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THE POEMS OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
Rydal Mount, in the time of Wordsworth.
First Published in this Edition 1908
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SCOTLAND, 1803

I

DEPARTURE

FROM THE VALE OF GRASMERE. AUGUST, 1803

THE gentlest Shade that walked Elysian plains
Might sometimes covet dissoluble chains;
Even for the tenants of the zone that lies
Beyond the stars, celestial Paradise,
Methinks 'twould heighten joy, to overleap
At will the crystal battlements, and peep
Into some other region, though less fair,
To see how things are made and managed there.
Change for the worse might please, incursion bold
Into the tracts of darkness and of cold:
O'er Limbo lake with aëry flight to steer,
And on the verge of Chaos hang in fear.
Such animation often do I find,
Power in my breast, wings growing in my mind,
Then, when some rock or hill is overpast,
Perchance without one look behind me cast,
Some barrier with which Nature, from the birth
Of things, has fenced this fairest spot on earth.
O pleasant transit, Grasmere! to resign
Such happy fields, abodes so calm as thine;
Not like an outcast with himself at strife;
The slave of business, time, or care for life,
But moved by choice; or, if constrained in part,
Yet still with Nature's freedom at the heart;
To cull contentment upon wildest shores,
And luxuries extract from bleakest moors;
With prompt embrace all beauty to enfold,
And having rights in all that we behold.
—Then why these lingering steps?—A bright adieu,
For a brief absence, proves that love is true;
Ne'er can the way be irksome or forlorn
That winds into itself for sweet return.
II

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS, 1803

SEVEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

SHIVER, Spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold:
As vapours breathed from dungeons cold
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mould
Where Burns is laid.

And have I then thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear?
As if it were thyself that's here
I shrink with pain;
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off weight—nor press on weight!—away
Dark thoughts!—they came, but not to stay;
With chastened feelings would I pay
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth
He sang, his genius 'glinted' forth,
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow,
The struggling heart, where be they now?—
Full soon the Aspirant of the plough,
The prompt, the brave,
Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
And silent grave.

I mourned with thousands, but as one
More deeply grieved, for He was gone
Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
And showed my youth
How Verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth.
Alas! where'er the current tends,
Regret pursues and with it blends,—
Huge Griffel's hoary top ascends
By Skiddaw seen,—
Neighbours we were, and loving friends
We might have been;

True friends though diversely inclined;
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibres are entwined,
Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
More closely still.

The tear will start, and let it flow;
Thou 'poor Inhabitant below,'
At this dread moment—even so—
Might we together
Have sate and talked where gowans blow,
Or on wild heather.

What treasures would have then been placed
Within my reach; of knowledge graced
By fancy what a rich repast!
But why go on?—
Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
His grave grass-grown.

There, too, a Son, his joy and pride,
(Not three weeks past the Stripling died,)
Lies gathered to his Father's side,
Soul-moving sight!
Yet one to which is not denied
Some sad delight.

For he is safe, a quiet bed
Hath early found among the dead,
Harboured where none can be misled,
Wronged, or distrest;
And surely here it may be said
That such are blest.

And oh for Thee, by pitying grace
Checked oft-times in a devious race,
May He, who halloweth the place
Where Man is laid,
Receive thy Spirit in the embrace
For which it prayed!
Sighing I turned away; but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near,
   A ritual hymn,
Chanted in love that casts out fear
   By Seraphim.

Published 1842

III

THOUGHTS

SUGGESTED THE DAY FOLLOWING, ON THE BANKS OF NITH,
NEAR THE POET'S RESIDENCE

Too frail to keep the lofty vow
   That must have followed when his brow
Was wreathed—'The Vision' tells us how—
   With holly spray,
He faltered, drifted to and fro,
   And passed away.

Well might such thoughts, dear Sister, throng
Our minds when, lingering all too long,
Over the grave of Burns we hung
   In social grief—
Indulged as if it were a wrong
   To seek relief.

But, leaving each unquiet theme
Where gentlest judgments may misdeem,
And prompt to welcome every gleam
   Of good and fair,
Let us beside this limpid Stream
   Breathe hopeful air.

Enough of sorrow, wreck, and blight;
Think rather of those moments bright
When to the consciousness of right
   His course was true,
When Wisdom prospered in his sight
   And virtue grew.

