Where, as we clasp in welcome friendship's hand,
That greeting clasp becomes a parting strain :
'Tis better to be blest for one short hour,
Than never know delight of love or joy,
Friendship, or mirth, or happiness, or power,
And all that Time creates, and must destroy.

III.—THE BLACK WALL-FLOWER.

I FOUND a flower in a desolate plot,
Where no man wrought,—by a deserted cot,
Where no man dwelt ; a strange, dark-colour'd gem,
Black heavy buds on a pale leafless stem ;
I pluck'd it, wondering, and with it hied
To my brave May ; and, showing it, I cried :
“ Look, what a dismal flower ! did ever bloom,
Born of our earth and air, wear such a gloom ?
It looks as it should grow out of a tomb :
Is it not mournful ? ” “ No,” replied the child ;
And, gazing on it thoughtfully, she smiled.
She knows each word of that great book of God,
Spread out between the blue sky and the sod :
“ There are no mournful flowers—they are all glad ;
This is a solemn one, but not a sad.”

Lo ! with the dawn the black buds open'd slowly ;
Within each cup a colour deep and holy,
As sacrificial blood, glow'd rich and red,
And through the velvet tissue mantling spread ;
While in the midst of this dark crimson heat
A precious golden heart did throb and beat ;
Through ruby leaves the morning light did shine,
Each mournful bud had grown a flow'r divine ;
And bitter sweet to senses and to soul,
A breathing came from them, that fill'd the whole
Of the surrounding tranced and sunny air
With its strange fragrance, like a silent prayer.
Then cried I, “ From the earth's whole wreath I'll
borrow
No flower but thee ! thou exquisite type of sorrow ! ”

IV.—WRITTEN AT TRENTON FALLS.

COME down ! from where the everlasting hills
Open their rocky gates to let thee pass,
Child of a thousand rapid running rills,
And still lakes, where the skies their beauty glass.
With thy dark eyes, white feet, and amber hair,
Of heaven and earth thou fair and fearful daughter,
Through thy wide halls, and down thy echoing stair,
Rejoicing come—thou lovely “Leaping Water !”
Shout ! till the woods beneath their vaults of green
Resound, and shake their pillars on thy way ;
Fling wide thy glittering fringe of silver sheen,
And toss towards heaven thy clouds of dazzling spray.
The sun looks down upon thee with delight,
And weaves his prism around thee for a belt ;
And as the wind waves thy thin robes of light,
The jewels of thy girdle glow and melt.
Ah ! where be they, who first with human eyes
Beheld thy glory, thou triumphant flood !
And through the forest, heard with glad surprise,
Thy waters calling, like the voice of God ?
Far towards the setting sun, wandering they go,
Poor remnant ! left, from exile and from slaughter,
But still their memory, mingling with thy flow,
Lives in thy name—thou lovely “Leaping Water.”

V.—WRITTEN ON CRAMOND BEACH.

FAREWELL, old playmate ! on thy sandy shore
My lingering feet will leave their print no more ;
To thy loved side I never may return.
I pray thee, old companion, make due mourn

For the wild spirit who so oft has stood
Gazing in love and wonder on thy flood.
The form is now departing far away,
That half in anger, oft, and half in play,
Thou hast pursued with thy white showers of foam.
Thy waters daily will besiege the home
I loved among the rocks ; but there will be
No laughing cry, to hail thy victory,
Such as was wont to greet thee, when I fled
With hurried footsteps, and averted head,
Like fallen monarch, from thy venturous stand,
Chased by thy billows far along the sand.
And when at eventide thy warm waves drink
The amber clouds, that in their bosom sink ;
When sober twilight over thee has spread
Her purple pall, when the glad day is dead,
My voice no more will mingle with the dirge
That rose in mighty moaning from thy surge,
Filling with awful harmony the air,
When thy vast soul and mine were joined in prayer.

VI.—DREAM LAND.

WHEN in my dreams thy lovely face,
Smiles with unwonted tender grace,
Grudge not the precious seldom cheer ;
I know full well, my lady dear !
It is no boon of thine.

In thy sweet sanctuary of sleep,
If my sad sprite should kneeling weep,
Suffer its speechless worship there ;
Thou know'st full well, my lady fair !
It is no fault of mine.

VII.—IS IT A SIN?

IS it a sin, to wish that I may meet thee
In that dim world whither our spirits stray,
When sleep and darkness follow life and day?
Is it a sin, that there my voice should greet thee
With all that love that I must die concealing?
Will my tear-laden eyes sin in revealing
The agony that preys upon my soul?
Is't not enough through the long, loathsome day,
To hold each look, and word, in stern control?
May I not wish the staring sunlight gone,
Day and its thousand torturing moments done,
And prying sights and sounds of men away?
Oh, still and silent Night! when all things sleep,
Locked in thy swarthy breast my secret keep:
Come, with thy visioned hopes and blessings now!
I dream the only happiness I know.

VIII.—WHENE'ER I RECOLLECT THE HAPPY TIME:

WHENE'ER I recollect the happy time,
When you and I held converse dear together,
There come a thousand thoughts of sunny weather,
Of early blossoms, and the frosh year's prime;
Your memory lives for ever in my mind
With all the fragrant beauties of the spring,
With od'rous lime and silver hawthorn twined,
And many a noonday woodland wandering.
There's not a thought of you, but brings along
Some sunny dream of river, field, and sky;
'Tis wafted on the blackbird's sunset song,
Or some wild snatch of ancient melody.
And as I date it still, our love arose
'Twixt the last violet and the earliest rose.

IX.—ABSENCE.

WHAT shall I do with all the days and hours
That must be counted ere I see thy face ?
How shall I charm the interval that lowers
Between this time and that sweet time of grace ?
Shall I in slumber steep each weary sense,
Weary with longing ?—shall I flee away
Into past days, and with some fond pretence
Cheat myself to forget the present day ?
Shall love for thee lay on my soul the sin
Of casting from me God's great gift of time ;
Shall I these mists of memory locked within,
Leave, and forget life's purposes sublime ?
Oh ! how, or by what means, may I contrive
To bring the hour that brings thee back more near ?
How may I teach my drooping hope to live
Until that blessed time, and thou art here ?
I'll tell thee : for thy sake, I will lay hold
Of all good aims, and consecrate to thee,
In worthy deeds, each moment that is told
While thou, beloved one ! art far from me.
For thee, I will arouse my thoughts to try
All heavenward flights, all high and holy strains ;
For thy dear sake I will walk patiently
Through these long hours, nor call their minutes pains
I will this dreary blank of absence make
A noble task-time, and will therein strive
To follow excellence, and to o'ertake
More good than I have won, since yet I live.
So may this doomed time build up in me
A thousand graces which shall thus be thine ;

So may my love and longing hallowed be,
And thy dear thought an influence divine.

X.—MORNING.

BY THE SEASIDE.

WITH these two kisses on thine eyes
I melt thy sleep away—arise !
For look, my love, Phœbus his golden hand
Hath laid upon the white mane of the sea,
And springing from the fresh brine gloriously,
He glances keen o'er the long level strand.
Now come his horses up, all snorting fire,
The lovely morning hours, hymning their choir
Of triumph, circle round the royal sun,
And the bright pageant of the day's begun.
Come, let me lock in mine thy hand,
And pace we with swift feet, this smooth and spark
ling sand.
See, how the swollen ridges of the waves
Curl into crystal caves,
Rising and rounding,
Rolling, rebounding,
Echoing, resounding,
And running into curves of creamy spray,
Mark, with white wavy lines, the far-indented bay.
The little bark, that by the sheltering shore,
Folded her wings, and rocked herself to sleep,
Shakes out her pinions to the breeze once more,
And like a swallow, dips, and skims the deep.
Hail, welcome day ! hail, miracle of light !
Hail, wondrous resurrection from the night !
Hail, glorious earth ! hail, ocean, fearful fair !
Hail, ye sweet kisses of fresh morning air !
Hail thou ! my love, my life, my air, my light,
Soul of my day ! my morning, noon, and night !

*XI.—ONE AFTER ONE, THE SHIELD, THE
SWORD, THE SPEAR.*

ONE after one, the shield, the sword, the spear,
The panoply that I was wont to wear,
My suit of proof, my wings that kept me free,
These, full of trust, delivered I to thee,
When, through all time, I swore that by thy side
I would henceforward walk.—I since have tried,
In hours of sadness, when my former life
Shone on me through thick gathering clouds of strife,
To wield my weapons bright, and wear again
My maiden corslet and free wings—in vain!
My hands have lost their strength and skill—my breast,
Beneath my mail throbs with a wild unrest;
My pinions trail upon the earth—my soul,
Quails 'neath the heavy spell of thy control.
All that was living of my life seems fled,
My mortal part alone is not yet dead.
But since my nobler gifts have all been thine,
Trophies, or sacrifices for thy shrine,
Pierce not the breast that stripped itself for thee
Of the fair means God gave it to be free,
Have yet some pity, and forbear to strike
One without power to strive, or fly alike,
Nor trample on a heart, which now must be
Towards all defenceless—most of all towards thee.

XII.—FAITH.

BBETTER trust all, and be deceived,
And weep that trust, and that deceiving;
Than doubt one heart, that, if believed,
Had blessed one's life with true believing.
Oh, in this mocking world, too fast
The doubting fiend o'ertakes our youth!
Better be cheated to the last,
Than lose the blessed hope of truth

XIII.—LADY, WHOM MY BELOVED LOVES.

LADY, whom my beloved loves so well !
When on his clasping arm thy head reclineth,
When on thy lips his ardent kisses dwell,
And the bright flood of burning light, that shineth
In his dark eyes, is poured into thine ;
When thou shalt lie enfolded to his heart,
In all the trusting helplessness of love ;
If in such joy sorrow can find a part,
Oh, give one sigh unto a doom like mine !
Which I would have thee pity, but not prove.
One cold, calm, careless, wintry look, that fell
Haply by chance on me, is all that he
E'er gave my love ; round that, my wild thoughts dwell
In one eternal pang of memory.

XIV.—PAOLO AND FRANCESCA.

SEER of the triple realm invisible,
When I behold that miserable twain,
By Rimini's sudden sword of justice slain,
Sweep through the howling hurricane of hell—
Light seems to me to rest upon their gloom,
More than upon this wretched earth above,
Falls on the path of many a living love,
Whose fate may envy their united doom.
There be, who wandering in this world, with heart
Riveted to some other heart for ever,
Past power of all eternity to sever,
The current of this life still drives apart,
Who, with strained eyes, and outstretched arms, and cry
Of bitterest longing, come each other nigh,
To look, to love, and to be swept asunder,
The breathless greeting of their agony
Lost in the pitiless world-storm's ceaseless thunder.

*XV.—IF I BELIEVED IN DEATH, HOW SWEET
A BED.*

IF I believed in death, how sweet a bed
For such a blessed slumber could I find,
Beneath the blue and sparkling coverlid
Of that smooth sea, stirred by no breath of wind.
Oh if I could but die, and be at rest,
Thou smiling sea ! in thy slow-heaving breast.

But all thy thousand waves quench not the spark
Immortal, woful, of one human soul ;
Under thy sapphire vault, cold, still, and dark,
Deep down, below where tides and tempests roll,
The spirit may not lose its deeper curse,
It finds no death in the whole universe.

*XVI.—COVER ME WITH YOUR EVERLASTING
ARMS.*

COVER me with your everlasting arms,
Ye guardian giants of this solitude !
From the ill-sight of men, and from the rude,
Tumultuous din of yon wild world's alarms !
Oh, knit your mighty limbs around, above,
And close me in for ever ! let me dwell
With the wood spirits, in the darkest cell
That ever with your verdant locks ye wove.
The air is full of countless voices, joined
In one eternal hymn ; the whispering wind,
The shuddering leaves, the hidden water-springs,
The work-song of the bees, whose honeyed wings
Hang in the golden tresses of the lime,
Or buried lie in purple beds of thyme.

*XVII.—I HEAR A VOICE LOW IN THE SUNSET
WOODS.*

I HEAR a voice low in the sunset woods;
Listen, it says : "Decay, decay, decay."
I hear it in the murmuring of the floods,
And the wind sighs it as it flies away.
Autumn is come ; seest thou not in the skies
The stormy light of his fierce, lurid eyes ?
Autumn is come ; his brazen feet have trod,
Withering and scorching, o'er the mossy sod.
The fainting year sees her fresh flowery wreath
Shrivel in his hot grasp ; his burning breath,
Dries the sweet water-springs that in the shade
Wandering along, delicious music made.
A flood of glory hangs upon the world,
Summer's bright wings shining ere they are furled.

XVIII.—EVENING.

NOW in the west is spread
A golden bed ;
Great purple curtains hang around,
With fiery fringes bound,
And cushions, crimson red,
For Phœbus' lovely head ;
And as he sinks through waves of amber light,
Down to the crystal halls of Amphitrite,
Hesper leads forth his starry legions bright
Into the violet fields of air—Good night !

Eliza Cook.

1812—1889.

AN almost contemptuous indifference has succeeded to the extensive popularity once enjoyed by Eliza Cook. The reaction, although not inexplicable, is to some extent undeserved. During the latter portion of her life her reputation was unduly depressed, owing to her lengthy withdrawal from the world through ill-health; but some of her lyrics are still familiar, and many of them are worthy of preservation.

It has been the fashion to weigh the merits of Eliza Cook by an unjust standard. She did not attempt to please poets or philosophers—her audience was the people. Her muse, though homely in attire, could touch the hearts of those to whom the philosophy of Shelley, or the psychology of Browning, was incomprehensible. She had her mission, and fulfilled it honestly. She carried pathos and true sentiment into hearts and homes, where little but vulgarity and commonplaceness dwelt. Modern England is singularly deficient in poets who can touch the nation's heart. She has poets, true and great, but they are only for the educated classes, the masses have but few minstrels now-a-days, whose lays are fit for their firesides. The songs of Béranger, Petöfi, Burns, can still

excite the emotions of the labouring folks more than they can the high-strung feelings of the educated of their nationalities; but the English possess no such influential bards. Eliza Cook sang for the people, and was comprehended of the people and her influence was ever for their good. She inculcated independence, integrity, a love of home, and a sturdy patriotism; and although beauty rather than morality may be the truest theme for poetry, the class of readers Eliza Cook appealed to were better able to understand and profit by moral themes, especially when they were presented to them in a self-respectful instead of in the usual mawkish manner. Eliza Cook's themes may be trivial, but they touch home, and have often caused the eyes to dim with tears—the lips to quiver with emotion—of those whose hearts have long been closed to any softening influence.

Adverse criticism notwithstanding, it may be confidently claimed for Eliza Cook that she was and is a poet of the people: a poet whose works are filled with sympathy for the down-trodden and helpless, the earth-weary and oppressed. Her works are characterised by purity of tone, clearness of expression, and an entire absence of straining for effect. In her verse, sound ever echoes sense, and rhyme is always accompanied by reason. No writer has been more national, without being narrow-minded, than Eliza Cook; and whilst in sympathy with the suffering of all humanity, she took pre-eminently to heart the precept, "Poet, of thine own country sing." Naturally, several of her lyrics were only of transient interest, referring as they did to such contemporary events as the Lancashire Cotton Famine, the Shakespeare

Tercentenary, Garibaldi's Visit to England, and the like; but many of them strike those chords of the human heart, which are of ever-enduring vitality, and deal with thoughts and themes that age cannot stale, nor repetition dull.

As far as the outside world may know, her life was calm and uneventful. She was born in Southwark on December 24th, 1812. Her parents were enabled to afford her an education suited to the position of a respectable tradesman's daughter; but at a very early age her writings brought her into public favour. She sent some verses to a contemporary periodical, which attracted the notice of Jerdan, the editor. He published them, encouraged her to persevere, and in a very short time she found herself famous. In 1840 she collected her scattered pieces, and published them in a volume, which was warmly received by the public. In 1849 she started a weekly periodical entitled *Eliza Cook's Journal*, and carried it on until 1854, when her failing health caused its discontinuance. From time to time new volumes of her poetry appeared, and new editions of her former work were published, including some that were handsomely illustrated. Besides these volumes, she published a collection of prose sketches, styled "Jottings from my Journal;" and in 1865, at the present writer's instigation, a collection of "wise saws and modern instances," partly selected, but chiefly original, entitled "Diamond Dust." It must not be forgotten that it is owing to her continuous exertions, and, above all, to her timely lines entitled "Poor Hood," that Kensal Green Cemetery now contains a suitable memorial of one of our truest and noblest poets:—

"MUST strangers come to woo his shade,
Scanning rare beauties as they pass ;
And when they pause where *he* is laid,
Stop at a trodden mound of grass ?

Give him the dust beneath his head,
Give him a grave—a grave alone—
In Life he dearly won his bread ;—
In Death he was not worth a stone.

'Poor Hood !' for whom a people wreathes
The heart-born flowers that never die.
'Poor Hood !' for whom a requiem breathes
In every human Toil-wrung sigh.

Let the Horse-tamer's bed be known
By the rich mausoleum-shrine ;
Give the bold Quack his charnel throne—
Their works were worthier far than thine.

And let thy Soul serenely sleep
While pilgrims stand as I have stood ;
To worship at a nameless heap,
And fondly, sadly say, 'Poor Hood !' "

For some years previous to her decease, on September 23rd, 1889, Eliza Cook's state of health prevented her writing anything new, or revising her existing works ; but in the home of her dear and best loved relatives she found that rest and care which, in her earlier years, she had given to others. Although for a lengthened period prior to her death she was compelled to relinquish her generous efforts on behalf of young and inexperienced writers, her past goodness and kindness have left memories which still thrill with gratitude those who were able to enjoy the benefit of her friendship and literary experience.

JOHN H. INGRAM.

POEMS AND SONGS.

ELIZA COOK.

I.—THE ENGLISHMAN.

THERE'S a land that bears a world-known name,
Though it is but a little spot ;
I say 'tis first on the scroll of Fame,
And who shall say it is not ?
Of the deathless ones who shine and live
In Arms, in Arts, or Song ;
The brightest the whole wide world can give,
To that little land belong.
'Tis the star of earth, deny it who can ;
The island home of an Englishman

There's a flag that waves o'er every sea,
No matter when or where :
And to treat that flag as aught but the free
Is more than the strongest dare.
For the lion-spirits that tread the deck
Have carried the palm of the brave ;
And that flag *may* sink with a shot-torn wreck,
But never float over a slave ;
Its honour is stainless, deny it who can ;
And this is the flag of an Englishman.

There's a heart that leaps with burning glow,
The wronged and the weak to defend ;
And strikes as soon for a trampled foe,
As it does for a soul-bound friend.
It nurtures a deep and honest love ;
It glows with faith and pride ;

And yearns with the fondness of a dove,
To the light of its own fireside.
'Tis a rich, rough gem, deny it who can ;
And this is the heart of an Englishman.

The Briton may traverse the pole or the zone,
And boldly claim his right ;
For he calls such a vast domain his own,
That the sun never sets on his might.
Let the haughty stranger seek to know
The place of his home and birth ;
And a flush will pour from cheek to brow ;
While he tells his native earth.
For a glorious charter, deny it who can,
Is breathed in the words "I'm an Englishman."

II.—THEY ALL BELONG TO ME.

THERE are riches without measure
Scattered thickly o'er the land ;
There are heaps and heaps of treasure,
Bright, beautiful, and grand ;
There are forests, there are mountains
There are meadows, there are rills,
Forming everlasting fountains
In the bosoms of the hills ;
There are birds and there are flowers
The fairest things that be—
And these great and joyful dowers,
Oh ! "they all belong to me."

There are golden acres bending
In the light of harvest rays,
There are garland branches blending
With the breath of June's sweet days

There are pasture grasses blowing
In the dewy, moorland shade,
There are herds of cattle lowing
In the midst of bloom and blade ;
There are noble elms that quiver,
As the gale comes full and free,
There are alders by the river,
And " they all belong to me."

I care not who may reckon
The wheat piled up in sacks,
Nor who has power to beckon
The woodman with his axe ;
I care not who hold leases
Of the upland or the dell,
Nor who may count the fleeces
When the flocks are fit to sell.
While there's beauty none can barter
By the greensward and the tree :
Claim who will, by seal and charter,
Yet " they all belong to me."

There's the thick and dinged cover
Where the hare and pheasant play,
There are sheets of rosy clover,
There are hedges crowned with May ;
There are vines all dark and gushing
There are orchards ripe and red,
There are herds of wild deer crushing
The heath-bells as they tread.
And ye, who count in money
The value these may be,
Your hives but hold my honey,
For " they all belong to me."

Ye cannot shut the tree in,
Ye cannot hide the hills,
Ye cannot wall the sea in,
Ye cannot choke the rills ;
The corn will only nestle
In the broad arms of the sky,
The clover crop must wrestle
With the common wind, or die.
And while these stores of treasure
Are spread where I may see,
By God's high, bounteous pleasure,
"They all belong to me."

What care I for the profit
The stricken stem may yield ?
I have the shadow of it
While upright in the field.
What reck I of the riches
The mill-stream gathers fast,
While I bask in shady niches,
And see the brook go past ?
What reck I who has title
To the widest lands that be ?
They are mine, without requital,
God gave them all to me.

Oh ! privilege and blessing,
To find I ever own,
What great ones, in possessing
Imagine theirs alone !
Oh ! glory to the Maker,
Who gave such boon to hold,
Who made me free partaker
Where others buy with gold !

For while the woods and mountains
Stand up where I can see,
While God unlocks the fountains,
"They all belong to me !"

III.—GOD SPEED THE PLOUGH.

"**G**OD speed the plough ! ' be this a prayer
To find its echo everywhere ;
But curses on the iron hand
That grasps one rood of " common " land.
Sure there's enough of earth beside,
Held by the sons of Wealth and Pride ;
Their glebe is wide enough without
Our " commons " being fenced about !

We guard the spot where steeples rise
In stately grandeur to the skies ;
We mark the place where altars shine,
As hallowed, sainted, and divine ;
And just as sacred should we hold
The turf, where peasants blithe and bold,
Can plant their footsteps day or night,
In free, unquestioned, native right.

The common range—the common range—
Oh ! guard it from invading change ;
Though rough, 'tis rich—though poor, 'tis blest,
And will be while the skylark's nest
And early violets are there,
Filling with sweetness earth and air.

It glads the eye—it warms the soul,
To gaze upon the rugged knoll ;
Where tangled brushwood twines across
The straggling brake and sedgy moss.
Oh ! who would give the blackthorn leaves

For harvest's full and rustling sheaves ?
Oh ! who would have the grain spring up
Where now we find the daisy's cup ;
Where clumps of dark red heather gleam,
With beauty in the summer beam—
And yellow furze-bloom laughs to scorn
Your ripened hops and bursting corn ?
" God speed the plough ! " but let us trace
Something of Nature's infant face ;
Let us behold some spot where man
Has not yet set his " bar and ban " ;
Leave us the green wastes, fresh and wild,
For poor man's beast and poor man's child !

'Tis well to turn our trusty steeds
In chosen stalls and clover meads ;
We like to see our " gallant grey "
Snuff daintily his fragrant hay ;
But the poor sandman's " Blind old Ball "
Lacks grooms and clover, oats and stall.

With tired limbs and bleeding back
He takes his steady, homeward track ;
The hovel gained, he neighs with glee,
From burthen, whip, and bridle free :
Turned forth he flings his bony length ;
And rolls with all his waning strength ;
Up on his trembling legs again,
He shakes himself from tail to mane,
And, nibbling with a grateful zest,
Finds on " the common " food and rest.

Hark to the shouts of peasant boys,
With ill-carved bats, and unchecked noise !
While " cricket," with its light-heeled mirth,
Leaves scars upon the grassy earth

Too deeply lined by Summer's play,
For Winter's storms to wear away.
Spent by the game, they rove apart,
With lounging form and careless heart ;
One by the rushy pond will float
Old "Dilworth" in a paper boat ;
Another wades, with legs all bare,
To pluck the water-lily fair ;
Others will sit and chatter o'er
The village fund of cricket lore—
Quote this rare "catch," and that bold "run,"
Till, having gossiped down the sun,
They promise, with a loud "Good night !"
That, if to-morrow's sky be bright,
They'll be again where they have been
For years—upon the "common green."

The chicken tribe—the duckling brood,
Go there to scratch their daily food ;
The woodman's colt—the widow's cows,
Unwatched—untethered—there may browse ;
And though the pasturage be scant,
It saves from keen and starving want.

"God speed the plough !" let fields be tilled,
Let ricks be heaped and garners filled ;
'Tis good to count the Autumn gold,
And try how much our barns can hold :
But every English heart will tell
It loves an "English common" well ;
And curse the hard and griping hand
That wrests away such "hallowed" land :
That shuts the green waste, fresh and wild :
From poor man's beast and poor man's child.

IV.—THE OLD ARM-CHAIR.

I LOVE it, I love it; and who shall dare
To chide me for loving that old Arm-chair?
I've treasur'd it long as a sainted prize;
I've bedew'd it with tears, and embalm'd it with sighs.
'Tis bound by a thousand bands to my heart;
Not a tie will break, not a link will start.
Would ye learn the spell?—a mother sat there;
And a sacred thing is that old Arm-chair.

In childhood's hour I lingered near
The hallowed seat with listening ear;
And gentle words that mother would give;
To fit me to die, and teach me to live.
She told me shame would never betide,
With truth for my creed and God for my guide;
She taught me to lisp my earliest prayer;
As I knelt beside that old Arm-chair.

I sat and watched her many a day,
When her eye grew dim, and her locks were grey:
And I almost worshipped her when she smiled,
And turned from her Bible to bless her child.
Years rolled on; but the last one sped—
My idol was shattered; my earth-star fled:
I learnt how much the heart can bear,
When I saw her die in that old Arm-chair.

'Tis past, 'tis past, but I gaze on it now
With quivering breath and throbbing brow:
'Twas there she nursed me: 'twas there she died:
And memory flows with lava tide.
Say it is folly, and deem me weak,
While the scalding drops start down my cheek;

But I love it, I love it ; and cannot tear
My soul from a mother's old Arm-chair.

V.—THE RAISING OF THE MAYPOLE.

MY own land ! My own land ! Where Freedom
finds her throne-land,
Fair thou art, and rare thou art to every true-born
son.
Though no gold ore veins thee, though no grape-
juice stains thee,
We've harvest fields, and quartered shields, well
kept and nobly won.
And we have pleasant tales to tell,
And spots in many a native dell,
Which we may prize and love as well
As Troubadour his story.
The lilting troll and roundelay
Will never, never pass away,
That welcomed in the herald day
Of Summer's rosy glory.
And goodly sight of mirth and might,
In blood that gained us Cressy's fight,
Was hearts and eyes, all warm and bright
About the high and gay pole ;
When flower-bedight, 'mid leaves and light,
Shouts echoed it—as it reared upright—
Of—"Hurrah for merry England, and the raising
of the Maypole !"
When the good old times had carol rhymes,
With morris games and village chimes ;
When clown and priest shared cup and feast,
And the greatest jostled with the least
At the "raising of the Maypole."

My brave land! my brave land! oh! may'st thou
be my grave-land;
For firm and fond will be the bond that ties my
breast to thee.
When Summer's beams are glowing, when Autumn's
gusts are blowing,
When Winter's clouds are snowing, thou art still
right dear to me.
But yet methinks I love thee best
When bees are nursed on white-thorn breast,
When Spring-tide pours in—sweet and blest—
And Mirth and Hope come dancing!
When music from the feathered throng,
Breaks forth in merry marriage-song,
And mountain streamlets dash along,
Like molten diamonds glancing!
Oh! pleasant 'tis to scan the page,
Rich with the theme of bygone age;
When motley fool and learned sage
Brought garlands for the gay pole;
When laugh and shout came ringing out,
From courtly knight and peasant lout,
In, "Hurrah for merry England, and the raising
of the Maypole!"
When the good old times had carol rhymes,
With morris games and village chimes;
When clown and priest shated cup and feast,
And the greatest jostled with the least,
At the "raising of the Maypole!"

Emily Brontë.

1818—1848.

Few persons of whom so little has been or can be recorded as Emily Brontë have made so deep an impression upon the popular mind, or are so distinctly present to the imagination. There is nothing to be said except that she was born in August 1818, and died of consumption in December 1848; that she was first a teacher without pupils, and then an authoress without readers; that her life was harassed by an impracticable father, and infected by a base, profligate brother; and that nevertheless she was visited by such noble inspirations, and was such a piece of her own moorland, that one hardly accounts her unfortunate. She was the laureate of the moors, and no fanciful analogy might be drawn between her and these scenes of her residence, and objects of her affections. Like them she was free, rough, wild; in a certain sense barren and limited; in another sense rich and expansive; from one point of view mournful, from another joyous. In one respect only is she false to the teaching of the nature that environed her: the moor is ever healthy, but it is impossible to acquit the creator of "*Heathcliff*" of a taint of unsoundness. The hero of "*Wuthering Heights*" is indeed by no means untrue to nature; what is unnatural is the authoress's evident sympathy with the most repulsive traits in his

character. By over-much insistence on these, she all but destroys our interest in her hero, who has after all found the pearl of great price. Her poetry, in general less powerful, is more pleasing than her fiction; harsh and forbidding as her view of life seems at first, it gains upon us as we realise her proud superiority to external circumstances, and the passionate affection for those she really loves, which redeems her unamiability towards the rest. Her scorn and her tenderness are beautifully combined in this simple and exquisite lyric:—

“The linnet in the rocky dells,
The moor-lark in the air,
The bee among the heather bells
That hide my lady fair.

The wild deer browse above her breast;
The wild birds raise their brood;
And they, her smiles of love caressed,
Have left her solitude!

I ween, that when the grave's dark wall
Did first her form retain,
They thought their hearts could ne'er recall
The light of joy again.

They thought the tide of grief would flow
Unchecked through future years;
But where is all their anguish now,
And where are all their tears?

Well, let them fight for honour's breath,
Or pleasure's shade pursue—
The dweller in the land of death
Is changed and careless too.

And, if their eyes should watch and weep
Till sorrow's source were dry,

She would not, in her tranquil sleep,
Return a single sigh !

Blow, west wind, by the lonely mound,
And murmur, summer-streams—
There is no need of other sound
To soothe my lady's dreams."

Almost all the poetry which Emily Brontë published during her lifetime was of this character, though not always attaining the same careless beauty, graceful in its apparent negligence. Not until nigh to death did she compose a strain of quite another sort, which, if it were just to judge her solely by one supreme inspiration, would place her above every other female lyrist since Sappho. The grandeur and eloquence of her last verses have in our judgment never been rivalled by any English poetess: the question whether she could have maintained herself at such an elevation, were it capable of an answer, would help to elucidate the deeper problem how far poetical inspiration is the result of favourable conditions, and how far it is a visitation from above. It must remain for ever unanswered.

Of Charlotte and Anne Brontë as poetesses, little need be said. Charlotte,—a nature as intense and passionate as Emily,—as a prose writer rivalling her sister's genius, and vastly excelling her art, was comparatively ineffective in verse, because verse was not a native language with her. She had no real call to write it, and added one more to the examples which prove that mental power will not make a poet without the addition of something, partly indefinite, partly definable as a tune in the head, the instinct and accomplishment of verse.

Still the quality of interest inheres in whatever Charlotte writes; and the same is in a measure true of Anne—a pallid touching figure, her sister's wraith. Charlotte is the most objective of the sisters; she alone manifests a faculty of imagining scenes and characters external to herself. Emily can place herself in imaginary situations, but at most only idealises her own experience and emotions. Anne cannot even do this; she simply sets down her thoughts in artless verse; her one really good poem, "Lines composed in a Wood on a Windy Day," is composed when her thoughts are for the moment exalted above her personal sphere by an inspiration from external Nature:—

"My soul is awakened, my spirit is soaring
And carried aloft on the wings of the breeze;
For above and around me the wild wind is roaring,
Arousing to rapture the earth and the seas.

The long withered grass in the sunshine is glancing
The bare trees are tossing their branches on high;
The dead leaves beneath them are merrily dancing,
The white clouds are scudding across the blue sky.

I wish I could see how the ocean is lashing
The foam of its billows to whirlwinds of spray;
I wish I could see how the proud waves are dashing,
And hear the wild roar of their thunder to-day!"

RICHARD GARNETT.

POEMS.

EMILY BRONTË.

I.—THE NIGHT-WIND.

IN summer's mellow midnight,
A cloudless moon shone through
Our open parlour window,
And rose-trees wet with dew.

I sat in silent musing,
The soft wind waved my hair;
It told me heaven was glorious,
And sleeping earth was fair.

I needed not its breathing
To bring such thoughts to me;
But still it whispered lowly,
How dark the woods will be!

"The thick leaves in my murmur
Are rustling like a dream,
And all their myriad voices
Instinct with spirit seem."

I said, "Go, gentle singer,
Thy wooing voice is kind:
But do not think its music
Has power to reach my mind.

"Play with the scented flower,
The young tree's supple bough,
And leave my human feelings
In their own course to flow."

The wanderer would not heed me;
Its kiss grew warmer still.
"Oh come!" it sighed so sweetly;
"I'll win thee 'gainst thy will.

"Were we not friends from childhood ?
Have I not loved thee long ?
As long as thou, the solemn night,
Whose silence wakes my song.
"And when thy heart is resting
Beneath the church-aisle stone,
I shall have time for mourning,
And *thou* for being alone."

II.—A DEATH-SCENE.

"O DAY! he cannot die
When thou so fair art shining !
O Sun, in such a glorious sky
So tranquilly declining ;
"He cannot leave thee now,
While fresh west winds are blowing,
And all around his youthful brow
Thy cheerful light is glowing !
"Edward, awake ! awake—
The golden evening gleams
Warm and bright on Arden's lake—
Arouse thee from thy dreams !
"Beside thee, on my knee,
My dearest friend, I pray
That thou, to cross the eternal sea,
Wouldst yet one hour delay :
"I hear its billows roar—
I see them foaming high ;
But no glimpse of a further shore
Has blest my straining eye.
"Believe not what they urge
Of Eden isles beyond ;

Turn back, from that tempestuous surge,
To thy own native land.

"It is not death, but pain
That struggles in thy breast—
Nay, rally, Edward, rouse again ;
I cannot let thee rest !"

One long look, that sore reproved me
For the woe I could not bear—
One mute look of suffering moved me
To repent my useless prayer :

And, with sudden check, the heaving
Of distraction passed away ;
Not a sign of further grieving
Stirred my soul that awful day.

Paled, at length, the sweet sun setting ;
Sunk to peace the twilight breeze :
Summer dewes fell softly, wetting
Glen, and glade, and silent trees.

Then his eyes began so weary,
Weighed beneath a mortal sleep ;
And their orbs grew strangely dreary,
Clouded, even as they would weep.

But they wept not, but they changed not,
Never moved, and never closed ;
Troubled still, and still they ranged not—
Wandered not, nor yet reposed !

So I knew that he was dying—
Stooped, and raised his languid head ;
Felt no breath, and heard no sighing,
So I knew that he was dead.

III.—REMEMBRANCE.

COLD in the earth—and the deeps snow piled above thee,
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave ?
Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more ?
Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring :
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering !
Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along ;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong !
No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me ;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.
But when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even Despair was powerless to destroy ;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened and fed without the aid of joy.
Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine ;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.
And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain ;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again ?

IV.—OFTEN REBUKED.

OFTEN rebuked, yet always back returning
To those first feelings that were born with me,
And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
For idle dreams of things which cannot be :

To-day, I will seek not the shadowy region ;
Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear ;
And visions rising, legion after legion,
Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
And not in paths of high morality,
And not among the half-distinguished faces,
The clouded forms of long-past history.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading :
It vexes me to choose another guide :
Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding ;
Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing ?
More glory and more grief than I can tell :
The earth that wakes *one* human heart to feeling
Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell

V.—THE OLD STOIC.

RICHES I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn ;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn :

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, "Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty !"

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
 'Tis all that I implore;
 In life and death, a chainless soul,
 With courage to endure.

VI.—LAST LINES.

NO coward soul is mine,
 No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
 I see Heaven's glories shine,
 And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.
 O God within my breast,
 Almighty, ever-present Deity!
 Life—that in me has rest,
 As I—undying Life—have power in thee!
 Vain are the thousand creeds
 That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
 Worthless as withered weeds,
 Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,
 To waken doubt in one
 Holding so fast by thine infinity;
 So surely anchored on
 The steadfast rock of immortality.
 With wide-embracing love
 Thy spirit animates eternal years,
 Pervades and broods above,
 Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.
 Though earth and man were gone,
 And suns and universes cease to be,
 And Thou were left alone,
 Every existence would exist in Thee.
 There is not room for Death,
 Nor atom that his might could render void:
 Thou—THOU art Being and Breath,
 And what THOU art may never be destroyed.

George Eliot.

(Mary Ann Cross.)

1819—1880.

THE story of the life of the great writer who chose to be known to the world as George Eliot has been told with more or less of completeness by one American and three English biographers—Mr. George Willis Cooke, Miss Mathilde Blind, Mr. J. W. Cross, and Mr. Oscar Browning; and the details of that uneventful but interesting career are familiar to most readers. Suffice it, then, here to say that Mary Ann Evans was born at Kirk Hallam, in Derbyshire, on November 22nd, in the year 1819, her father, Robert Evans, being agent for an estate held by a member of the Newdigate family. The letters of her quiet early years show her to have been a studious, thoughtful girl, deeply imbued with a somewhat narrow form of Evangelical Christianity; but in early womanhood she made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Bray, and of their relatives the Hennells—names not unknown in philosophical literature—under whose influence she abandoned her previous beliefs, and adopted a creed which may, perhaps, be most justly described as a reverent and unaggressive agnosticism. Migrating to London she became sub-editor of the *Westminster Review*, the quarterly organ of Radicalism in politics, philosophy, and religion, and while fulfilling the duties of

this post made the acquaintance of that brilliant *littérateur*, George Henry Lewes. Acquaintance developed into friendship, friendship into something still warmer, and Lewes having contracted an unfortunate marriage, from which circumstances denied him the relief of a divorce, Miss Evans and he entered into an alliance which, though unrecognised by law and custom, had for the persons immediately concerned all the sacredness belonging to a true union of husband and wife. To the stimulation and encouragement given by Lewes, there is little doubt that the world largely owes not merely the famous works of fiction by which George Eliot has won an assured place among the great novelists of the world, but that smaller poetical product which, though doubtless less important, has had such importance as really belongs to it unduly and unjustly minimised. This union, entered upon in 1853, endured for a happy and fruitful quarter of a century, and was terminated by the death of Lewes in 1878. In May, 1880, George Eliot, unable to bear up against the desolation of her solitude, contracted the marriage with Mr. J. W. Cross which has provided material for so much fruitless discussion; but her new happiness was of brief duration, for seven months afterwards her voice in the earthly chorus was stilled, and she passed away to join that other company of which she had sung with such passionate fervency: "the choir invisible, whose music is the gladness of the world."

That the outward conduct of a life bears a fixed and inevitable relation to the character and personality behind it is a truth to which George Eliot herself bore emphatic testimony; and yet the George

Eliot whom, by an act of unconscious synthesis, we evolve from her published writings is, in various perplexing ways, a very different person from the George Eliot who actually lived and loved and rejoiced and suffered. What she said of Dorothea Casaubon is largely true of herself—that the determining acts of her life “were not ideally beautiful”, and in addition to their want of inherent beauty, they seem curiously inconsistent with the nature of that ideal personality which the mind creates for itself from the hints supplied to it. As a matter of fact, however, the self-contained, self-reliant nature, strong to achieve and to endure, which we think we discern behind such creations as Adam Bede, Tom Tulliver, Felix Holt, Romola, and Fedalma, is, like the Shakespeare of so many constructive critics, an entirely imaginary personage. The true George Eliot realised, with a quite remarkable completeness, the old ideal of woman as a being born not to stand alone and to work out her own conception of life, but to love and to cling, to lean on some stronger nature, and to accept its care and guidance. In all the leading events of her life—her rejection of Christianity, her union with Lewes, her appearance before the world as an imaginative writer, and her marriage with Mr. Cross—she was, to an incalculable extent, a passive rather than an active agent, enduring pain, contumely, self-distrust, and the consciousness of dull disapproval, because the endurance was prompted and sustained by the magnetic proximity of spirits more potent than her own. This combination of an intellectual nature so essentially virile, with an emotional nature so typically feminine, is unique in the history of literature; and it confers

upon the life of George Eliot the peculiar fascination belonging to objects of thought or vision in which the element of strangeness is added to the element of beauty. Here, however, the beauty is in excess of the strangeness; and the nearer we come to the true personality of this great woman, the more rapidly does the strangeness disappear. The shadowy figure of George Eliot present to the mind's eye is not altogether unreal—nay, it has the finest reality; for it is the George Eliot of aspiration and endeavour, though not of achievement. She might have said, with Rabbi Ben Ezra—

“ All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.”

And not only to God, but to man; for—to quote again from the sentences in which she dismisses her own Dorothea—“the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive”; and men went from the presence of this timid, self-distrustful woman with new strength for that battle of life which she herself dared not fight alone.