Yes, freely let our hearts expand,
Freely as in youth's season bland,
When side by side, his Book in hand,
   We wont to stray,
Our pleasure varying at command
   Of each sweet Lay.
How oft inspired must he have trod
These pathways, yon far-stretching road!
There lurks his home; in that Abode,
With mirth elate,
Or in his nobly-pensive mood,
The Rustic sate.

Proud thoughts that Image overawes,
Before it humbly let us pause,
And ask of Nature, from what cause
And by what rules
She trained her Burns to win applause
That shames the Schools.

Through busiest street and loneliest glen
Are felt the flashes of his pen;
He rules 'mid winter snows, and when
Bees fill their hives;
Deep in the general heart of men
His power survives.

What need of fields in some far clime
Where Heroes, Sages, Bards sublime,
And all that fetched the flowing rhyme
From genuine springs,
Shall dwell together till old Time
Folds up his wings?

Sweet Mercy! to the gates of Heaven
This Minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;
The rueful conflict, the heart riven
With vain endeavour,
And memory of Earth's bitter leaven,
Effaced for ever.

But why to Him confine the prayer,
When kindred thoughts and yearnings bear
On the frail heart the purest share
With all that live?—
The best of what we do and are,
Just God, forgive.¹

¹ See Note.

Finished 1839
IV

TO THE SONS OF BURNS,

AFTER VISITING THE GRAVE OF THEIR FATHER

"The Poet's grave is in a corner of the churchyard. We looked at it with melancholy and painful reflections, repeating to each other his own verses—

"'Is there a man whose judgment clear," etc.'

Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-traveller.

'Mid crowded obelisks and urns
I sought the untimely grave of Burns;
Sons of the Bard, my heart still mourns
With sorrow true;
And more would grieve, but that it turns
Trembling to you!

Through twilight shades of good and ill
Ye now are panting up life's hill,
And more than common strength and skill
Must ye display;
If ye would give the better will
Its lawful sway.

Hath Nature strung your nerves to bear
Intemperance with less harm, beware!
But if the Poet's wit ye share,
Like him can speed
The social hour—of tenfold care
There will be need;

For honest men delight will take
To spare your failings for his sake,
Will flatter you,—and fool and rake
Your steps pursue;
And of your Father's name will make
A snare for you.

Far from their noisy haunts retire,
And add your voices to the quire
That sanctify the cottage fire
With service meet;
There seek the genius of your Sire,
His spirit greet;
Or where, 'mid 'lonely heights and hows,'  
He paid to Nature tuneful vows;  
Or wiped his honourable brows  
    Bedewed with toil,  
While reapers strove, or busy ploughs  
    Upturned the soil.

His judgment with benignant ray  
Shall guide, his fancy cheer, your way;  
But ne'er to a seductive lay  
    Let faith be given;  
Nor deem that 'light which leads astray,  
    Is light from Heaven.'

Let no mean hope your souls enslave;  
Be independent, generous, brave;  
Your Father such example gave,  
    And such revere;  
But be admonished by his grave,  
    And think, and fear!  

V

ELLEN IRWIN:

OR, THE BRAES OF KIRTLÉ

FAIR Ellen Irwin, when she sate  
Upon the bracs of Kirtle,  
Was lovely as a Grecian maid  
Adorned with wreaths of myrtle;  
Young Adam Bruce beside her lay,  
And there did they beguile the day  
With love and gentle speeches,  
Beneath the budding beeches.

From many knights and many squires  
The Bruce had been selected;  
And Gordon, fairest of them all,  
By Ellen was rejected.  
Sad tidings to that noble Youth!  
For it may be proclaimed with truth,  
If Bruce hath loved sincerely,  
That Gordon loves as dearly.

1 The Kirtle is a river in the southern part of Scotland, on the banks of which the events here related took place.
But what are Gordon's form and face,
His shattered hopes and crosses,
To them, 'mid Kirtle's pleasant braes,
Reclined on flowers and mosses?
Alas that ever he was born!
The Gordon, crouched behind a thorn,
Sees them and their caressing;
Beholds them blest and blessing.

Proud Gordon, maddened by the thoughts
That through his brain are travelling,
Rushed forth, and at the heart of Bruce
He launched a deadly javelin!
Fair Ellen saw it as it came,
And, starting up to meet the same,
Did with her body cover
The Youth, her chosen lover.

And, falling into Bruce's arms,
Thus died the beauteous Ellen,
Thus, from the heart of her True-love,
The mortal spear repelling.
And Bruce, as soon as he had slain
The Gordon, sailed away to Spain;
And fought with rage incessant
Against the Moorish crescent.