To some of us it will always seem inexplicable that the question which must first be answered by any writer upon George Eliot, as a writer of verse, is not “What is her true place among poets?” but that much more searching question, “Was she, in any really accurate sense of the word, a poet at all?” Yet not only is this the case, but any writer who has the courage to return an affirmative reply finds that he has on his side hardly one of the critics who speaks with a voice having any authority. Mr. Oscar Browning, George Eliot's most recent biographer, denies to her not only “the passionate fire, without

which," he says, "no poet can excel," but also "the gift of melodious language." "Verse to her," says Mr. R. H. Hutton, "is a fetter, not a stimulus." "A large rhythm," writes Mr. Edward Dowden, "sustains the verse, similar in nature to the movement of a calmly musical period of prose; but at best the music of the lines is a measurable music; under the verse there lies no living heart of music with curious pulsation, and rhythm which is a miracle of the blood . . . She could not sing." These three criticisms are fairly representative: George Eliot was not a poet; she was not a singer; verse was a fetter to her;—the second and third statements being the justifications of the first. The verdict sounds very formidable, but it may lose some of its formidableness if we see in it only an illustration of a habit which has recently been growing among the critics of demanding in all poetry the presence of certain characteristics which necessarily belong only to poetry of the lyrical kind,—an effusion, an abandonment, a sense as of a pulse beating in the verse. Poetry has, in fact, been too exclusively identified with song, whereas many conceptions which are purely poetical, and which clothe themselves in verse as naturally and inevitably as other conceptions clothe themselves in prose, are not of a nature to ally themselves with song or to allow of being sung. Prose and poetry are not related as speech and song, for speech may be poetry and song prose; indeed the difference between the two is primarily one of substance and only secondarily one of form. Poetry is a sustained metrical rendering of thought or emotion or vision which cannot otherwise be adequately rendered; and in order to decide whether a metrical

composition presented to us is or is not poetry we have to ask ourselves whether the form is one with the substance or separable from it,—whether the impression intended to be made would have been deeper or sharper, or even as deep and sharp, if prose had been employed instead of verse.

The writer of these pages has asked this question many times, with regard to the verse of George Eliot; and to the self which asks the self which answers has always been impelled to return one reply. "The Spanish Gypsy" is the work upon which the deniers of George Eliot's poetic faculty, mainly base their judgment. In speaking of it their voice is loud and confident. "The Legend of Jubal" and "Brother and Sister" bring it down to a lower tone; and as they approach that lyric of solemn rapture, "Oh may I join the choir invisible!" it dies into a whisper. "The Spanish Gypsy" is therefore the structure brave upon which those who greatly dare, because they greatly admire, will, with courageous eagerness plant their standard as a signal that there as elsewhere they are ready to stand an assault. Nor will they fear to admit that there are passages in "The Spanish Gypsy" which lack the metrical inevitableness just referred to,—passages which might have taken the form of prose without any loss of essential weight or beauty; but then they are to be found not less in the "Iliad," the "Inferno," the "Paradise Lost." To the whole world, however, these works are indubitable poetry; and those who regard "The Spanish Gypsy" also as poetry, and poetry of a very noble order, base their regard on the fact that the final impression left by it as by them is of an imaginative conception which could

only be made fully manifest in an embodiment of verse. If we try to imagine such characters as those of Zarca, Silva, and Fedalma, such situations as those which one by one reveal the evolution of the great tragedy, embodied in a prose romance we feel instinctively that the work which our vagrant fancy has brought into shadowy being, is a poorer and less impressive thing than the actual existing volume,—a thing that could never stir us as we are stirred by the printed page. Quotation is a poor aid to the appraisement of a great imaginative organism; the “*Beauties of Shakespeare*” never made any reader feel the marvel of “*Hamlet*”; but as for the critics who deny to George Eliot “a passionate fire,” who tell us that verse was “a fetter” to her, and that her poetry has no “living heart of music,”—what avail their confident words as we read but one single passage, the reply of Fedalma when Zarca summons her to the great renunciation, and ends his appeal with the terrible words, “Say you will curse your race”?

“No, no—I will not say it—I will go!
 Father, I choose! I will not take a heaven
 Haunted by shrieks of far-off misery.
 This deed and I have ripened with the hours:
 It is a part of me—a wakened thought
 That, rising like a giant, masters me,
 And grows into a doom. O mother life,
 That seemed to nourish me so tenderly,
 Even in the womb you vowed me to the fire,
 Hung on my soul the burden of men’s hopes,
 And pledged me to redeem!—I’ll pay the debt.
 You gave me strength that I might pour it all
 Into this anguish. I can never shrink
 Back into bliss—my heart has grown too big
 With things that might be. Father, I will go.”

The impression that is left by this passage, and by much besides, in "The Spanish Gypsy" is an impression of sombre and profound passion, the combined intensity and elevation of which make themselves heard in a weighty music, not of dance or song, but rather of a solemn triumphal or funeral march;—a measured music indeed, yet measured not by the calculation of conscious thought, but rather by the decorous restraint which every finely trained nature will put upon the outflow of its most poignant emotions. It is this impression that is left by the majestic close of "Jubal"; by the outpouring of Armgart's foiled aspirations; by the quieter but not really less impassioned colloquy of Stradivarius, most of all by that supreme utterance which will fulfil its own desire, and make its writer an immortal member of the invisible choir. George Eliot *could* sing—witness the lovely lyric in "How Lisa loved the King!" but she has given us something better than song—the poetry which incarnates energising thought and purifying emotion in a body of stately verse, the gracious form of which is not unworthy of the indwelling spirit.

JAMES ASHCROFT NOBLE.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

1869.

GEORGE ELIOT.

I.

I CANNOT choose but think upon the time
When our two lives grew like two buds that kiss
At lightest thrill from the bee's swinging chime,
Because the one so near the other is.

He was the elder and a little man
Of forty inches, bound to show no dread,
And I the girl that puppy-like now ran,
Now lagged behind my brother's larger tread.

I held him wise, and when he talked to me
Of snakes and birds, and which God loved the best,
I thought his knowledge marked the boundary
Where men grew blind, though angels knew the rest.

If he said "Hush!" I tried to hold my breath.
Wherever he said "Come!" I stepped in faith.

II.

Long years have left their writing on my brow,
But yet the freshness and the dew-fed beam
Of those young mornings are about me now,
When we two wandered toward the far-off stream

With rod and line. Our basket held a store
Baked for us only, and I thought with joy
That I should have my share, though he had more,
Because he was the elder and a boy.

The firmaments of daisies since to me
Have had those mornings in their opening eyes,

The bunchèd cowslip's pale transparency
Carries that sunshine of sweet memories,

And wild-rose branches take their finest scent
From those blest hours of infantine content.

III

Our mother bade us keep the trodden ways,
Stroked down my tippet, set my brother's full,
Then with the benediction of her gaze
Clung to us lessening, and pursued us still

Across the homestead to the rookery elms,
Whose tall old trunks had each a grassy mound,
So rich for us, we counted them as realms
With varied products: here were earth-nuts found,

And here the Lady-fingers in deep shade;
Here sloping toward the Moat the rushes grew,
The large to split for pith, the small to braid;
While over all the dark rooks cawing flew,

And made a happy strange solemnity,
A deep-toned chant from life unknown to me.

IV.

Our meadow-path had memorable spots:
One where it bridged a tiny rivulet,
Deep hid by tangled blue Forget-me-nots;
And all along the waving grasses met

My little palm, or nodded to my cheek,
When flowers with upturned faces gazing drew
My wonder downward, seeming all to speak
With eyes of souls that dumbly heard and knew.

Then came the copse, where wild things rushed unseen,
And black-scathed grass betrayed the past abode
Of mystic gypsies, who still lurked between
Me and each hidden distance of the road.

A gypsy once had startled me at play,
Blotting with her dark smile my sunny day.

v.

Thus rambling we were schooled in deepest lore,
And learned the meanings that give words a soul,
The fear, the love, the primal passionate store,
Whose shaping impulses make manhood whole.

Those hours were seed to all my after good,
My infant gladness, through eye, ear, and touch,
Took easily as warmth a various food
To nourish the sweet skill of loving much.

For who in age shall roam the earth and find
Reasons for loving that will strike out love
With sudden rod from the hard year-pressed mind ?
Were reasons sown as thick as stars above,

'Tis love must see them, as the eye sees light :
Day is but Number to the darkened sight.

vi.

Our brown canal was endless to my thought ;
And on its banks I sat in dreamy peace,
Unknowing how the good I loved was wrought,
Untroubled by the fear that it would cease.

Slowly the barges floated into view
Rounding a grassy hill to me sublime
With some Unknown beyond it, whither flew
The parting cuckoo toward a fresh spring time

The wide-arched bridge, the scented elder-flowers,
The wondrous watery rings that died too soon,
The echoes of the quarry, the still hours
With white robe sweeping-on the shadeless noon,
Were but my growing self, are part of me,
My present Past, my root of piety.

VII.

Those long days measured by my little feet
Had chronicles which yield me many a text ;
Where irony still finds an image meet
Of full-grown judgments in this world perplex.

One day my brother left me in high charge,
To mind the rod, while he went seeking bait,
And bade me, when I saw a nearing barge,
Snatch out the line, lest he should come too late.

Proud of the task, I watched with all my might
For one whole minute, till my eyes grew wide,
Till sky and earth took on a strange new light
And seemed a dream-world floating on some tide

A fair pavilioned boat for me alone
Bearing me onward through the vast unknown.

VIII.

But sudden came the barge's pitch-black prow,
Nearer and angrier came my brother's cry,
And all my soul was quivering fear, when lo !
Upon the imperilled line, suspended high,
A silver perch ! My guilt that won the prey,
Now turned to merit, had a guerdon rich
Of hugs and praises, and made merry play,
Until my triumph reached its highest pitch

When all at home were told the wondrous feat,
And how the little sister had fished well,
In secret, though my fortune tasted sweet,
I wondered why this happiness befell.

"The little lass had luck," the gardener said:
And so I learned, luck was with glory wed.

IX.

We had the self-same world enlarged for each
By loving difference of girl and boy:
The fruit that hung on high beyond my reach
He plucked for me, and oft he must employ

A measuring glance to guide my tiny shoe
Where lay firm stepping-stones, or call to mind
"This thing I like my sister may not do,
For she is little, and I must be kind."

Thus boyish Will the nobler mastery learned
Where inward vision over impulse reigns,
Widening its life with separate life discerned,
A Like unlike, a Self that self-restrains.

His years with others must the sweeter be
For those brief days he spent in loving me.

X.

His sorrow was my sorrow, and his joy
Sent little leaps and laughs through all my frame;
My doll seemed lifeless and no girlish toy
Had any reason when my brother came.

I knelt with him at marbles, marked his fling
Cut the ringed stem and make the apple drop,
Or watched him winding close the spiral string
That looped the orbits of the humming top.

Grasped by such fellowship my vagrant thought
Ceased with dream-fruit dream-wishes to fulfil;
My æry-picturing fantasy was taught
Subjection to the harder, truer skill

That seeks with deeds to grave a thought-tracked line,
And by "What is," "What will be" to define

XI.

School parted us; we never found again
That childish world where our two spirits mingled
Like scents from varying roses that remain
One sweetness, nor can evermore be singled.

Yet the twin habit of that early time
Lingered for long about the heart and tongue:
We had been natives of one happy clime,
And its dear accent to our utterance clung.

Till the dire years whose awful name is Change
Had grasped our souls still yearning in divorce,
And pitiless shaped them in two forms that range
Two elements which sever their life's course.

But were another childhood-world my share,
I would be born a little sister there.

THE LEGEND OF JUBAL.

1869.

GEORGE ELIOT.

(A SELECTION.)

THUS glorying as a god beneficent,
Forth from his solitary joy he went
To bless mankind. It was at evening,
When shadows lengthen from each westward thing,
When imminence of change makes sense more fine
And light seems holier in its grand decline.
The fruit-trees wore their studded coronal,
Earth and her children were at festival,
Glowing as with one heart and one consent—
Thought, love, trees, rocks, in sweet warm radiance
blent.

The tribe of Cain was resting on the ground,
The various ages wreathed in one broad round.
Here lay, while children peeped o'er his huge thighs,
The sinewy man embrowned by centuries ;
Here the broad-bosomed mother of the strong
Looked, like Demeter, placid o'er the throng
Of young lithe forms whose rest was movement too—
Tricks, prattle, nods, and laughs that lightly flew.
And swayings as of flower-beds where Love blew
For all had feasted well upon the flesh
Of juicy fruits, on nuts, and honey fresh,
And now their wine was health-bred merriment,
Which through the generations circling went,
Leaving none sad, for even father Cain
Smiled as a Titan might, despising pain.
Jabal sat climbed on by a playful ring
Of children, lambs and whelps, whose gambolling,
With tiny hoofs, paws, hands, and dimpled feet,
Made barks, bleats, laughs, in pretty hubbub meet

But Tubal's hammer rang from far away
Tubal alone would keep no holiday,
His furnace must not slack for any feast,
For of all hardship work he counted least;
He scorned all rest but sleep, where every dream
Made his repose more potent action seem.

Yet with health's nectar some strange thirst was blent,
The fateful growth, the unnamed discontent,
The inward shaping toward some unborn power,
Some deeper-breathing act, the being's flower.
After all gestures, words, and speech of eyes,
The soul had more to tell, and broke in sighs.
Then from the east, with glory on his head
Such as low-slanting beams on corn-waves spread,
Came Jubal with his lyre : there 'mid the throng,
Where the blank space was, poured a solemn song,
Touching his lyre to full harmonic throb
And measured pulse, with cadences that sob,
Exult and cry, and search the inmost deep
Where the dark sources of new passion sleep.
Joy took the air, and took each breathing soul,
Embracing them in one entranced whole,
Yet thrilled each varying frame to various ends,
As Spring new-waking through the creature sends
Or rage or tenderness; more plenteous life
Here breeding dread, and there a fiercer strife.
He who had lived through twice three centuries,
Whose months monotonous, like trees on trees
In hoary forests, stretched a backward maze,
Dreamed himself dimly through the travelled days
Till in clear light he paused, and felt the sun
That warmed him when he was a little one;
Felt that true heaven, the recovered past,

The dear small Known amid the Unknown vast,
And in that heaven wept. But younger limbs
Thrilled toward the future, that bright land which swims
In western glory, isles and streams and bays,
Where hidden pleasures float in golden haze.
And in all these the rhythmic influence,
Sweetly o'ercharging the delighted sense,
Flowed out in movements, little waves that spread
Enlarging, till in tidal union led
The youths and maidens both alike long-tressed,
By grace-inspiring melody possessed,
Rose in slow dance, with beauteous floating swerve
Of limbs and hair, and many a melting curve
Of ringèd feet swayed by each close-linked palm :
Then Jubal poured more rapture in his psalm,
The dance fired music, music fired the dance,
The glow diffusive lit each countenance,
Till all the gazing elders rose and stood
With glad yet awful shock of that mysterious good.

Even Tubal caught the sound, and wondering came,
Urging his sooty bulk like smoke-wrapt flume
Till he could see his brother with the lyre,
The work for which he lent his furnace-fire
And diligent hammer, witting nought of this—
This power in metal shape which made strange bliss,
Entering within him like a dream full-fraught
With new creations finished in a thought.

The sun had sunk, but music still was there,
And when this ceased, still triumph filled the air :
It seemed the stars were shining with delight
And that no night was ever like this night.
All clung with praise to Jubal : some besought
That he would teach them his new skill ; some caught,

Swiftly as smiles are caught in looks that meet,
The tone's melodic change and rhythmic beat :
'Twas easy following where invention trod—
All eyes can see when light flows out from God

And thus did Jubal to his race reveal
Music their larger soul, where woe and weal
Filling the resonant chords, the song, the dance
Moved with a wider-wingèd utterance.
Now many a lyre was fashioned, many a song
Raised echoes new, old echoes to prolong,
Till things of Jubal's making were so rife,
"Hearing myself," he said, "hems in my life,
And I will get me to some far-off land,
Where higher mountains under heaven stand
And touch the blue at rising of the stars,
Whose song they hear where no rough mingling mars
The great clear voices. Such lands there must be,
Where varying forms make varying symphony—
Where other thunders roll amid the hills,
Some mightier wind a mightier forest fills
With other strains through other-shapen boughs ;
Where bees and birds and beasts that hunt or browse
Will teach me songs I know not. Listening there,
My life shall grow like trees both tall and fair
That rise and spread and bloom toward fuller fruit
each year."

He took a raft, and travelled with the stream
Southward for many a league, till he might deem
He saw at last the pillars of the sky,
Beholding mountains whose white majesty
Rushed through him as new awe, and made new song
That swept with fuller wave the chords along,
Weighting his voice with deep religious chime,

The iteration of slow chant sublime.
It was the region long inhabited
By all the race of Seth ; and Jubal said :
" Here have I found my thirsty soul's desire,
Eastward the hills touch heaven, and evening's fire
Flames through deep waters , I will take my rest,
And feed anew from my great mother's breast,
The sky-clasped Earth, whose voices nurture me
As the flowers' sweetness doth the honey-bee."
He lingered wandering for many an age,
And, sowing music, made high heritage
For generations far beyond the Flood—
For the poor late-begotten human brood
Born to life's weary brevity and perilous good.

And ever as he travelled he would climb
The farthest mountain, yet the heavenly chime,
The mighty tolling of the far-off spheres
Beating their pathway, never touched his ears.
But wheresoe'er he rose the heavens rose,
And the far-gazing mountain could disclose
Nought but a wider earth ; until one height
Showed him the ocean stretched in liquid light
And he could hear its multitudinous roar,
Its plunge and hiss upon the pebbled shore :
Then Jubal silent sat, and touched his lyre no more.

He thought, " The world is great, but I am weak,
And where the sky bends is no solid peak
To give me footing, but instead, this main—
Myriads of maddened horses thundering o'er the plain.

" New voices come to me where'er I roam,
My heart too widens with its widening home :
But song grows weaker, and the heart must break
For lack of voice, or fingers that can wake

The lyre's full answer ; nay, its chords were all
Too few to meet the growing spirit's call.
The former songs seem little, yet no more
Can soul, hand, voice, with interchanging lore
Tell what the earth is saying unto me :
The secret is too great, I hear confusedly.

" No farther will I travel : once again
My brethren I will see, and that fair plain
Where I and Song were born. There fresh-voiced youth
Will pour my strains with all the early truth
Which now abides not in my voice and hands,
But only in the soul, the will that stands
Helpless to move. My tribe remembering
Will cry 'Tis he !' and run to greet me, welcoming."

The way was weary. Many a date-palm grew,
And shook out clustered gold against the blue,
While Jubal, guided by the steadfast spheres,
Sought the dear home of those first eager years,
When, with fresh vision fed, the fuller will
Took living outward shape in pliant skill ;
For still he hoped to find the former things,
And the warm gladness recognition brings.
His footsteps erred among the mazy woods
And long illusive sameness of the floods,
Winding and wandering. Through far regions, strange
With Gentile homes and faces, did he range,
And left his music in their memory,
And left at last, when nought besides would free
His homeward steps from clinging hands and cries,
The ancient lyre. And now in ignorant eyes
No sign remained of Jubal, Lamech's son,
That mortal frame wherein was first begun
The immortal life of song. His withered brow

Pressed over eyes that held no lightning now,
His locks streamed whiteness on the hurrying air,
The unresting soul had worn itself quite bare
Of beauteous token, as the outworn might
Of oaks slow dying, gaunt in summer's light.
His full deep voice toward thinnest treble ran :
He was the rune-writ story of a man.

And so at last he neared the well-known land,
Could see the hills in ancient order stand
With friendly faces whose familiar gaze
Looked through the sunshine of his childish days ;
Knew the deep-shadowed folds of hanging woods,
And seemed to see the self-same insect broods
Whirling and quivering o'er the flowers—to hear
The self-same cuckoo making distance near.
Yea, the dear Earth, with mother's constancy,
Met and embraced him, and said, "Thou art he !
This was thy cradle, here my breast was thine,
Where feeding, thou didst all thy life entwine
With my sky-wedded life in heritage divine."

But wending ever through the watered plain,
Firm not to rest save in the home of Cain,
He saw dread Change, with dubious face and cold
That never kept a welcome for the old,
Like some strange heir upon the hearth, arise
Saying "This home is mine." He thought his eyes
Mocked all deep memories, as things new made,
Usurping sense, make old things shrink and fade
And seem ashamed to meet the staring day.
His memory saw a small foot-trodden way,
His eyes a broad far-stretching paven road
Bordered with many a tomb and fair abode ;
The little city that once nestled low

As buzzing groups about some central glow,
Spread like a murmuring crowd o'er plain and steep,
Or monster huge in heavy-breathing sleep.
His heart grew faint, and tremblingly he sank
Close by the wayside on a weed-grown bank,
Not far from where a new-raised temple stood,
Sky-roofed, and fragrant with wrought cedar wood.
The morning sun was high ; his rays fell hot
On this hap-chosen, dusty, common spot,
On the dry-withered grass and withered man :
That wondrous frame where melody began
Lay as a tomb defaced that no eye cared to scan.

But while he sank far music reached his ear.
He listened until wonder silenced fear
And gladness wonder ; for the broadening stream
Of sound advancing was his early dream,
Brought like fulfilment of forgotten prayer ;
As if his soul, breathed out upon the air,
Had held the invisible seeds of harmony
Quick with the various strains of life to be.
He listened : the sweet mingled difference
With charm alternate took the meeting sense ;
Then bursting like some shield-broad lily red,
Sudden and near the trumpet's notes out-spread,
And soon his eyes could see the metal flower,
Shining upturned, out on the morning pour
Its incense audible ; could see a train
From out the street slow-winding on the plain
With lyres and cymbals, flutes and psalteries,
While men, youths, maids, in concert sang to these
With various throat, or in succession poured,
Or in full volume mingled. But one word
Ruled each recurrent rise and answering fall,

As when the multitudes adoring call
On some great name divine, their common soul,
The common need, love, joy, that knits them in one whole.

The word was "Jubal!" . . . "Jubal" filled the air
And seemed to ride aloft, a spirit there,
Creator of the quire, the full-fraught strain
That grateful rolled itself to him again.
The aged man adust upon the bank—
Whom no eye saw—at first with rapture drank
The bliss of music, then, with swelling heart,
Felt, this was his own being's greater part,
The universal joy once born in him.
But when the train, with living face and limb
And vocal breath, came nearer and more near,
The longing grew that they should hold him dear;
Him, Lamech's son, whom all their fathers knew,
The breathing Jubal—him, to whom their love was due.
All was forgotten but the burning need
To claim his fuller self, to claim the deed
That lived away from him, and grew apart,
While he as from a tomb, with lonely heart,
Warmed by no meeting glance, no hand that pressed,
Lay chill amid the life his life had blessed.
What though his song should spread from man's small race
Out through the myriad worlds that people space,
And make the heavens one joy-diffusing quire?—
Still 'mid that vast would throb the keen desire
Of this poor aged flesh, this eventide,
This twilight soon in darkness to subside,
This little pulse of self that, having glowed
Through thrice three centuries, and divinely strowed
The light of music through the vague of sound,
Ached with its smallness still in good that had no bound.

For no eye saw him, while with loving pride
Each voice with each in praise of Jubal vied.
Must he in conscious trance, dumb, helpless lie
While all that ardent kindred passed him by?
His flesh cried out to live with living men
And join that soul which to the inward ken
Of all the hymning train was present there.
Strong passion's daring sees not aught to dare :
The frost-locked starkness of his frame low-bent,
His voice's penury of tones long spent,
He felt not ; all his being leaped in flame
To meet his kindred as they onward came
Slackening and wheeling toward the temple's face :
He rushed before them to the glittering space,
And, with a strength that was but strong desire,
Cried, " I am Jubal, I ! . . . I made the lyre ! "

The tones amid a lake of silence fell
Broken and strained, as if a feeble bell
Had tuneless pealed the triumph of a land
To listening crowds in expectation spanned.
Sudden came showers of laughter on that lake ;
They spread along the train from front to wake
In one great storm of merriment, while he
Shrank doubting whether he could Jubal be,
And not a dream of Jubal, whose rich vein
Of passionate music came with that dream-pain
Wherein the sense slips off from each loved thing
And all appearance is mere vanishing.
But ere the laughter died from out the rear,
Anger in front saw profanation near ;
Jubal was but a name in each man's faith
For glorious power untouched by that slow death
Which creeps with creeping time ; this too, the spot,

And this the day, it must be crime to blot,
Even with scoffing at a madman's lie :
Jubal was not a name to wed with mockery.

Two rushed upon him : two, the most devout
In honour of great Jubal, thrust him out,
And beat him with their flutes 'Twas little need ;
He strove not, cried not, but with tottering speed,
As if the scorn and howls were driving wind
That urged his body, serving so the mind
Which could but shrink and yearn, he sought the
screen

Of thorny thickets, and there fell unseen.
The immortal name of Jubal filled the sky,
While Jubal lonely laid him down to die.
He said within his soul, " This is the end :
O'er all the earth to where the heavens bend
And hem men's travel, I have breathed my soul :
I lie here now the remnant of that whole,
The embers of a life, a lonely pain ;
As far-off rivers to my thirst were vain,
So of my mighty years nought comes to me again.

" Is the day sinking ? Softest coolness springs
From something round me : dewy shadowy wings
Enclose me all around—no, not above—
Is moonlight there ? I see a face of love,
Fair as sweet music when my heart was strong :
Yea—art thou come again to me, great Song ? "

The face bent over him like silver night
In long-remembered summers ; that calm light
Of days which shine in firmaments of thought,
That past unchangeable, from change still wrought.
And gentlest tones were with the vision blent :
He knew not if that gaze the music sent.

Or music that calm gaze : to hear, to see,
Was but one undivided ecstasy :
The raptured senses melted into one,
And parting life a moment's freedom won
From in and outer, as a little child
Sits on a bank and sees blue heavens mild
Down in the water, and forgets its limbs,
And knoweth nought save the blue heaven that swims.

"Jubal," the face said, "I am thy loved Past,
The soul that makes thee one from first to last.
I am the angel of thy life and death,
Thy outbreathed being drawing its last breath.
Am I not thine alone, a dear dead bride
Who blest thy lot above all men's beside ?
Thy bride whom thou wouldst never change, nor take
Any bride living, for that dead one's sake ?
Was I not all thy yearning and delight,
Thy chosen search, thy senses' beauteous Right,
Which still had been the hunger of thy frame
In central heaven, hadst thou been still the same ?
Wouldst thou have asked aught else from any god—
Whether with gleaming feet on earth he trod
Or thundered through the skies—ought else for share
Of mortal good, than in thy soul to bear
The growth of song, and feel the sweet unrest
Of the world's spring-tide in thy conscious breast ?
No, thou hadst grasped thy lot with all its pain,
Nor loosed it any painless lot to gain
Where music's voice was silent ; for thy fate
Was human music's self incorporate :
Thy senses' keenness and thy passionate strife
Were flesh of *her* flesh and her womb of life.
And greatly hast thou lived, for not alone

With hidden raptures were her secrets shown,
Buried within thee, as the purple light
Of gems may sleep in solitary night ;
But thy expanding joy was still to give,
And with the generous air in song to live,
Feeding the wave of ever-widening bliss
Where fellowship means equal perfectness.
And on the mountains in thy wandering
Thy feet were beautiful as blossomed spring,
That turns the leafless wood to love's glad home,
For with thy coming Melody was come.
This was thy lot, to feel, create, bestow,
And that immeasurable life to know
From which the fleshly self falls shrivelled, dead,
A seed primeval that has forests bred.
It is the glory of the heritage
Thy life has left, that makes thy outcast age :
Thy limbs shall lie dark, tombless on this sod,
Because thou shinest in man's soul, a god,
Who found and gave new passion and new joy
That nought but Earth's destruction can destroy
Thy gifts to give was thine of men alone :
'Twas but in giving that thou couldst atone
For too much wealth amid their poverty."—

The words seemed melting into symphony,
The wings upbore him, and the gazing song
Was floating him the heavenly space along,
Where mighty harmonies all gently fell
Through veiling vastness, like the far-off bell,
Till, ever onward through the choral blue,
He heard more faintly and more faintly knew,
Quitting mortality, a quenched sun-wave,
The All-creating Presence for his grave.

THE SPANISH GYPSY.

1864-8.

GEORGE ELIOT.

(FROM BOOK I.)

THE long notes linger on the trembling air,
With subtle penetration enter all
The myriad corridors of the passionate soul,
Message-like spread, and answering action rouse.
Not angular jigs that warm the chilly limbs
In hoary northern mists, but action curved
To soft andante strains pitched plaintively.
Vibrations sympathetic stir all limbs :
Old men live backward in their dancing prime,
And move in memory ; small legs and arms
With pleasant agitation purposeless
Go up and down like pretty fruits in gales.
All long in common for the expressive act
Yet wait for it ; as in the olden time
Men waited for the bard to tell their thought.
"The dance! the dance!" is shouted all around.
Now Pablo lifts the bow, Pepita now,
Ready as bird that sees the sprinkled corn,
When Juan nods and smiles, puts forth her foot
And lifts her arm to wake the castanets.
Juan advances, too, from out the ring
And bends to quit his lute ; for now the scene
Is empty ; Roldan weary, gathers pence,
Followed by Annibal with purse and stick.
The carpet lies a coloured isle untrod,
Inviting feet : "The dance, the dance," resounds,
The bow entreats with slow melodic strain,
And all the air with expectation yearns.

Sudden, with gliding motion like a flame
That through dim vapour makes a path of glory,
A figure lithe, all white and saffron-robed,
Flashed right across the circle, and now stood
With ripened arms uplift and regal head,
Like some tall flower whose dark and intense heart
Lies half within a tulip-tinted cup.

Juan stood fixed and pale ; Pepita stepped
Backward within the ring ; the voices fell
From shouts insistent to more passive tones
Half meaning welcome, half astonishment.

"Lady Fedalma !—will she dance for us ?"

But she, sole swayed by impulse passionate,
Feeling all life was music and all eyes
The warming quickening light that music makes,
Moved as, in dance religious, Miriam,
When on the Red Sea shore she raised her voice
And led the chorus of the people's joy ;
Or as the Trojan maids that reverent sang
Watching the sorrow-crowned Hecuba :
Moved in slow curves voluminous, gradual,
Feeling and action flowing into one,
In Eden's natural taintless marriage-bond ;
Ardently modest, sensuously pure,
With young delight that wonders at itself
And throbs as innocent as opening flowers,
Knowing not comment—soilless, beautiful.
The spirit in her gravely glowing face
With sweet community informs her limbs,
Filling their fine gradation with the breath
Of virgin majesty ; as full vowelled words
Are new impregnate with the master's thought.
Even the chance-strayed delicate tendrils black,
That backward 'scape from put her wreathing hair—

Even the pliant folds that cling transverse
When with obliquely soaring bend altern
She seems a goddess quitting earth again—
Gather expression—a soft undertone
And resonance exquisite from the grand chord
Of her harmoniously bodied soul.

At first a reverential silence guards
The eager senses of the gazing crowd :
They hold their breath, and live by seeing her.
But soon the admiring tension finds relief—
Sighs of delight, applausive murmurs low,
And stirrings gentle as of eared corn
Or seed-bent grasses, when the ocean's breath
Spreads landward. Even Juan is impelled
By the swift-travelling movement : fear and doubt
Give way before the hurrying energy ;
He takes his lute and strikes in fellowship,
Filling more full the rill of melody
Raised ever and anon to clearest flood
By Pablo's voice, that dies away too soon,
Like the sweet blackbird's fragmentary chant,
Yet wakes again, with varying rise and fall,
In songs that seem emergent memories
Prompting brief utterance—little canciones
And villancicos, Andalusia-born.

PABLO (*sings*).

*It was in the prime
Of the sweet Spring-time.
In the linnet's throat
Trembled the love-note,
And the love-stirred air
Thrilled the blossoms there.*

*Little shadows danced
Each a tiny elf,
Happy in large light
And the thinnest self.*

*It was but a minute
In a far-off Spring,
But each gentle thing,
Sweetly-wooing linnet,
Soft-thrilled hawthorn tree,
Happy shadowy elf
With the thinnest self,
Lives still on in me.
O the sweet, sweet prime
Of the past Spring-time !*

And still the light is changing · high above
Float soft pink clouds ; others with deeper flush
Stretch like flamingos bending toward the south.
Comes a more solemn brilliance o'er the sky,
A meaning more intense upon the air—
The inspiration of the dying day.
And Juan now, when Pablo's notes subside,
Soothes the regretful ear, and breaks the pause
With masculine voice in deep antiphony.

JUAN (*sings*).

*Day is dying ! Float, O song,
Down the westward river,
Requiem chanting to the Day—
Day, the mighty Giver.*

*Pierced by shafts of Time he bleeds,
Melted rubies sending
Through the river and the sky,
Earth and heaven blending ;*

*All the long-drawn earthy banks
Up to cloud-land lifting :
Slow between them drifts the swan,
'Twixt two heavens drifting.*

*Wings half open, like a flow'r
Inly deeper flushing,
Neck and breast as virgin's pure—
Virgin proudly blushing.*

*Day is dying ! Float, O swan,
Down the ruby river ;
Follow, song, in requiem
To the mighty Giver.*

The exquisite hour, the ardour of the crowd,
The strains more plenteous, and the gathering might
Of action passionate where no effort is,
But self's poor gates open to rushing power
That blends the inward ebb and outward vast—
All gathering influences culminate
And urge Fedalma. Earth and heaven seem one,
Life a glad trembling on the outer edge
Of unknown rapture. Swifter now she moves,
Filling the measure with a double beat
And widening circle ; now she seems to glow
With more declared presence, glorified,
Circling, she lightly bends and lifts on high
The multitudinous-sounding tambourine,
And makes it ring and boom, then lifts it higher
Stretching her left arm beauteous ; now the crowd
Exultant shouts, forgetting poverty
In the rich moment of possessing her.

"O MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR INVISIBLE."

1867.

GEORGE ELIOT.

*Longum illud tempus, quum non ideo, magis me movet,
quam hoc exiguum.*—CICERO, AD ATT., XII. 18.

O MAY I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence : live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.

So to live is heaven :
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonised
With widening retrospect that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved ;
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies,
Die in the large and charitable air.
And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burthen of the world,
Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better—saw within

A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shaped it forth before the multitude
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with love—
That better self shall live till human Time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb
Unread for ever.

This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

Menella Bute Smedley.

1820—1877.

MENELLA B. SMEDLEY was born in 1820, the daughter of the Rev. Edward Smedley, M.A., himself the author of some poems of merit. As a child she was delicate, and required the most careful attention. She came of a family that had shown genius in many of its members—her cousin Frank, though from youth paralysed, wrote some popular books; and her sister, Mrs. Hart, secured considerable success alike as a story-writer and a writer of poems for children. Miss Smedley could not, on account of health, live in London, and resided for many years in that pleasant seacoast town Tenby. But though thus exiled from much that she delighted in, she was constantly at work. Considering the weak health with which she was so tried, she produced what formed a fair body of literature, and some of it reached a very high level. Her earliest volume of poems, "Lays and Ballads from English History," is little known as her identity was disguised under the reversed initials, "S. M."; but the poet's touch is felt throughout in fresh images, lines of exceptional beauty, and sweet rhythmic effects, rare in such poems. Those on "Richard Cœur de Lion" and "Wallace" are very fine indeed. She wrote at least half-a-dozen prose-stories, the most successful of which were, perhaps, "Twice Lost" and "Linnet's

Trial"; she contributed many articles to the magazine *Good Words* and to *The Contemporary Review*; and published at least three volumes of poems, besides those she wrote for children in association with her sister.

If the poet is born and not made, Miss Smedley was by nature a poet. Not only was she gifted with imagination and the power of verse, but she possessed in no slight measure the dramatic faculty. Though in many of her earlier poems there was a decided tendency to mysticism, by which the human interest was veiled, or at any rate clouded, she managed, as she gained in experience, largely to escape from this. Many of her later poems are indeed imbued with fine human sympathy, and the loving imagination which clothes commonplace themes with beauty. Some of her sonnets on heroic workers—notably that on Bishop Patteson—if not strictly after the Petrarchan form, are very complete; penetrated by a lyrical spirit, and marked by a subtle music of their own. Here and there in her later work there are touches which recall to mind some of Alice Cary's best work, though Miss Smedley was unacquainted with her writings.

The touch of mysticism, tending sometimes a little to obscurity, which prevails in such poems as "A Little Fair Soul" and "Wind me a Summer Crown," hardly prepares one for the realistic strength to be found in such pieces as "Hero Harold," which, though suffused with the true ballad spirit, observes a polish that recalls Lord Tennyson's "Lord of Burleigh"; while certainly the force and compact energy thrown into some poems written on striking events of the day (only a few of which were

published in her volume of collected poems) give the idea of such decision, patriotic feeling, and width of range as only a few English women poets have shown. Note, for example, the poem "When the News about the 'Trent' came":—

Faint as a sigh the weary light
 Touches the verge before it drops ;
 The rustle of descending night
 Is felt through all the breathless copse.
 A great slow shadow dims the sea,
 And ships come softly through its haze,
 Like passing shapes seen doubtfully
 By eyes that ache while sleep delays.
 A ship had brought us word at morn,
 How some mad world beyond the sea
 Stood up to fling a look of scorn
 In face of England's majesty.
 And all our land was thinking war ;
 I, too, with powerless hopes and hands,
 Watched while each pale deliberate star
 Struck this wet purple in the sands ;
 And felt, for each red boss of rock,
 Now blackening as the night-time grows ;
 Each curve of these cliff-walls that lock
 Our precious freedom from our foes ;
 For each small circuit traced by foam,
 And marking England to my sight,
 Each fringe and fragment of my home,
 I could have wished to die to-night.

We recall, too, a powerful piece—"Lines suggested by the Greek Massacre"—in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 1870, which, so far as we know has not been reprinted.

Miss Smedley, in association with her sister, Mrs. Hart, the author of "Mrs. Jerningham's Journal," and other tales in verse, wrote many of the poems in the volumes titled "Child-World

and "Poems Written for a Child;" and if she did not equal her sister in that quaint and sparkling glee which seems to accord with so much in happy childhood, she certainly surpassed her in fancy, in lyrical sweetness, and in all that goes to constitute true poetry. A delicious sense of music, and an airy fancy, are everywhere to be found in the sections of the book that come from her pen.

The drama entitled "Lady Grace" has been declared by competent critics to be in some respects one of the best chamber-dramas ever written in English. It is original in construction, its incidents are nicely treated and adjusted to promote the movement of the piece, and it is full of careful delineations of character, with the nicest perception of the modifying effects of association and personal influence. A second volume, containing two plays, "Blind Love" and "Cyril," published in 1874, though it showed great resource, with touches of rare music and melody, and a growing feeling for life, was not so successful—at all events, from a publisher's point of view. Miss Smedley, as we said, wrote many prose tales full of originality, and remarkable for polish of style. The more notable are "A Mere Story" (1865), "A Very Woman" (1867), "Twice Lost" (1868), "Other Folk's Lives" (1869), "Linnet's Trial" (1878). She took a great interest in many forms of philanthropic work, and wrote in favour of boarding out poor children.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

POEMS.

MENELLA BUTE SMEDLEY.

I.—THE LAY OF SIR WILLIAM WALLACE.

(FROM "LAYS AND BALLADS FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.")

THE grey hill and the purple heath
Are round me as I stand ;
The torrent hoar doth sternly roar,
The lake lies calm and grand ;
The altars of the living rock
'Neath yon blue skies are bare,
And a thousand mountain-voices mock
Mine accents on the air.

O loved most lovely and beloved,—
Whether in morn's bright hues,
Or in the veil, so soft, so pale,
Woven by twilight dews,
God's bounty pours from sun and cloud,
Beauty on shore and wave,—
I lift my hands, I cry aloud,
Man shall not make thee slave.

Ye everlasting witnesses,—
Most eloquent, though dumb,—
Sky, shore, and seas, light, mist, and breeze,
Receive me when I come !
How could I in this holy place,
Stand with unstained brow,
How look on earth's accursing face,
If I forget my vow ?

Not few nor slight his burdens are
Who gives himself to stand,
Steadfast and sleepless as a star,
Watching his fatherland ;
Strong must his will be, and serene,
His spirit pure and bright,
His conscience vigilant and keen,
His arm an arm of might.

From the closed temple of his heart,
Sealed as a sacred spring,
Self must he spurn, and set apart
As an unholy thing ;
Misconstrued where he loves the best,
Where most he hopes, betrayed,
The quenchless watchfire in his breast
Must neither fail nor fade.

And his shall be a holier meed
Than earthly lips may tell ;—
Not in the end, but in the deed,
Doth truest honour dwell.
His land is one vast monument,
Bearing the record high
Of a spirit with itself content,
And a name that cannot die !

For this, with joyous heart, I give
Fame, pleasure, love, and life ;
Blest for a cause so high, to live
In ceaseless, hopeless strife :
For this to die, with sword in hand,
Oh, blessed and honoured thrice !
God, countrymen, and fatherland,
Accept the sacrifice !

I.—“WIND ME A SUMMER CROWN,” SHE SAID.

“WIND me a summer crown,” she said,
“And set it on my brows ;
For I must go, while I am young,
Home to my Father’s house.

“And make me ready for the day,
And let me not be stayed ;
I would not linger on the way,
As if I was afraid.

“O ! will the golden courts of heaven,
When I have paced them o’er,
Be lovely as my lily walks
Which I must see no more ?

“And will the seraph hymns and harps,
When they have filled my ear,
Be tender as my mother’s voice,
Which I must never hear ?

“And shall I lie where sunsets drift
Or where the stars are born,
Or where the living tints are mixed
To paint the clouds of morn ?”

Your mother’s tones shall reach you still,
Even sweeter than they were ;
And the false love that broke your heart
Shall be forgotten there.

And not of star or flower is born
The beauty of that shore ;
There is a Face which you shall see,
And wish for nothing more.

III. A CHARACTER.

SO noble that he cannot see
He stands in aught above the rest,
But does his greatness easily,
And mounts his scaffold with a jest ;

Not vaunting any daily death,
Because he scorns the thing that dies,
And not in love with any breath
That might proclaim him grand or wise.

Not much concerned with schemes that show
The counterchange of weak with strong,
But never passing by a woe,
Nor sitting still to watch a wrong.

Of all hearts careful save his own ;
Most tender when he suffers most ;
Wont, if a foe must be o'erthrown,
To count, but never grudge the cost.

Sharp insight, severing with a glance
Greater from less, from substance shade ;
Faith, in gross darkness, of mischance
Unable to be much afraid ;

Out-looking eyes that seek and scan,
Ready to love what they behold ;
Quick reverence for his brother-man ;
Quick sense where gilding is not gold.

Such impulse of his self-control,
It seems a voluntary grace,
The careless grandeur of a soul
That holds no mirror to its face.

True sympathy, a light that grows
And broadens like the summer morn's;
A hope that trusts before it knows,
Being out of tune with all the scorns.

On-moving, temperately intent
On radiant ends by means as bright,
And never cautious, but content
With all the bitter fruits of right.

Under this shade the tired may lie,
Worn with the greatness of their way;
Under this shield the brave may die,
Aware that they have won the day.

For such a leader lifts his times
Out of the limits of the night,
And, falling grandly, while he climbs,
Falls with his face toward the height.

IV.—THE LITTLE FAIR SOUL.

(A PARABLE)

A LITTLE fair soul that knew not sin
Looked over the edge of Paradise,
And saw one striving to come in
With fear and tumult in his eyes.

"Oh, brother, is it you?" he cried;
"Your face is like a breath from home;
Why do you stay so long outside?
I am athirst for you to come!"

"Tell me first how our mother fares,
And has she wept too much for me?"
"White are her cheeks and white her hairs,
But not from gentle tears for thee."

"Tell me where are our sisters gone?"
"Alas, I left them weary and wan."
"And tell me, is the baby grown?"
"Alas, he is almost a man."

"Cannot you break the gathering days
And let the light of death come through,
Ere his feet stumble in the maze
Crossed safely by so few, so few?"

"For like a cloud upon the sea
That darkens till you find no shore,
So was the face of life to me,
Until I sank for evermore;

"And like an army in the snow
My days went by, a treacherous train,
Each smiling as he struck his blow,
Until I lay among them, slain."

"Oh, brother, there was a path so clear!"
"There might be, but I never sought."
"Oh, brother, there was a sword so near!"
"There might be, but I never fought."

"Yet sweep this needless gloom aside,
For you are come to the gate at last!"
Then in despair that soul replied,
"The gate is fast, the gate is fast!"

"I cannot move this mighty weight,
I cannot find this golden key,
But hosts of heaven around us wait,
And none has ever said 'no' to me.

"Sweet Saint, put by thy palm and scroll,
And come undo the door for me!"
"Rest thee still, thou little fair soul,
It is not mine to keep the key."

"Kind Angel, strike these doors apart!
The air without is dark and cold."
"Rest thee still, thou little pure heart,
Not for my word will they unfold."

Up all the shining heights he prayed
For that poor Shadow in the cold;
Still came the word, "Not ours to aid;
We cannot make the doors unfold."

But that poor Shadow, still outside,
Wrung all the sacred air with pain,
And all the souls went up and cried
Where never cry was heard in vain.

No eye beheld the pitying Face,
The answer none might understand,
But dimly through the silent space
Was seen the stretching of a Hand.

V.—A DISCOVERY.

THE languid world went by me as I found
A jewel on the ground,
Under a silent weed,
A nameless glory set for none to heed.
"Stoop, see, and wonder!" was my joyful cry,
But still the languid world went only by.

I drew it forth, and set it on a hill;
 They passed it still.
 Some turned to look,
And said it was a pebble from the brook,
A dewdrop, only made to melt away,
A worthless mirror, with a bordered ray.

Then on my knees I shouted forth its praise,
 For nights and days.
 "See with your eyes
A diamond shining only for the wise!
How is it that you love not at first sight,
This unfamiliar treasure of pure light?"

I set it on my breast. Then, with a sneer,
 The world drew near,
 They knew the sign
And secret of my praise; the thing was mine.
They left it to me with a bland disdain,
And hugged their tinsel to their hearts again.

I showed it to the dearest soul I had :
 "*You* are not mad ;
 Let them go by ;
We *know* it is a diamond, you and I."
Coldly he answered, "If you love it so,
You need not me to praise it. Let me go."

"It is my sin," I cried with bitter tears,
 "That no man hears.
 I'll fling it down ;
Some nobler hand shall set it in a crown.
I shall behold it honoured ere I die ;
But no one could have loved it more than I !

VI.—SLAIN.

LET her lie upon your heart while she faints,
Where she slept such a short time ago ;
O ! she's young to be crowned with the saints—
Hold her fast, mother, do not let her go !

The roses are not dead on her cheeks,
There is but a passing chill in their bloom ;
It will melt when she smiles, when she speaks—
Hush ! was not that her voice in the room ?

She is looking like a babe as she lies
With her ringlets swept aside and apart—
Ah, mother, keep the tears in your eyes,
If they fall upon her face she may start.

Did some one break her heart with a word,
Having grasped at it first as a prize ?
Did it flutter from his hand, like a bird
Which goes a little way, and then dies ?

He remembers the joy of her face,
The love in her smile, and the light,
When, shrinking, she met his embrace—
Bring him here, let him look at her to-night !

O ! first came the wonder and the doubt,
And the pale hope fading day by day,
So wistfully she wandered about,
Like a lost child asking its way ;

And then came the silence and despair,
And the sighing after wings like a dove,
And the proud heart bleeding into prayer,
But hiding all its wounds from your love.

It is over and the tale is all told,
And the white lamb lies dead in the frost ;
You may cover up its limbs from the cold,
But you cannot find a life that is lost.

We were thinking that she moved, but her cheek
Was but stirred by the breast where she lay
Heaving a moment, while we speak,
With the quiet sobs forcing their way.

Let them come, poor mother, let them come ;
You must turn when your tears are all done
To a blank in the sweet talk at home,
And a name on a little grey stone.

VII.—BISHOP PATTESON.

AN Angel came and cried to him by night,
"God needs a Martyr from your little band ;
Name me the purest soul, which, closely scanned,
Still overflows with sweetness and with light
That find no limit till they reach the Land
Whence first they sprang !" Weeping for what
must be,
He named them all, with love adorning each ;
And still that Angel smiled upon his speech,
And, smiling still, went upward silently
Not marking any name. Amazed he knelt,
Pondering the silent choice. But when the stroke
Fell, not an Angel, but the Master, spoke,
With voice so strong that nothing else was felt ;
"Thou art the man ! Belovèd, come to Me ! "

Dora Greenwell.

1821—1882.

DOROTHY GREENWELL, a poet of rare sweetness, penetration, and individuality, if touched with something of a religious mysticism, was born at Greenwell Ford, in the parish of Lanchester, Durham, on December 6th, 1821. Her father was owner of the estate of Greenwell Ford, as his ancestors had been before him from the time of Henry VIII. He was a popular magistrate, and Deputy Lieutenant of the County, and was greatly beloved and respected. The mansion of Greenwell Ford was a spacious house in a beautiful country, well fed with streams and charmingly wooded; and the little Dora drew from it many memories and inspirations. Very sweet and gentle as a child, she soon showed rare faculty. Her childish letters were said to have been very premature. Her fondness for those about her—more especially her mother and her brother Alan—was very marked. Always delicate, and often ill, her cheerfulness amidst pain surprised those who were near her, while her sufferings, continued through life, mellowed her character and gave tone and colour to her verse. In 1848 her father was compelled to part with his estate; and Dora went to live for a time with her brother William (afterwards Canon of Durham), at Ovingham Rectory, in Northumberland. While here her first

volume of poems was published by Mr. Pickering. It contained poems and sonnets, some of which indicated the mystico-religious vein of which so much was to follow. After a short period of residence with her brother Alan, who was now rector of Colbourne, she went to Durham in 1854, and settled down there with her mother. Her acquaintance with members of the Constable family of Edinburgh, formed about this time, resulted in much encouragement and stimulus, as did also the friendship afterwards formed with Professor William Knight, of St. Andrews,—the editor and biographer of Wordsworth,—which produced a collection of letters, remarkably rich in thought and experience. On her mother's death, in 1871, she left Durham, where she had lived for eighteen years. After a brief visit to Torquay she settled in London, where she had made many friends, whose society she greatly enjoyed. In 1881 she met with an accident, which rendered it necessary for her to go to the house of her brother Alan, at Clifton, where she passed away on March 29th, 1882.

The most noticeable characteristic of Miss Greenwell, as a poet, is quickness of thought, wedded to striking originality of form and subtle sweetness of verse. She is utterly unconventional in her movements, and now and then touches boldly a new chord. Though she was one of the most interested and active in many philanthropic and social movements, this did not, as in so many other cases, exercise a deteriorating effect on her poetry—at all events, not directly. The same thing can hardly be said of her religious tendencies, which induced a strain of mysticism; and thus had the effect of throwing over

much of her work a kind of dreamy haze, such as would have been ruinous in destroying all clear outline, and becoming merely sectarian had it not been for the colours of which she made it the medium. One of her friends—herself a poet—has pointed out that she had the same passion as Charles Kingsley for all that was tropical and glowing—rich and spreading palms, rich and potent scents; and that, in her whole nature, there was a love of what was free and lavish. The width and healthy outflow of her human sympathies did much to save her from the fate of the pure mystic. One of the most remarkable sections of her work is that collection of poems titled “Songs of Salvation,” in which she shows quite an exceptional power of uniting a high religious teaching with a kind of dramatic realism of portraiture of simple characters by monologue and dialogue, marked by the utmost truth and directness. Her faculty in ballad was surprising, and almost beyond expectation, as may be seen in “The Battle Flag of Sigurd,” where there is action, and keen sense of movement. Her prose bears almost the same marks, and has the same range. In “The Two Friends,” and in “The Patience of Hope” we have simplicity and now and then force fitted to carry home practical truths; in “Colloquia Crucis” and “The Soul’s Legend” we have it affecting the level of prose-poetry. Her articles in *The Contemporary Review*, on “Our Single Women,” etc., and her papers on “Imbeciles and their Treatment,” a subject in which she took a profound interest, should not, however, be forgotten. “The Life of Lacordaire”—full of subtle insight and biographic sympathy—shows Miss Greenwell at her

best as a prose writer, as perhaps "Carmina Crucis" shows her at her best as regards poetic form. In some respects, this is the most remarkable of Miss Greenwell's works. There is in it a glow of colour and light, a passionate throb or thrill of devotion, of spiritual elevation and expectancy. She has entered largely into the joys of the soul; these are but promises, prophecies of fuller joys to follow; and the forms she finds to embody and express her "sanctified emotions" are richly musical, and sometimes recall the finest turns of her friend, Christina Rossetti. She shares with Dr. George MacDonald the tendency to parable. She will accept nothing for itself, but must translate everything into a text for religious truth. The experience of the soul is the first thing with her, and must find a language. Her exceeding desire to interpret exceptional phases of spiritual experience has operated against the popular acceptance of her poetry as a whole; but there is much in it that beyond cavil belongs *almost* to the first rank, or at the lowest, must take a very high place in the second; for she was undoubtedly original, had a fine sense of music, and in her more important poems exhibited a happy instinct for new forms and musical terms and phrases.

ALEX. H. JAPP.

POEMS.

DORA GREENWELL.

I.—HOME.

TWO birds within one nest ;
Two hearts within one breast ;
Two spirits in one fair
Firm league of love and prayer,
Together bound for aye, together blest.

An ear that waits to catch
A hand upon the latch ;
A step that hastens its sweet rest to win,
A world of care without,
A world of strife shut out,
A world of love shut in.

II.—THE BATTLE-FLAG OF SIGURD.

The flag of Sigurd, the northern warrior, carried victory with it, but brought death to its bearer.

I HAVE no folded flock to show,
Though from my youth I have loved the sheep
And the lambs, as they strayed in the valleys low,
Or clomb the upland pastures steep,
But none were given me to keep !
I stood on the hill when the dawn brake red,
Through the darkling glen the foe drew nigh,

They came on swift, with a stealthy tread ;
I gave the earliest warning cry !
Then flashed the falchion, the arrow flew ;
I did not fight, nor yield, nor fly,
I held up the flag the whole day through—
Wrap it round me when I die !

I have no garnered sheaf to show,
Though oft with my shining sickle bared
I have wrought with the reapers, row by row,
And joined the shout as they homeward fared :
I was not by when the land was shared !
I stood at noon when the maidens dread
Came forth ere the battle, to choose the slain,
And at nightfall the raven's foot was red,
And the wolves were met on the darkening plain.
Then hewed the hanger, the sword smote sore,
I held up the flag till the day went by ;
It was glued to my straining clasp with gore—
Wrap it round me when I die !

I have no silken spoil to show,
No torque of the beaten gold, no red
Rich broidered mantle, wrung from the foe,
Or flung down by chief as the banquet sped ;
I have only watched, and toiled, and bled !
I stand at eve on the vessel's prow,
My heart is wounded, and I have striven
So long that my arm is weary now,
And the flag I bear is stained and riven ;
The dark waves mutter, the night dews fall ;
'Twixt a sullen sea and a stormy sky
I hold up the flag in sight of all—
Wrap it round me when I die !

III.—DARIA.

In Calderon's drama, *Los Dos Amantes del Cielo*, Daria, a beautiful Roman girl, eventually a Christian convert and martyr, declares, while yet Pagan, that she will never love until she finds some one who has died to prove his love for her.

O H, proud and fair was she !
Yet only proud perchance in being fair,
And in her speech, and in her smiling free,
As Rose to summer air ;

And near her in the dell
Another damsel sat who sweetly sung ;
And one who Love's fond ancient chronicle
Read ; and these three were young,

And fair, and richly dight.
But she I speak of, read not, neither sung,
But deemed she ministered enough delight
In being fair and young.

"Love!" said she in disdain,
"Now am I weary of the vows and sighs
Of lovers that to die for me are fain,
Yet find I none who dies."

She spoke again in jest
Or sadness—which, I knew not then, nor she :
Deep words are spoken, deepest thoughts confessed,
By hearts in careless glee.

"Yet might I in that train
Find one who for my love indeed had died,
Then let him come to ask for love again,
And I will be his bride!"

Oh, meek was she and fair,
But then most fair, methought, in being meek ;
And yet the same was she whom otherwhere
I heard so proudly speak.

Her voice rose clear and soft
As is the dove's, and dove-like still caressed
One tender note, as if returning oft
To what it loveth best.

She sang, " My soul is bound
By that sweet olden promise, One who died
For me and for my love now have I found,
I quit no more His side."

IV.—THE MAN WITH THREE FRIENDS.

(A STORY TOLD IN THE "GESTA ROMANORUM.")

TO one full sound and quietly
That slept, there came a heavy cry,
"Awake ! arise ! for thou hast slain
A man." "Yea, have I to mine own pain,"

He answered ; "but of ill intent
And malice am I that naught forecast
As is the babe innocent.

"From sudden anger our strife grew.
I hated not, in times past,
Him whom unwittingly I slew."

"If it be thus indeed, thy case
Is hard," they said ; "for thou must die,
Unless with the Judge thou can'st find grace.
Hast thou, in thine extremity,
Friends soothfast for thee to plead ?"

Then said he, "I have friends three :

One¹ whom in word, and will, and deed
From my youth I have served, and loved before
Mine own soul, and for him striven ;
To him was all I got given ;
And the longer I lived, I have loved him more.

And another² have I, whom, sooth to tell,
I love as I love my own heart well,
And the third,³ I cannot now call
To mind that ever loved at all
He hath been of me, or in aught served ;
And yet, maybe, he hath well deserved
That I should love him with the rest.

"Now will I first to the one loved best."
Said the first, "And art thou so sore bestead ?
See, I have gained of cloth good store,
So will I give thee three ells and more
(If more thou needest) when thou art dead,
To wrap thee. Now hie away from my door :
"I have friends many, and little room."

And the next made answer, weeping sore
"We will go with thee to the place of doom :
There must we leave thee evermore."

"Alack," said the man, "and well-a-day !"
But the third only answered, "Yea" ;
And while the man spake, all to start soon,
Knelt down and buckled on his shoon,
And said, "By thee in the Judgment Hall
I will stand, and hear what the Judge decree ;
And if it be death, I will die with thee,
Or for thee, as it may befall."

1 The world. 2 Wife and children. 3 Christ.

V.—THE ETERNAL NOW.

"For one day with Thee is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

"**N**OW have I won a marvel and a Truth";
Sospake the soul and trembled, "dread and ruth
Together mixed, a sweet and bitter core
Closed in one rind; for I did sin of yore,
But this (so said I oft) was long ago;
So put it from me far away, but, lo!
With Thee is neither After nor Before,
O Lord, and clear within the noon-light set
Of one illimitable Present, yet
Thou lookest on my fault as it were now.
So will I mourn and humble me; yet Thou
Art not as man, that oft forgives a wrong
Because he half forgets it, Time being strong
To wear the crimson of guilt's stain away;
For Thou, forgiving, dost so in the Day
That shows it clearest, in the boundless Sea
Of Mercy and Atonement, utterly
Casting our pardoned trespasses behind,
No more remembered, or to come in mind;
Set wide from us as East from West away
So now this bitter turns to solace kind;
And I will comfort me that once of old
A deadly sorrow struck me, and its cold
Runs through me still; but this was long ago.
My grief is dull through age, and friends outworn,
And wearied comforters, have long forborne
To sit and weep beside me: Lord, yet Thou
And look upon my pang as it were now!"

VI.—DEMETER AND CORA.

"**S**PEAK, daughter, speak ; art speaking now ?"
" Seek, mother, seek ; art seeking thou
Thy dear-loved Cora ? " " Daughter sweet,
I bend unto the earth my ear
To catch the sound of coming feet ;
I listen long but only hear
The deep, dark waters running clear."
" Oh ! my great mother, now the heat
Of thy strong heart in thickened beat
Hath reached thy Cora in her gloom, '
Is't well with thee, my Mother—tell ? "
" Is't well with thee, my daughter ? " " Well
Or ill I know not ; I through fate
Queen of a wide unmeasured tomb
Know not if it be love or hate
That holds me fast, but I am bound
For ever ! What if I am found
Of thee, my mother, still the bars
Are round me, and the girdling night
Hath passed within my soul ! the stars
Have risen on me, but the light
Hath gone for ever." " Daughter, tell,
Doth thy dark lord, the King of Hell,
Still love thee ? " " Oh, too well, too well
He loves ! he binds with unwrought chain.
I was not born to be thy mate,
Aides ! nor the Queen of pain :
I was thy daughter Cora, vowed
To gladness in thy world above,
I loved the daffodil, I love
All lovely, free and gentle things
Beloved of thee ! a sound of wings

Is with me in captivity,
Of birds, and bees, with her that sings
The shrill Cicula, ever gay
In noon's white heat." "But, daughter, say
Dost love Aides?" "Now, too bold
Thy question, mother; this be told,
I leave him not for love, for gold,
One lot we share, one life we know.
The Lord is he of wealth and rest,
As well as king of death and pain;
He folds me to a kingly breast,
He yields to me a rich domain.
I leave him not for aught above,
For any God's unsteadfast love
Or fairest mortal-form below;
Thou hast left heaven for earth; and thou
For thy poor Cora's sake, self-driven,
Hast fled its sunny heights in scorn
And hate, of Zeus unforgiven!
Do mortals love thee?" "Daughter, yea.
They call me their great mother. Corn
And wine I give them when they pray;
Their love for me their little day
Of life lasts out; perchance they knew
It was not love for them that drew
Me down to wander where the vine
Is sweet to me, and breath of kine.
Art listening now, my Cora dear?
Art listening now, my child,—art near?
Oh, that thy kiss upon my cheek
Were warm! thy little hand in mine
Once more! Yet, let me hear thee speak,
And tell me of that garden rare,
And of thy flowers, dark, fiery, sweet,

That never breathe the upper air."
 "Oh, mother, they are fair, are fair ;
 Large-leaved are they, large-blossomed, frail,
 And beautiful. No vexing gale
 Comes ever nigh them ; fed with fire,
 They kindle in a torch-like flame
 Half ecstasy, half tender shame
 Of bloom that must so soon expire.
 But, mother, tell me of the wet
 Cool primrose ! of the lilac-bough
 And its warm gust of rapture, met
 In summer days !—art listening yet ?"
 "Art near me, O my Cora, now ?"

VII.—"BRING ME WORD HOW TALL SHE IS."

WOMAN IN 1873.

"How tall is your Rosalind ?"

"Just as high as my heart."

As You Like It.

WITHIN a garden shade,
 A garden sweet and dim,
 Two happy children played
 Together ; he was made
 For God, and she for him.
 Beyond the garden's shade,
 In deserts drear and dim
 Two outcast children strayed
 Together, he betrayed
 By her, and she by him.
 Together girl and boy,
 They wandered, ne'er apart ;
 Each wrought to each annoy,

Yet each knew never joy
Save in the other's heart
By her so oft deceived ;
By him so sore opprest ;
They each the other grieved,
Yet each of each was best
Beloved, and still caressed.
And she was in his sight
Found fairest, still his prize,
His constant chief delight ;
She raised to him her eyes
That led her not aright,
And ever by his side
A patient huntress ran
Through forests dark and wide,
And still the woman's pride
And glory was the Man.
When her he would despise,
She kept him captive bound ;
Forbidding her to rise,
By many cords and ties
She held him to the ground.
At length, in stature grown,
He stands erect and free ;
Yet stands he not alone,
For his beloved would be
Like him she loveth wise, like him she
loveth free.
So wins she her desire,
Yet stand they not apart ;
For as *she* doth aspire
He grows, nor stands she higher
Than her Beloved's heart.

VIII.—“*QUI SAIT AIMER, SAIT MOURIR.*”

“**I** BURN my soul away !”
 So spake the Rose and smiled ; “ within my cup
 All day the sunbeams fall in flame, all day
 They drink my sweetness up ! ”

“ I sigh my soul away ! ”
 The Lily said ; “ all night the moonbeams pale
 Steal round and round me, whispering in their play
 An all too tender tale ! ”

“ I give my soul away ! ”
 The Violet said ; “ the West wind wanders on,
 The North wind comes ; I know not what they say,
 And yet my soul is gone ! ”

Oh, Poet, burn away
 Thy fervent soul ! fond Lover at the feet
 Of her thou lovest, sigh ! dear Christian, pray,
 And let the world be sweet !

IX.—*THE SOUL'S PARTING.*

November 12th, 1851.

SHE sat within Life's Banquet Hall at noon,
 When word was brought unto her secretly,
 “ The Master cometh onwards quickly ; soon
 Across the Threshold He will call for thee.”
 Then she rose up to meet Him at the Door,
 But turning, courteous, made a farewell brief
 To those that sat around. From Care and Grief
 She parted first : “ Companions sworn and true
 Have ye been ever to me, but for Friends
 I knew ye not till later, and did miss
 Much solace through that error ; let this kiss,
 Late known and prized, be taken for amends ;
 Thou, too, kind, constant Patience, with thy slow,
 Sweet counsels aiding me ; I did not know

That ye were angels, until ye displayed
Your wings for flight ; now bless me ! " but they said,
" We blest thee long ago."

Then turning unto twain
That stood together, tenderly and oft
She kissed them on their foreheads, whispering soft,
" Now must we part ; yet leave me not before
Ye see me enter safe within the Door ;
Kind bosom-comforters, that by my side
The darkest hour found ever closest bide,
A dark hour waits me, ere for evermore
Night with its heaviness be overpast ;
Stay with me till I cross the Threshold o'er.
So Faith and Hope stayed by her till the last.

But giving both her hands
To one that stood the nearest,— " Thou and I
May pass together ; for the holy bands
God knits on earth are never loosed on high.
Long have I walked with Thee ; Thy name arose
E'en in my sleep, and sweeter than the close
Of music was thy voice ; for thou wert sent
To lead me homewards from my banishment
By devious ways, and never hath my heart
Swerved from Thee, though our hands were wrung apart
By spirits sworn to sever us ; above
Soon shall I look upon Thee as Thou art."
So she crossed o'er with Love.

X.—GONE.

A LONE, at midnight as he knelt, his spirit was aware
Of somewhat falling in between the silence and
the prayer,
A bell's dull clangour that hath sped so far, it faints
and dies

So soon as it hath reached the ear whereto its errand lies ;
And as he rose up from his knees, his spirit was aware
Of Somewhat, forceful and unseen, that sought to hold
him there ;

As of a Form that stood behind, and on his shoulders prest
Both hands to stay his rising up, and Somewhat in his
breast,

In accents clearer far than words, spake, "Pray yet
longer, pray,
For one that ever prayed for thee, this night hath passed
away ;

"A soul, that climbing hour by hour the silver-shining stair
That leads to God's great treasure-house, grew covetous ;
and there

"Was stored no blessing and no boon, for thee she did
not claim,

(So lowly, yet importunate !) and ever with *thy* name

"She linked—that none in earth or heaven might hinder
it or stay—

One Other Name, so strong, that thine hath never
missed its way.

"This very night within my arms this gracious soul I bore
Within the Gate, where many a prayer of hers had gone
before ;

"And where she resteth, evermore one constant song
they raise,

Of 'Holy, holy,' so that *now* I know not if she prays ;

But for the voice of Praise in Heaven, a voice of
Prayer hath gone

From Earth ; thy name upriseth now no more ; pray on,
pray on ! "

XI.—LIFE TAPESTRY.

TOO long have I, methought, with tearful eye
Pored o'er this tangled work of mine, and mused
Above each stitch awry, and thread confused ;
Now will I think on what in years gone by
I heard of them that weave rare tapestry
At Royal looms, and how they constant use
To work on the rough side, and still peruse
The pictured pattern set above them high :
So will I set MY COPY high above,
And gaze and gaze till on my spirit grows
Its gracious impress : till some line of love
Transferred upon my canvas, faintly glows ;
Nor look too much on warp or woof, provide
He whom I work for sees their fairer side.

XII.—TO CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

"I have mingled my grapes and my wine."

The Song of Songs.

THOU hast filled me a golden cup
With a drink divine that glows,
With the bloom that is flowing up
From the heart of the folded rose.
The grapes in their amber glow,
And the strength of the blood-red wine
All mingle and change and flow
In this golden cup of thine.
With the scent of the curling wine
With the balm of the rose's breath,—
For the voice of love is thine,
And thine is the Song of Death !

Adelaide Anne Procter

1825—1864.

IN his sympathetic and touching preface to the "Legends and Lyrics" of Adelaide Anne Procter, Charles Dickens gave a characteristic account of the connection which had grown up between himself—as Editor of *Household Words*—and the gentle and delicate lyrist whose works he was then introducing. Her father, Bryan Waller Procter, better known as Barry Cornwall, himself a lyrist of no mean power, had befriended Dickens when he was a young literary aspirant, and a life-long friendship had ensued between them. Dickens had known Adelaide Procter as a child, and had watched her develop into young womanhood. She was a gay, sprightly girl, of great energy and rare sympathy of character, strenuous and eager in every study, passionately fond of books and of music. Highly cultured, intensely sympathetic, and surrounded by a rare intellectual atmosphere, it was not remarkable that she should seek to give expression to her thoughts and feelings in literary shape; and when at length she determined on making some of her verses public, she sent them, under an assumed name, to her father's friend, Charles Dickens. Their merit was at once discerned, and further contributions were invited and secured for publication in *Household Words*. How the humorous and imaginative editor

built up in his mind a little romance about his unknown contributor, "Miss Mary Berwick," and how it at length became known to him that she was none other than the daughter of his old friend, is most delightfully told in the preface to her collected works.

Born in Bedford Square, London, October 30th, 1825, Adelaide Procter early manifested a love of poetry. A tiny album, into which her favourite verses were copied by her mother's hand, was carried about by her as another child carries about her doll. She soon displayed a remarkable memory and great quickness of apprehension, and as she grew older she acquired the French, Italian, and German languages, and great skill as a pianoforte player. At the age of twenty-six she adopted the Roman Catholic faith, and though her special views of religion are not obtruded in her works, a generally devout tone, deep admiration for Christian heroism, devotion, and self-abnegation are conspicuously manifest in her subsequent writings. She spent her life between contemplation, poetical composition, and active benevolence. "Always impelled by the conviction that her life must not be dreamed away, and that her indulgence in her favourite pursuits must be balanced by action in the real world around her, she was indefatigable in her endeavours to do some good. . . . Now it was the visitation of the sick that had possession of her; now it was the sheltering of the houseless; now it was the elementary teaching of the densely ignorant; now it was the raising up of those who had wandered and got trodden under foot; . . . now it was all these things at once. Perfectly unselfish, swift to sympathise, and eager to

relieve, she wrought at such designs with a flushed earnestness that disregarded season, weather, time of day or night, food and rest." Thus wrote Charles Dickens. No wonder that a constitution so overtaxed succumbed under the burdens imposed upon it. After a lingering illness of fifteen months, borne with patience, resignation and hope, she died, in her mother's arms, on the 2nd of February, 1864. Adelaide Procter's best work was the fruit of the last ten years of her life; for though she had published a few verses before that date, it was not until the spring of 1853 that "Mary Berwick" sent her first contribution to *Household Words*, and her career was over, as we have seen, in 1864. Her poetry may be classified as narrative, lyrical, and devotional, though, as we have already observed, the deeply religious and devotional cast of their author's mind is manifest in all of them. Nor is their purpose unapparent, though their didacticism is kept under admirable restraint. All of them faithfully reflect the deeper convictions of her mind, and it is matter for observation that though she lived till 1864, in the midst of intellectual people, many of whom must have been profoundly influenced by the scepticism, the unrest, the despair, of the time, no trace of it is to be discovered in her writings,—a remarkable fact in connection with the work of one so eager, so sympathetic, so impetuous. So far as books inspired her songs, she might have drawn all her inspiration from the New Testament. We must strive. Yes; she accepts, cheerfully accepts, this nineteenth century admonition; but we must wait and pray too.

Full of faith and hope, she is yet practical and

sensible in her view of life. She finds the world full of sorrow and suffering and accepts it without a murmur; nay, rather glories in the imperfect and transient nature of earthly joys. The ministry of suffering is a favourite theme with her, and this without any affected cynicism as to "the joy of the whole earth." There can be no doubt as to the genuineness of the joy that sings—

"My God, I thank Thee who hast made
The Earth so bright;
So full of splendour and of joy,
Beauty and light;
So many glorious things are here
Noble and right!

"I thank Thee, too, that Thou hast made
Joy to abound;
So many gentle thoughts and deeds
Circling us round,
That in the darkest spot of Earth
Some love is found.—"

Nor is it possible to deny the high standard of self-discipline, of calm, hopeful and resigned confidence attained by the spirit that can sing with her—

"I thank Thee *more* that all our joy
Is touched with pain;
That shadows fall on brightest hours;
That thorns remain;
So that Earth's bliss may be our guide,
And not our chain.

* * * * *

"I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast kept
The best in store;
We have enough, yet not too much
To long for more:
A yearning for a deeper peace,
Not known before.

"I thank Thee, Lord, that here our souls,
Though amply blest,
Can never find, although they seek,
A perfect rest—
Nor ever shall, until they lean
On Jesus' breast."

Surely here she gives lyric expression to a very rare attainment of even Christian faith. Her message to suffering humanity is characteristically given in the poem "Friend Sorrow":—

"Do not cheat thy Heart and tell her
'Grief will pass away,
Hope for fairer times in future,
And forget to-day.'—
Tell her, if you will, that sorrow
Need not come in vain;
Tell her that the lesson taught her
Far outweighs the pain."

Her narrative poems have remarkably good qualities. The stories are vivid, the reader is quickly interested, and reads right to the end. Witness the two entitled respectively, "A Legend of Bregenz," and "A Legend of Provence." In the former, the story of the young Tyrolean maid, faithfully performing the "daily round, the common task," of humble servitude in the household of strangers, placid and content, all unconscious of the heroic potentiality within her, suddenly aroused into a burning anxiety to save her native town from attack, is powerfully though simply told, and the reader's anxiety and sympathy for the maiden, as she scales the steep banks and conveys the warning to her townsmen, is complete.

References to the power of Music are scattered throughout her poems, and two of her lyrics, expressive of its magical efficiency in ministering to the soul's needs, have become widely popular. We refer

to "A Lost Chord," and "Sent to Heaven" ("The Message"). How exquisitely lyrical are the lines

"It rose in harmonious rushing
Of mingled voices and strings."

Adelaide Procter is never obscure. She never struggles to find utterance for any "perplexed meanings"; all she says is clear, simple, direct. On the other hand, it is not often that she touches a very deep note in the human heart. There are no flashes of inspiration, no revelations of truths before unrecognised. Perhaps she penetrates deepest in "Judge Not."

"Judge not; the workings of his brain
And of his heart thou canst not see;
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
In God's pure light may only be
A scar, bright from some well-won field,
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

* * * * *

"The fall thou darest to despise—
May be the angel's slackened hand
Has suffered it, that he may rise
And take a firmer, surer stand;
Or, trusting less to earthly things,
May henceforth learn to use his wings.

One of her best and most characteristic pieces is, undoubtedly, "The Story of the Faithful Soul." To compare her for a moment with another sweet religious singer of this century,—Keble—it might be said that, while she instils the same precepts and inculcates the same duties, she has never attained to his height. "Wisdom and sight are well, but Trust is best," she wrote. Keble, in treating of the same theme, wrote,

"Thou art thy Father's darling,
Ask no more."

H. J. GIBBS.

LEGENDS AND LYRICS.

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

I.—SENT TO HEAVEN.

I HAD a Message to send her,
To her whom my soul loved best ;
But I had my task to finish,
And she was gone home to rest.
To rest in the far bright heaven ;
Oh, so far away from here,
It was vain to speak to my darling,
For I knew she could not hear !
I had a message to send her
So tender, and true, and sweet,
I longed for an Angel to bear it,
And lay it down at her feet.
I placed it, one summer evening,
On a Cloudlet's fleecy breast ;
But it faded in golden splendour,
And died in the crimson west.
I gave it the Lark next morning,
And I watched it soar and soar ;
But its pinions grew faint and weary,
And it fluttered to earth once more.
To the heart of a Rose I told it ;
And the perfume, sweet and rare,
Growing faint on the blue bright ether,
Was lost in the balmy air.

I laid it upon a Censer,
And I saw the incense rise ;
But its clouds of rolling silver
Could not reach the far blue skies.

I cried, in my passionate longing :—
“Has the earth no Angel-friend
Who will carry my love the message
That my heart desires to send ?”

Then I heard a strain of music,
So mighty, so pure, so clear,
That my very sorrow was silent,
And my heart stood still to hear.

And I felt, in my soul's deep yearning,
At last the sure answer stir :—
“The music will go up to Heaven,
And carry my thought to her.”

It rose in harmonious rushing
Of mingled voices and strings,
And I tenderly laid my message
On the Music's outspread wings.

I heard it float farther and farther,
In sound more perfect than speech ;
Farther than sight can follow,
Farther than soul can reach.

And I know that at last my message
Has passed through the golden gate :
So my heart is no longer restless,
And I am content to wait.

II.—HUSH!

"I CAN scarcely hear," she murmured,
"For my heart beats loud and fast,
But surely, in the far, far distance,
I can hear a sound at last."
"It is only the reapers singing,
As they carry home their sheaves,
And the evening breeze has risen,
And rustles the dying leaves."
"Listen! there are voices talking."
Calmly still she strove to speak,
Yet her voice grew faint and trembling,
And the red flushed in her cheek.
"It is only the children playing
Below, now their work is done,
And they laugh that their eyes are dazzled
By the rays of the setting sun."
Fainter grew her voice, and weaker
As with anxious eyes she cried,
"Down the avenue of chestnuts,
I can hear a horseman ride."
"It was only the deer that were feeding
In a herd on the clover grass,
They were startled, and fled to the thicket,
As they saw the reapers pass."
Now the night arose in silence,
Birds lay in their leafy nest,
And the deer couched in the forest,
And the children were at rest:
There was only a sound of weeping
From watchers around a bed,
But Rest to the weary spirit,
Peace to the quiet Dead!

III.—THE STORY OF THE FAITHFUL SOUL.

FOUNDED ON AN OLD FRENCH LEGEND.

THE fettered Spirits linger
In purgatorial pain,
With penal fires effacing
Their last faint earthly stain,
Which Life's imperfect sorrow
Had tried to cleanse in vain.

Yet, on each feast of Mary
Their sorrow finds release,
For the Great Archangel Michael
Comes down and bids it cease ;
And the name of these brief respites
Is called "Our Lady's Peace."

Yet once—so runs the Legend—
When the Archangel came
And all these holy spirits
Rejoiced at Mary's name ;
One voice alone was wailing,
Still wailing on the same.

And though a great Te Deum
The happy echoes woke,
This one discordant wailing
Through the sweet voices broke ;
So when St. Michael questioned,
Thus the poor spirit spoke :—

"I am not cold or thankless,
Although I still complain ;
I prize our Lady's blessing
Although it comes in vain
To still my bitter anguish,
Or quench my ceaseless pain.

"On earth a heart that loved me,
Still lives and mourns me there,
And the shadow of his anguish
Is more than I can bear;
All the torment that I suffer
Is the thought of his despair.

"The evening of my bridal
Death took my Life away;
Not all Love's passionate pleading
Could gain an hour's delay.
And he I left has suffered
A whole year since that day.

"If I could only see him,—
If I could only go
And speak one word of comfort
And solace,—then, I know
He would endure with patience,
And strive against his woe."

Thus the Archangel answered :—
"Your time of pain is brief,
And soon the peace of Heaven
Will give you full relief;
Yet if his earthly comfort
So much outweighs your grief,

"Then through a special mercy
I offer you this grace,—
You may seek him who mourns you,
And look upon his face,
And speak to him of comfort
For one short minute's space

"But when that time is ended,
Return here, and remain
A thousand years in torment,
A thousand years in pain :
Thus dearly must you purchase
The comfort he will gain."

* * * *

The Lime-trees' shade at evening
Is spreading broad and wide ;
Beneath their fragrant arches,
Pace slowly, side by side,
In low and tender converse,
A Bridegroom and his Bride.
The night is calm and stilly,
No other sound is there
Except their happy voices :
What is that cold bleak air
That passes through the Lime-trees
And stirs the Bridegroom's hair ?
While one low cry of anguish,
Like the last dying wail
Of some dumb, hunted creature,
Is borne upon the gale :—
Why does the Bridegroom shudder
And turn so deathly pale ?

* * * *

Near Purgatory's entrance
The radiant Angels wait ;
It was the great St. Michael
Who closed that gloomy gate,
When the poor wandering spirit
Came back to meet her fate.

"Pass on," thus spoke the Angel :
 "Heaven's joy is deep and vast ;
Pass on, pass on, poor Spirit,
 For Heaven is yours at last ;
In that one minute's anguish
 Your thousand years have passed."

IV.—A LEGEND OF BREGENZ.

GIRT round with rugged mountains
The fair Lake Constance lies ;
In her blue heart reflected
 Shine back the starry skies ;
And, watching each white cloudlet
 Float silently and slow,
You think a piece of Heaven
 Lies on our earth below !

Midnight is there . and Silence,
 Enthroned in Heaven, looks down
Upon her own calm mirror,
 Upon a sleeping town :
For Bregenz, that quaint city
 Upon the Tyrol shore,
Has stood above Lake Constance,
 A thousand years and more.

Her battlements and towers,
 From off their rocky steep,
Have cast their trembling shadow
 For ages on the deep :
Mountain, and lake, and valley,
 A sacred legend know,
Of how the town was saved, one night
 Three hundred years ago.

Far from her home and kindred,
A Tyrol maid had fled,
To serve in the Swiss valleys
And toil for daily bread ;
And every year that fled
So silently and fast,
Seemed to bear farther from her
The memory of the Past.

She served kind, gentle masters,
Nor asked for rest or change ;
Her friends seemed no more new ones,
Their speech seemed no more strange ;
And when she led her cattle
To pasture every day,
She ceased to look and wonder
On which side Bregenz lay.

She spoke no more of Bregenz,
With longing and with tears :
Her Tyrol home seemed faded
In a deep mist of years ;
She heeded not the rumours
Of Austrian war and strife ;
Each day she rose contented,
To the calm toils of life.

Yet, when her master's children
Would clustering round her stand,
She sang them ancient ballads
Of her own native land ;
And when at morn and evening
She knelt before God's throne,
The accents of her childhood
Rose to her lips alone.

And so she dwelt : the valley
More peaceful year by year ;
When suddenly strange portents,
Of some great deed seemed near.
The golden corn was bending
Upon its fragile stalk,
While farmers, heedless of their fields,
Paced up and down in talk.

The men seemed stern and altered,
With looks cast on the ground ;
With anxious faces, one by one,
The women gathered round ;
All talk of flax, or spinning,
Or work, was put away ;
The very children seemed afraid
To go alone to play.

One day, out in the meadow
With strangers from the town,
Some secret plan discussing,
The men walked up and down.
Yet, now and then seemed watching,
A strange uncertain gleam,
That looked like lances 'mid the trees,
That stood below the stream.

At eve they all assembled,
Then care and doubt were fled ;
With jovial laugh they feasted ;
The board was nobly spread.
The elder of the village
Rose up, his glass in hand,
And cried, " We drink the downfall
"Of an accursed land !

"The night is growing darker,
"Ere one more day is flown,
"Bregenz, our foemen's stronghold,
"Bregenz shall be our own!"
The women shrank in terror,
(Yet Pride, too, had her part),
But one poor Tyrol maiden
Felt death within her heart.

Before her, stood fair Bregenz;
Once more her towers arose;
What were the friends beside her?
Only her country's foes!
The faces of her kinsfolk,
The days of childhood flown,
The echoes of her mountains,
Reclaimed her as their own!

Nothing she heard around her,
(Though shouts rang forth again),
Gone were the green Swiss valleys,
The pasture, and the plain;
Before her eyes one vision,
And in her heart one cry,
That said, "Go forth, save Bregenz,
And then, if need be, die!"

With trembling haste and breathless,
With noiseless step she sped;
Horses and weary cattle
Were standing in the shed;
She loosed the strong white charger,
That fed from out her hand,
She mounted, and she turned his head
Towards her native land.

Out—out into the darkness—
Faster, and still more fast ;
The smooth grass flies behind her,
The chestnut wood is past ;
She looks up ; clouds are heavy :
Why is her steed so slow ?—
Scarcely the wind beside them,
Can pass them as they go.

“Faster !” she cries, “O, faster !”
Eleven the church-bells chime :
“O God,” she cries, “help Bregenz,
And bring me there in time !”
But louder than bells’ ringing,
Or lowing of the kine,
Grows nearer in the midnight
The rushing of the Rhine.

Shall not the roaring waters
Their headlong gallop check ?
The steed draws back in terror,
She leans upon his neck
To watch the flowing darkness ;
The bank is high and steep ;
One pause—he staggers forward,
And plunges in the deep.

She strives to pierce the blackness,
And looser throws the rein ;
Her steed must breast the waters
That dash above his mane.
How gallantly, how nobly,
He struggles through the foam,
And see—in the far distance,
Shine out the lights of home !

Up the steep banks he bears her,
And now, they rush again
Towards the heights of Bregenz,
That tower above the plain.
They reach the gate of Bregenz,
Just as the midnight rings,
And out come serf and soldier
To meet the news she brings.

Bregenz is saved ! Ere daylight
Her battlements are manned ;
Defiance greets the army
That marches on the land.
And if to deeds heroic
Should endless fame be paid,
Bregenz does well to honour
The noble Tyrol maid.

Three hundred years are vanished,
And yet upon the hill
An old stone gateway rises,
To do her honour still.
And there, when Bregenz women
Sit spinning in the shade,
They see in quaint old carving
The Charger and the Maid.

And when, to guard old Bregenz,
By gateway, street, and tower,
The warder paces all night long,
And calls each passing hour ;
"Nine," "ten," "eleven," he cries aloud,
And then (Oh crown of Fame !)
When midnight pauses in the skies,
He calls the maiden's name !

Dinah Maria Craik.

1826—1887.

LIKE many other successful prose writers, Mrs. Craik sometimes threw her thoughts into the form of verse. These occasional efforts formed the substance of two volumes issued at different times and afterwards of one volume, entitled, "Thirty Years, being Poems New and Old." Though lacking in the higher qualities of true poetry, imagination, passion, breadth of experience, and depth of emotion, there is enough true feeling and human interest in many of her poems to entitle them to recognition in these pages, and give her a true if not a very exalted place in any representative anthology of the verse of her countrywomen. "Philip my King," the first poem in either volume, ranked high among her own favourites, and has, perhaps, been the most often quoted of her verses. "A Silly Song," too, and "A Christmas Carol" are given in an anthology for which her own selection of her own work was asked. The ballad "In Swanage Bay," which is not included in her last volume, has none the less been very popular as a recitation, and shows ability to write a simple and touching story in verse.

Dinah Maria Muloch was born at Stoke-upon-Trent, in the year 1826. Her father, a clergyman of wide learning, superintended her education and encouraged her early efforts. She published her

first novel "The Ogilvies" when in her twenty-third year, a work which was followed in 1850 by "Olive," and in 1856-7 by "John Halifax, Gentleman." Other novels, stories for children, essays on ethical and domestic subjects and translations succeeded, including "A Life for a Life" (1860), in which, perhaps, her strongest work is to be found. In 1864 she received a pension of £60 in consideration of work in literature; and in 1865 she married Mr. George Lillie Craik. Mrs. Craik died in the month of October, 1887.

ALFRED H. MILES.

POEMS.

DINAH MARIA CRAIK.

I.—PHILIP MY KING.

“ Who bears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty.”

LOOK at me with thy large brown eyes,
Philip my king,
Round whom the enshadowing purple lies
Of babyhood's royal dignities :
Lay on my neck thy tiny hand
With love's invisible sceptre laden ;
I am thine Esther to command
Till thou shalt find a queen-handmaiden,
Philip my king.

O the day when thou goest a wooing,
Philip my king !
When those beautiful lips are sung,
And some gentle heart's bars undoing
Thou dost enter, love-crowned, and there
Sittest love glorified. Rule kindly,
Tenderly, over thy kingdom fair
For we that love, ah ! we love so blindly
Philip my king.

Up from thy sweet mouth,—unto thy brow,
Philip my king !
The spirit that there lies sleeping now
May rise like a giant and make men bow
As to one heaven-chosen amongst his peers :
My Saul, than thy brethren taller and fairer
Let me behold thee in future years ;—
Yet thy head needeth a circlet rarer,
Philip my king.

—A wreath not of gold, but palm. One day,
Philip my king,
Thou too must tread, as we trod, a way
Thorny and cruel and cold and gray :
Rebels within thee and foes without,
Will snatch at thy crown. But march on, glorious,
Martyr, yet monarch : till angels shout
As thou sit'st at the feet of God victorious,
"Philip the king !"

II.—A SILLY SONG.

"O HEART, my heart !" she said, and heard
His mate the blackbird calling,
While through the sheen of the garden green
May rain was softly falling,—
Aye softly, softly falling.

The buttercups across the field
Made sunshine rifts of splendour :
The round snow-bud of the thorn in the wood
Peeped through its leafage tender,
As the rain came softly falling.

"O heart, my heart !" she said and smiled,
"There's not a tree of the valley,
Or a leaf I wis which the rain's soft kiss
Freshens in yonder alley,
Where the drops keep ever falling,—

"There's not a foolish flower i' the grass,
Or bird through the woodland calling,
So glad again of the coming rain
As I of these tears now falling,—
These happy tears down falling."

III. SEMPER FIDELIS.

"Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted."

THINK you, had we two lost fealty, something
would not, as I sit
With this book upon my lap here, come and over-
shadow it?
Hide with spectral mists the pages, under each
familiar leaf
Lurk, and clutch my hand that turns it with the icy
clutch of grief?
Think you, were we twain divided, not by distance,
time, or aught
That the world calls separation, but we smile at,
better taught,
That I should not feel the dropping of each link you
did untwine
Clear as if you sat before me with your true eyes
fixed on mine?
That I should not, did you crumble as the other false
friends do
To the dust of broken idols, know it without sight of
you,
By some shadow darkening daylight in the fickle
skies of spring,
By foul fears from household corners crawling over
everything?
If that awful gulf were opening which makes two,
however near,
Parted more than we were parted, dwelt we in each
hemisphere,—
Could I sit here, smiling quiet on this book within
my hand,
And while earth was cloven beneath me, feel no
shock nor understand?

No, you cannot, could not alter. No, my faith builds
safe on yours,
Rock-like; though the winds and waves howl, its
foundation still endures:
By a man's will—"See, I hold thee: mine thou art,
and mine shalt be."
By a woman's patience—"Sooner doubt I my own
soul than thee."
So, Heaven mend us! we'll together once again take
counsel sweet;
Though this hand of mine drops empty, that blank
wall my blank eyes meet:
Life may flow on: men be faithless,—ay, forsooth,
and women too!
ONE is true; and as He liveth, I believe in truth—
and *you*.

IV.—LETTICE.

I SAID to Lettice, our sister Lettice,
While drooped and glistened her eyelash brown,
"Your man's a poor man, a cold and dour man,
There's many a better about our town."
She smiled securely—"He loves me purely:
A true heart's safe, both in smile or frown;
And nothing harms me while his love warms me,
Whether the world go up or down."
"He comes of strangers, and they are rangers,
And ill to trust, girl, when out of sight:
Fremd folk may blame ye, and e'en defame ye,—
A gown oft handled looks seldom white."
She raised serenely her eyelids queenly,—
"My innocence is my whitest gown;
No harsh tongue grieves me while he believes me,
Whether the world go up or down."

"Your man's a frail man, was ne'er a hale man,
And sickness knocketh at every door,
And death comes making bold hearts cower, breaking—"
Our Lettice trembled ;— but once, no more.
"If death should enter, smite to the centre
Our poor home palace, all crumbling down,
He cannot fright us, nor disunite us,
Life bears Love's cross, death brings Love's crown."

V.—ROTHESAY BAY.

FU' yellow lie the corn-rigs
Far down the braid hillside ;
It is the brawest harst-field
Along the shores o' Clyde,—
And I'm a pur harst-lassie
Wha stands the lee-lang day
Shearing the corn-rigs of Ardheg
Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.
O I had ance a true-love,—
Now, I hae nane ava ;
And I had three braw brithers,
But I hae tint them a' ;
My father and my mither
Sleep i' the mools this day,
I sit my lane amang the rigs
Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.
It's a bonnie bay at morning,
And bonnier at the noon,
But it's bonniest when the sun draps
And red comes up the moon :
When the mist creeps o'er the Cumbrays
And Arran peaks are gray,
And the great black hills, like sleepin' kings,
Sit grand roun' Rothesay Bay,

Then a bit sigh stirs my bosom,
And a saut tear blin's my e'e,—
And I think o' that far Countrie
Whar I wad like to be !
But I rise content i' the morning
To wark while wark I may,
I' the yellow harst-field of Ardbeg
Aboon sweet Rothesay Bay.

VI.—A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

GOD rest ye, merry gentlemen ; let nothing you
dismay,
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas-
day.
The dawn rose red o'er Bethlehem, the stars shone
through the gray,
When Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christ-
mas-day.
God rest ye, little children ; let nothing you affright,
For Jesus Christ, your Saviour, was born this happy
night ;
Along the hills of Galilee the white flocks sleeping
lay,
When Christ, the Child of Nazareth, was born on
Christmas-day.
God rest ye, all good Christians ; upon this blessed
morn
The Lord of all good Christians was of a woman
born :
Now all your sorrows He doth heal, your sins He
takes away ;
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christ-
mas-day.

Jean Ingelow.

1820—1897.

AMONG the small group of eminent English women-poets that the present century has produced, Jean Ingelow holds a conspicuous place. She is greater than Felicia Hemans or Lætitia Landon, for she avoids sentimentality—the characteristic weakness of both these poets. It is true that she did not possess in an equal degree with Elizabeth Barrett Browning that breadth of thought, that strength of passion—that imaginative fervour, and that vigour of execution—which give to the latter the first place among English women-poets, nor had she that peculiarly exalted spirituality tinctured with ascetism which distinguishes the best work of Christina Rossetti. Nevertheless her poems exhibit high qualities of their own. First among these qualities is lyrical charm. Hence it is that her poems have gained such widespread popular acceptance, for, as Mr. Ashcroft Noble has pointed out with true critical discernment, “there is no maxim of the critics which finds more favour with the general public than this—that the poet must be, before all other things, a singer.” Jean Ingelow’s verse is always distinguished by graceful fancy, and often by imagination of the more lofty kind. Though it cannot be said that her range is wide, her pictures within this range are vivid, and her verse displays a

tender womanliness, a reverent simplicity of religious faith, and a deep touch of sympathy with the pain inherent in human life which are very fascinating.

She had also the rare quality of depicting faithfully, and sometimes with minute accuracy, the aspects of nature in purely lyrical measures of anapæstic movement. The best example of this is seen in "Divided," where the colour of the landscape is rendered in an exquisitely lyrical measure with as much faithfulness as if the poem had been written in iambic lines. And, remembering how seldom the great English poets have succeeded in such efforts, Jean Ingelow's success in this respect may, indeed, be regarded as a worthy achievement.

Born at Boston, in Lincolnshire, in 1820, Jean Ingelow's first book, "A Rhyming Chronicle of Incidents and Feelings," appeared in 1850. This was followed in 1851 by a novel, entitled "Allerton and Dreux; or, The War of Opinion," and in 1860 by "Tales of Orris." But it was not until the publication in November 1863 of the first series of her "Poems" that she gained any important recognition. This volume, however, was received with warm praise by the critics, and their praise was immediately echoed and confirmed by the general public. But we need feel no surprise at this somewhat unusual occurrence when we remember some of the poems the volume contained. The very first poem, "Divided" (p. 405), was well fitted to attract both the critic and the general reader. For while the critic would observe its distinctive lyrical qualities, and a certain touch of sadness which is often a characteristic of its author's best moods, the general reader, whatever the extent of his culture, could at least under-

stand and enjoy its directness and its simplicity, together with its lovely descriptions of some of Nature's more familiar aspects. Perhaps none of Jean Ingelow's other poems quite equals this in perfection of music and lyrical freedom, though "The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire, 1571" (p. 393), has other notable qualities. Cast in an archaic mould, and full of deep and passionate human feeling, the pathetic motive of the latter poem is handled with an earnestness which is absolutely convincing. This, even more than its high technical excellence, makes it one of the finest of modern ballads. But, perhaps, the exquisite poem "Requiescat in Pace" (p. 398) is, in many respects, the highest effort of Jean Ingelow's poetical genius. In it there is a touch of the supernatural which we find elsewhere in some of her best work, though in a less intense degree. Moreover it is full of that concentrated fervour which comes only to the poet when the creative imagination is fully alive. The manner in which the tender mournfulness—almost the despair—of the concluding stanzas is handled makes the poem irresistible in its appeal to our sympathies. "Strife and Peace," another beautiful lyric, calls also for mention.

"Supper at the Mill," "Brothers and a Sermon," and "Afternoon at a Parsonage," all in blank verse, with interspersed songs, belong to a different class of poems—a class for which Jean Ingelow had evidently a marked predilection—poems of mingled narrative and reflection. In the extreme simplicity of the poems just named we see the influence of Wordsworth; while in their mingling of narrative and reflection with snatches of song we see the

influence of Tennyson. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that these remarkable poems are imitative. On the contrary they display dramatic insight and originality both of thought and treatment. All three poems contain striking examples of Jean Ingelow's gift in delineating character. In the first-named poem the middle-aged farmer's wife, as she chats at her son's house on a market day, is as real to us as if she had been sketched by Crabbe, although, in Jean Ingelow's verse, there is nothing of that hardness of touch which sometimes detracts from the effect of Crabbe's marvellous fidelity. Indeed, the character painting throughout Jean Ingelow's poems is frequently very good. But, as with the similar work of Tennyson, we often feel it to be the character-painting of the writer of prose fiction rather than of the poet. "Brothers and a Sermon" with its true vein of devotional feeling, exhibits a certain idiosyncrasy of conception peculiar to its author. The pretty song beginning, "Goldilocks sat on the grass," which occurs in this poem, is one of her most simple, and, at the same time, one of her most finished efforts. The two last stanzas, beginning, "As a gloriole sign o' grace," bring before the mind of the reader, in a few delicate touches full of subtle beauty, the change, the almost unconscious sympathy, which, to the eye of the beholder, comes over the aspect of external nature after the first dawn of love.

"Persephone" is interesting as being a rendering of that favourite theme of the poets—the story of Demeter and her daughter. The brevity of Jean Ingelow's ballad does not admit of the elaboration observable in the poem of Tennyson, nor in that of

Mr. Aubrey de Vere on the same subject. But her version has a certain beauty of its own. "The Letter L," fine as it is in part, is injured by that diffuseness into which Jean Ingelow's facility, both in verse and prose, not unfrequently betrayed her. It is unnecessary to dwell at any length on so widely popular and so admirable a series of poems as "Songs of Seven." Several of these lyrics are almost perfect of their kind. Where all is so good it is difficult to give adequate reasons for the awarding of especial praise. I may remark, however, that the first lyric, entitled "Exultation," has pre-eminent merit from the fact that in it Jean Ingelow shows a rare dramatic gift—a gift of interpreting faithfully a child's emotions.

"A Story of Doom and other Poems" appeared in 1867. The title poem in this collection, the longest of Jean Ingelow's poetical efforts, tells in flowing blank verse the Biblical narrative of Noah. The theme is handled with no little skill, and many of the individual pictures are effective. Still the poem in its entirety shows that the subject she has here chosen is not so well suited to her powers as some others which she has elsewhere treated. She is a lyrist above all else, and although (as I have already remarked) she shows dramatic instinct in some of her shorter narrative poems, such as "Supper at the Mill" and "Afternoon at a Parsonage," she does not show that consummate degree of dramatic power required by the writer who would cope effectively with the great difficulties inherent in such a theme. Much better work is to be found in "Songs of the Voices of Birds," particularly in one of these called "A Raven in a White Chine," and in the series of

poems entitled "Songs of the Night Watches." The opening lyric "Apprenticed" and "A Morn of May," the lyric which closes the sequence, are probably the most beautiful. "Songs with Preludes," and "Contrasted Songs," ought also to be mentioned. Of the last-named poems "Sailing Beyond Seas" and "A Lily and a Lute" are fine examples of Jean Ingelow's work.

As a novelist, as well as a poet, Jean Ingelow gives token of very considerable power in the delineation of character, especially as seen in child-life. But her work in fiction is sometimes disfigured by deficiency in construction, and by occasional prolixity in narrative. "Studies for Stories" (1864), a series of brief tales, contains some of Jean Ingelow's best work in this department of literature. There is often a quaint realism about these "Studies" which is very delightful. "Off the Skelligs" (1872) is, perhaps, the most successful of Jean Ingelow's full-length novels. Her exceptional faculty of delineating child life is shown here, and again in "Don John" (1881), where more attention is paid to the strict lines of plot than is usual with this writer. The *dénouement* is cleverly conceived and unexpected, so unexpected, indeed, that possibly some readers might be inclined to resent a conclusion so different from that which they had been disposed to look for. Among her other novels are "Fated to be Free" (1873); "Sarah de Berenger" (1879); "John Jerome: His Thoughts and Ways" (1886); and "Very Young and Quite Another Story" (1890). Jean Ingelow has long been favourably known as a writer of stories avowedly for children—stories, however, which have an appeal to readers of all ages.

Indeed some of the most fascinating of all her prose work belongs to this class. "Stories told to a Child" (1865) must here be named. This was followed in 1869 by "Mopsa the Fairy." Some episodes in the last-mentioned tale are very fine of their kind: as, for example, Jack's voyage from the enchanted bay where lie the ships of bygone ages which had been sent on voyages of evil purpose. Doubtless some of Jean Ingelow's prose fiction will live by reason of the real imaginative power displayed in it.

Jean Ingelow's third series of "Poems" was published in 1885. If it cannot with candour be said that this volume is altogether free from the faults discernible in her earlier verse, and if it cannot be said that it shows a wider range, it may be said emphatically that it possesses the same great qualities which originally gained for her and still maintain her wide popularity. We see the same mingled sweetness and simplicity, the same rare lyrical gift, the same remarkable power in the description of nature, and the same profound knowledge of child-life. Her lyrical faculty, her power of depicting nature, and her subtle knowledge of the heart of a child are all revealed in the lovely poem called "Echo and the Ferry" (p. 410). "Rosamund," a narrative poem in blank verse, is of some considerable length. The scene is laid in the time of the Spanish Armada. The story is well planned and told throughout with much imaginative ardour. Jean Ingelow here exhibits even more than her accustomed ability in handling blank verse. Many excellent descriptive passages and felicitous phrases occur, and, occasionally, comes a note of true passion. "Preludes to a Penny Reading"

belongs to the same class as "Supper at the Mill." Some of the interspersed songs, such as "For Exmoor," are full of the lyrical beauty which we expect from Jean Ingelow. "Lyrical and other Poems, selected from the Writings of Jean Ingelow" was published in 1886. Jean Ingelow died on the 20th of July, 1897.

MACKENZIE BELL.

LYRICAL AND OTHER POEMS.

JEAN INGELow.

I.—THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLNSHIRE (1571).

THE old mayor climbed the belfry tower.
The ringers ran by two, by three;
Pull, if ye never pulled before;
Good ringers, pull your best,' quoth he.
'Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!
Ply all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe "The Brides of Enderby."

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was nought of strange, beside
The flights of mews and peewits pied
By millions crouched on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes;
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies,
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

'Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!' calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,
Farre away I heard her song.

'Cusha ! Cusha !' all along
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
 Floweth, floweth ;
From the meads where melick groweth
Faintly came her milking song—

'Cusha ! Cusha ! Cusha !' calling,
'For the dewes will soone be falling ;
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow ;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow ;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow ;
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
From the clovers lift your head ;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed.'

If it be long, ay, long ago,
 When I beginne to think howe long,
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
 Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong ;
And all the aire, it seemeth mee,
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
 And not a shadowe mote be seene,
Save where full fyve good miles away
 The steeple towered from out the greene ;
And lo ! the great bell farre and wide
Was heard in all the country side
That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are
 Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
 The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
 And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth ;
 Till floating o'er the grassy sea
 Came downe that kyndly message free,
 The ' Brides of Mavis Enderby.'

Then some looked uppe into the sky,
 And all along where Lindis flows
 To where the goodly vessels lie,
 And where the lordly steeple shows.
 They sayde, ' And why should this thing be ?
 What danger lowers by land or sea ?
 They ring the tune of Enderby !

' For evil news from Mablethorpe,
 Of pyrate galleys warping down ;
 For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
 They have not spared to wake the towne :
 But while the west bin red to see,
 And storms be none, and pyrates flec,
 Why ring " The Brides of Enderby " ?'

I looked without, and lo ! my sonne
 Came riding downe with might and main ;
 He raised a shout as he drew on,
 Till all the welkin rang again,
 ' Elizabeth ! Elizabeth !'
 (A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
 Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

' The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
 The rising tide comes on apace,
 And boats adrift in yonder towne
 Go sailing uppe the market-placc.'

He shook as one that looks on death ;
' God save you, mother ! ' straight he saith ;
' Where is my wife, Elizabeth ? '

' Good sonne, where Lindis winds away,
With her two bairns I marked her long ;
And ere yon bells beganne to play
Afar I heard her milking song.'
He looked across the grassy lea,
To right, to left, ' Ho Enderby ! '
They rang ' The Brides of Enderby ! '

With that he cried and beat his breast ;
For, lo ! along the river's bed
A mighty eygre reared his crest,
And uppe the Lindis raging sped,
It swept with thunderous noises loud ;
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed
Shook all her trembling bankes amaine ;
Then madly at the eygre's breast
Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
Then bankes came downe with ruin and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
The heart had hardly time to beat,
Before a shallow seething wave
Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet ;
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sate that night,
 The noise of bells went sweeping by ;
 I marked the lofty beacon light
 Stream from the church tower, red and high—
 A lurid mark and dread to see ;
 And awsome bells they were to mee,
 That in the dark rang 'Enderby.'

They rang the sailor lads to guide
 From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed ;
 And I—my sonne was at my side,
 And yet the ruddy beacon glowed ;
 And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
 'O come in life, or come in death !
 O lost ! my love, Elizabeth.'

And didst thou visit him no more ?
 Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare ;
 The waters laid thee at his doore,
 Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
 Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
 The lifted sun shone on thy face,
 Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,
 That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea ;
 A fatal ebbe and flow, alas !

To manye more than myne and mee :
 But each will mourn his own (she saith)
 And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
 Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
 By the reedy Lindis shore,
 'Cusha ! Cusha ! Cusha !' calling
 Ere the early dews be falling ;

I shall never hear her song,
'Cusha ! Cusha !' all along
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
 Goeth, floweth ;
From the meads where melick groweth,
When the water winding down,
Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
 Shiver, quiver ;
Stand beside the sobbing river,
Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling
To the sandy lonesome shore ;
I shall never hear her calling,

"Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow ;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow ;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot ;
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow ;
Come uppe Lightfoot, rise and follow ;
 Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
From your clovers lift the head ;
Come uppe Jetty, follow, follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed.'

II.—REQUIESCAT IN PACE!

O MY heart is sick awishing and awaiting :
The lad took up his knapsack, he went, he
 went his way ;
And I looked on for his coming, as a prisoner through
the grating
Looks and longs and longs and wishes for its
opening day.

On the wild purple mountains, all alone with no
other,
The strong terrible mountains, he longed, he longed
to be ;
And he stooped to kiss his father, and he stooped to
kiss his mother,
And till I said 'Adieu, sweet Sir,' he quite forgot
me.

He wrote of their white raiment, the ghostly capes
that screen them,
Of the storm winds that beat them, their thunder-
rents and scars,
And the paradise of purple, and the golden slopes
atween them,
And fields, where grow God's gentian bells and
His crocus stars.

He wrote of frail gauzy clouds, that drop on them
like fleeces,
And make green their fir forests, and feed their
mosses hoar ;
Or come sailing up the valleys, and get wrecked and
go to pieces,
Like sloops against their cruel strength : then he
wrote no more.

O the silence that came next, the patience and long
aching !
They never said so much as 'He was a dear-loved
son ;'
Not the father to the mother moaned, that dreary
stillness breaking :
'Ah ! wherefore did he leave us so — this, our only
one ?'

They sat within, as waiting, until the neighbours
prayed them,

‘At Cromer, by the sea-coast, ’twere peace and
change to be ;’

And to Cromer, in their patience, or that urgency
affrayed them,

Or because the tidings tarried, they came, and
took me.

It was three months and over since the dear lad had
started :

On the green downs at Cromer I sat to see the view ;
On an open space of herbage, where the ling and
fern had parted,

Betwixt the tall white lighthouse towers, the old
and the new.

Below me lay the wide sea, the scarlet sun was
stooping,

And he dyed the waste water, as with a scarlet
dye ;

And he dyed the lighthouse towers ; every bird with
white wing swooping

Took his colours, and the cliffs did, and the yawning
sky.

Over grass came that strange flush, and over ling
and heather,

Over flocks of sheep and lambs, and over Cromer
town ;

And each filmy cloudlet crossing drifted like a scarlet
feather

Torn from the folded wings of clouds, while he
settled down.

When I looked, I dared not sigh :—In the light of
God's splendour,
With his daily blue and gold, who am I? what
am I?

But that passion and outpouring seemed an awful
sign and tender,
Like the blood of the Redeemer, shown on earth
and sky.

O for comfort, O the waste of a long doubt and trouble!
On that sultry August eve trouble had made me
meek;

I was tired of my sorrow—O so faint, for it was
double
In the weight of its oppression, that I could not
speak!

And a little comfort grew, while the dimmed eyes
were feeding,

And the dull ears with murmur of waters satisfied;
But a dream came slowly nigh me, all my thoughts
and fancy leading

Across the bounds of waking life to the other side.

And I dreamt that I looked out, to the waste waters
turning,

And saw the flakes of scarlet from wave to wave
tossed on;

And the scarlet mix with azure, where a heap of
gold lay burning

On the clear remote sea reaches; for the sun was
gone.

Then I thought a far-off shout dropped across the
still water—

A question as I took it, for soon an answer came

From the tall white ruined lighthouse : ' If it be the
old man's daughter
That we wot of,' ran the answer, ' what then—
who's to blame ? '

I looked up at the lighthouse all roofless and storm-
broken :

A great white bird sat on it, with neck stretched
out to sea ;

Unto somewhat which was sailing in a skiff the bird
had spoken,

And a trembling seized my spirit, for they talked
of me.

I was the old man's daughter, the bird went on to
name him ;

' He loved to count the starlings as he sat in the
sun ;

Long ago he served with Nelson, and his story did
not shame him ;

Ay, the old man was a good man—and his work
was done.'

The skiff was like a crescent, ghost of some moon
departed,

Frail, white, she rocked and curtsied as the red
wave she crossed,

And the thing within sat paddling, and the crescent
dipped and darted,

Flying on, again was shouting, but the words were
lost.

I said, ' That thing is hooded ; I could hear but that
floweth

The great hood below its mouth : ' then the bird
made reply,

'If they know not, more's the pity, for the little
shrew-mouse knoweth,
And the kite knows, and the eagle, and the glead
and pye.'

And he stooped to whet his beak on the stones of the
coping;
And when once more the shout came, in querulous
tones he spake,
'What I said was "more's the pity;" if the heart
be long past hoping,
Let it say of death, "I know it," or doubt on and
break.

'Men must die—one dies by day, and near him moans
his mother;
They dig his grave, tread it down, and go from it
full loth:
And one dies about the midnight, and the wind
moans, and no other,
And the snows give him a burial—and God loves
them both.

'The first hath no advantage—it shall not soothe his
slumber
That a lock of his brown hair his father aye shall
keep;
For the last, he nothing grudgeth, it shall nought his
quiet cumber
That in a golden mesh of his callow eaglets sleep.

'Men must die when all is said, e'en the kite and
glead know it,
And the lad's father knew it, and the lad, the lad
too;

It was never kept a secret, waters bring it and winds
blow it,

And he met it on the mountain—why then make
ado ?'

With that he spread his white wings, and swept
across the water,

Lit upon the hooded head, and it and all went
down ;

And they laughed as they went under, and I woke
'the old man's daughter,'

And looked across the slope of grass, and at Cromer
town.

And I said, 'Is that the sky, all grey and silver
suited ?'

And I thought, 'Is that the sea that lies so white
and wan ?'

I have dreamed as I remember : give me time—I was
reputed

Once to have a steady courage—O, I fear 'tis
gone !'

And I said, 'Is this my heart ?' if it be, low 'tis
beating,

So he lies on the mountain, hard by the eagle's
brood ;

I have had a dream this evening, while the white and
gold were fleeting,

But I need not, need not tell it—where would be
the good ?

'Where would be the good to them, his father and
his mother ?'

For the ghost of their dead hope appeareth to them
still.

While a lonely watchfire smoulders, who its dying
red would smother,
That gives what little light there is to a darksome
hill ?'

I rose up, I made no moan, I did not cry nor falter,
But slowly in the twilight I came to Cromer town.
What can wringing of the hands do that which is
ordained to alter ?

He had climbed, had climbed the mountain, he
would ne'er come down.

But, O my first, O my best, I could not choose but
love thee :

O, to be a wild white bird, and seek thy rocky
bed !

From my breast I'd give thee burial, pluck the down
and spread above thee ;

I would sit and sing thy requiem on the mountain
head.

Fare thee well, my love of loves ! would I had died
before thee ;

O, to be at least a cloud, that near thee I might
flow,

Solemnly approach the mountain, weep away my
being, o'er thee,

And veil thy breast with icicles, and thy brow
with snow !

III.—DIVIDED.

I.

AN empty sky, a world of heather,
Purple of foxglove, yellow of broom ;
We two among them wading together,
Shaking out honey, treading perfume.

Crowds of bees are giddy with clover,
Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our feet
Crowds of larks at their matins hang over,
Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.
Flusheth the rise with her purple favour,
Gloweth the cleft with her golden ring,
'Twixt the two brown butterflies waver,
Lightly settle, and sleepily swing.
We two walk till the purple dieth
And short dry grass under foot is brown ;
But one little streak at a distance lieth
Green like a ribbon to prank the down.

II.

Over the grass we stepped unto it,
And God He knoweth how blithe we were !
Never a voice to bid us eschew it :
Hey the green ribbon that showed so fair !
Hey the green ribbon ! we kneeled beside it,
We parted the grasses dewy and sheen ;
Drop over drop there filtered and slided
A tiny bright beck that trickled between.
Tinkle, tinkle, sweetly it sang to us,
Light was our talk as of faëry bells—
Faëry wedding-bells faintly rung to us
Down in their fortunate parallels.
Hand in hand, while the sun peered over,
We lapped the grass on that youngling spring ;
Swept back its rushes, smoothed its clover,
And said, ' Let us follow it westering.'

III.

A dappled sky, a world of meadows,
Circling above us the black rooks fly

Forward, backward ; lo, their dark shadows
 Flit on the blossoming tapestry—
 Flit on the beck, for her long grass parteth
 As hair from a maid's bright eyes blown back :
 And, lo, the sun like a lover darteth
 His flattering smile on her wayward track.
 Sing on ! we sing in the glorious weather
 Till one steps over the tiny strand,
 So narrow, in sooth, that still together
 On either brink we go hand in hand.
 The beck grows wider, the hands must sever.
 On either margin, our songs all done,
 We move apart, while she singeth ever,
 Taking the course of the stooping sun.
 He prays, ' Come over '—I may not follow ;
 I cry ' Return '—but he cannot come :
 We speak, we laugh, but with voices hollow ;
 Our hands are hanging, our hearts are numb.

IV.

A breathing sigh, a sigh for answer,
 A little talking of outward things :
 The careless beck is a merry dancer,
 Keeping sweet time to the air she sings.
 A little pain when the beck grows wider ;
 ' Cross to me now—for her wavelets swell ; '
 ' I may not cross '—and the voice beside her
 Faintly reacheth, though heeded well.
 No backward path ; ah ! no returning ;
 No second crossing that ripple's flow :
 ' Come to me now, for the west is burning ;
 Come ere it darkens ;—Ah, no ! ah, no ! '

Then cries of pain, and arms outreaching—
The beck grows wider and swift and deep:
Passionate words as of one beseeching—
The loud beck drowns them; we walk, and weep.

v.

A yellow moon in splendour drooping,
A tired queen with her state oppressed,
Low by rushes and swordgrass stooping,
Lies she soft on the waves at rest.
The desert heavens have felt her sadness;
Her earth will weep her some dewy tears;
The wild beck ends her tune of gladness,
And goeth stilly as soul that fears.
We two walk on in our grassy places
On either marge of the moonlit flood,
With the moon's own sadness in our faces,
Where joy is withered, blossom and bud.

vi.

A shady freshness, chafers whirring,
A little piping of leaf-hid birds;
A flutter of wings, a fitful stirring,
A cloud to the eastward snowy as curds.
Bare grassy slopes, where kids are tethered;
Round valleys like nests all ferny lined;
Round hills, with fluttering tree-tops feathered,
Swell high in their freckled robes behind.
A rose-flush tender, a thrill, a quiver,
When golden gleams to the tree-tops glide;
A flashing edge for the milk-white river,
The beck, a river—with still sleek tide.
Broad and white, and polished as silver,
On she goes under fruit-laden trees

Sunk in leafage cooeth the culver,
 And 'plaineth of love's disloyalties.
 Glitters the dew and shines the river,
 Up comes the lily and dries her bell;
 But two are walking apart for ever,
 And wave their hands for a mute farewell.

VII.

A braver swell, a swifter sliding;
 The river hasteth, her banks recede:
 Wing-like sails on her bosom gliding
 Bear down the lily and drown the reed.
 Stately prows are rising and bowing
 (Shouts of mariners winnow the air),
 And level sands for banks endowing
 The tiny green ribbon that showed so fair.
 While, O my heart! as white sails shiver,
 And crowds are passing, and banks stretch wide
 How hard to follow, with lips that quiver,
 That moving speck on the far-off side!
 Farther, farther—I see it—know it—
 My eyes brim over, it melts away:
 Only my heart to my heart shall show it
 As I walk desolate day by day.

VIII.

And yet I know past all doubting, truly—
 A knowledge greater than grief can dim—
 I know, as he loved, he will love me duly—
 Yea, better—e'en better than I love him.
 And as I walk by the vast calm river,
 The awful river so dread to see,
 I say 'Thy breadth and thy depth for ever
 Are bridged by his thoughts that cross to me.

IV.—ECHO AND THE FERRY.

A Y, Oliver ! I was but seven, and he was eleven ;
He looked at me pouting and rosy. I blushed
where I stood.

They had told us to play in the orchard (and I only
seven !

A small guest at the farm) ; but he said ' Oh, a girl
was no good ! '

So he whistled and went, he went over the stile to
the wood.

It was sad, it was sorrowful ! Only a girl—only
seven !

At home in the dark London smoke I had not found
it out.

The pear-trees looked on in their white, and blue
birds flash'd about,

And they too were angry as Oliver. Were they
eleven ?

I thought so. Yes, every one else was eleven—
eleven !

So Oliver went, but the cowslips were tall at my
feet,

And all the white orchard with fast-falling blossom
was litter'd ;

And under and over the branches those little birds
twitter'd,

While hanging head downwards they scolded because
I was seven.

A pity. A very great pity. One should be eleven.
But soon I was happy, the smell of the world was so
sweet,

And I saw a round hole in an apple-tree rosy and
old.

Then I knew! for I peeped, and I felt it was right
they should scold!
Eggs small and eggs many. For gladness I broke
into laughter;
And then some one else—oh, how softly!—came after,
came after
With laughter—with laughter came after.
And no one was near us to utter that sweet mocking
call,
That soon very tired sank low with a mystical fall.
But this was the country—perhaps it was close under
heaven;
Oh, nothing so likely; the voice might have come
from it even.
I knew about heaven. But this was the country, of
this
Light, blossom, and piping, and flashing of wings not
at all.
Not at all. No. But one little bird was an easy
forgiver:
She peeped, she drew near as I moved from her
domicile small,
Then flashed down her hole like a dart—like a dart
from the quiver.
And I waded atween the long grasses and felt it was
bliss.
—So this was the country; clear dazzle of azure and
shiver
And whisper of leaves, and a humming all over the
tall
White branches, a humming of bees. And I came
to the wall—
A little low wall—and looked over, and there was
the river,

The lane that led on to the village, and then the
sweet river
Clear shining and slow, she had far far to go from
her snow ;
But each rush gleamed a sword in the sunlight to
guard her long flow,
And she murmur'd, methought, with a speech very
soft—very low.
'The ways will be long, but the days will be long,
quoth the river,
To me a long liver, long, long ! ' quoth the river—
the river.

I dreamed of the country that night, of the orchard,
the sky,
The voice that had mocked coming after and over and
under.
But at last—in a day or two namely—Eleven and I
Were very fast friends, and to him I confided the
wonder.
He said that was Echo. ' Was Echo a wise kind of
bee
That had learned how to laugh : could it laugh in
one's ear and then fly
And laugh again yonder ? ' ' No ; Echo '—he whis-
pered it low—
' Was a woman, they said, but a woman whom no
one could see
And no one could find ; and he did not believe it, not
he,
But he could not get near for the river that held us
asunder.
Yet I that had money—a shilling, a whole silver
shilling—

We might cross if I thought I would spend it.' 'Oh
 yes, I was willing'—
 And we ran hand in hand, we ran down to the ferry,
 the ferry,
 And we heard how she mocked at the folk with a
 voice clear and merry
 When they called for the ferry; but oh! she was
 very—was very
 Swift-footed. She spoke and was gone; and when
 Oliver cried,
 'Hie over! hie over! you man of the ferry—the
 ferry!'

By the still water's side she was heard far and wide
 —she replied
 And she mocked in her voice sweet and merry, 'You
 man of the ferry,
 You man of—you man of the ferry!'

'Hie over!' he shouted. The ferryman came at his
 calling,
 Across the clear reed-bordered river he ferried us
 fast;—
 Such a chase! Hand in hand, foot to foot, we ran
 on; it surpass'd
 All measure her doubling—so close, then so far away
 falling,
 Then gone, and no more. Oh! to see her but once
 unaware,
 And the mouth that had mocked, but we might not
 (yet sure she was there!),
 Nor behold her wild eyes and her mystical coun-
 tenance fair.

We sought in the wood, and we found the wood-
 wren in her stead;

In the field, and we found but the cúckoo that talked
overhead ;
By the brook, and we found the reed-sparrow deep-
nested, in brown—
Not Echo, fair Echo ! for Echo, sweet Echo ! was
flown.
So we came to the place where the dead people wait
till God call.
The church was among them, grey moss over roof,
over wall.
Very silent, so low. And we stood on a green grassy
mound
And looked in at a window, for Echo, perhaps, in her
round
Might have come in to hide there. But no ; every
oak-carven seat
Was empty. We saw the great Bible—old, old, very
old,
And the parson's great Prayer-book beside it ; we
heard the slow beat
Of the pendulum swing in the tower ; we saw the
clear gold
Of a sunbeam float down the aisle and then waver
and play
On the low chancel step and the railing, and Oliver
said,
' Look, Katie ! look, Katie ! when Lettice came here
to be wed
She stood where that sunbeam drops down, and all
white was her gown ;
And she stepped upon flowers they strew'd for her.'
Then quoth small Seven :
' Shall I wear a white gown and have flowers to
walk upon ever ?'

All doubtful : ' It takes a long time to grow up,' quoth
Eleven ;

' You're so little, you know, and the church is so old,
it can never

Last on till you're tall.' And in whispers—because
it was old

And holy, and fraught with strange meaning, half felt,
but not told,

Full of old parsons' prayers, who were dead, of old
days, of old folk,

Neither heard nor beheld, but about us, in whispers
we spoke.

Then we went from it softly and ran hand in hand to
the strand,

While bleating of flocks and birds piping made
sweeter the land.

And Echo came back e'en as Oliver drew to the ferry,
' O Katie ! ' ' O Katie ! ' ' Come on, then ! ' ' Come on,
then ! ' ' For, see,

The round sun, all red, lying low by the tree '—' by
the tree.'

' By the tree.' Ay, she mocked him again, with her
voice sweet and merry :

' Hie over ! ' ' Hie over ! ' ' You man of the ferry '—
' the ferry.'

' You man of the ferry—

You man of—you man of—the ferry.'

Ay, here—it was here that we woke her, the Echo of
old ;

All life of that day seems an echo, and many times
told.

Shall I cross by the ferry to-morrow, and come in my
white

To that little low church ? and will Oliver meet me
anon ?

Will it all seem an echo from childhood pass'd over
—pass'd on ?

Will the grave parson bless us ? Hark, hark ! in the
dim failing light

I hear her ! As then the child's voice clear and high,
sweet and merry

Now she mocks the man's tone with 'Hie over !
Hie over the ferry !'

And Katie.' 'And Katie.' 'Art out with the glow-
worms to-night,

My Katie ?' 'My Katie !' For gladness I break into
laughter

And tears. Then it all comes again as from far-away
years ;

Again, some one else—oh, how softly ! with laughter
comes after,

Comes after—with laughter comes after.