But many days, and many months,
And many years ensuing,
This wretched Knight did vainly seek
The death that he was wooing.
So, coming his last help to crave,
Heart-broken, upon Ellen's grave
His body he extended,
And there his sorrow ended.

Now ye, who willingly have heard
The tale I have been telling,
May in Kirkconnell churchyard view
The grave of lovely Ellen:
By Ellen's side the Bruce is laid;
And, for the stone upon his head,
May no rude hand deface it,
And its forlorn θυτ jaceτ !

Published 1800
TO A HIGHLAND GIRL

VI

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL

(AT INVERSNEYDE, UPON LOCH LOMOND)

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:
And these grey rocks; that household lawn;
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake;
This little bay; a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy Abode—

In truth together do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream;
Such Forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!
But, O fair Creature! in the light
Of common day, so heavenly bright,
I bless Thee, Vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart;
God shield thee to thy latest years!
Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scattered, like a random seed,
Remote from men, Thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness:
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a Mountaineer:
A face with gladness overspread!
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred!
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech:
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind—
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee who art so beautiful?
O happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell;
Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder Brother I would be,
Thy Father—anything to thee!

Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had; and going hence
I bear away my recompense.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes:
Then, why should I be loth to stir?
I feel this place was made for her;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part;
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
And Thee, the Spirit of them all!

VII

GLEN ALMAIN;
OR, THE NARROW GLEN

In this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the narrow glen;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one:
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unreconciled;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet;
But this is calm; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the Bard sleep here indeed?
Or is it but a groundless creed?
What matters it?—I blame them not
Whose Fancy in this lonely Spot
Was moved; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell,
Would break the silence of this Dell:
It is not quiet, is not ease;
But something deeper far than these:
The separation that is here
Is of the grave; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead:
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race!
Lies buried in this lonely place.

VIII

STEPPING WESTWARD

While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a Hut where, in the course of our Tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, 'What, you are stepping westward?'

'WHAT, you are stepping westward?'—'Yea.'
—'Twould be a wildish destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange Land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of Chance:
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on?
The dewy ground was dark and cold;  
Behind, all gloomy to behold;  
And stepping westward seemed to be  
A kind of heavenly destiny:  
I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound  
Of something without place or bound;  
And seemed to give me spiritual right  
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake  
Was walking by her native lake:  
The salutation had to me  
The very sound of courtesy:  
Its power was felt; and while my eye  
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,  
The echo of the voice enwrought  
A human sweetness with the thought  
Of travelling through the world that lay  
Before me in my endless way.

Between 1803 and 1805  June 3

IX

THE SOLITARY REAPER

BEHOLD her, single in the field,  
Yon solitary Highland Lass!  
Reaping and singing by herself;  
Stop here, or gently pass!  
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,  
And sings a melancholy strain;  
O listen! for the Vale profound  
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chant  
More welcome notes to weary bands  
Of travellers in some shady haunt,  
Among Arabian sands:  
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard  
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,  
Breaking the silence of the seas  
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—  
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow  
For old, unhappy, far-off things,  
And battles long ago:
ADDRESS TO KILCHURN CASTLE

Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

From the top of the hill a most impressive scene opened upon our view,—a ruined Castle on an Island (for an Island the flood had made it) at some distance from the shore, backed by a Cove of the Mountain Cruachan, down which came a foaming stream. The Castle occupied every foot of the Island that was visible to us, appearing to rise out of the water,—mists rested upon the mountain side, with spots of sunshine; there was a mild desolation in the low grounds, a solemn grandeur in the mountains, and the Castle was wild, yet stately—not dismantled of turrets—nor the walls broken down, though obviously a ruin.‘—Extract from the Journal of my Companion.

CHILD of loud-throated War! the mountain Stream
Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
Is come, and thou art silent in thy age;
Save when the wind sweeps by and sounds are caught
Ambiguous, neither wholly thine nor theirs.
Oh! there is life that breathes not; Powers there are
That touch each other to the quick in modes
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
No soul to dream of. What art Thou, from care
Cast off—abandoned by thy rugged Sire,
Nor by soft Peace adopted; though, in place
And in dimension, such that thou might'st seem
But a mere footstool to yon sovereign Lord,
Huge Cruachan, (a thing that meaner hills
Might crush, nor know that it had suffered harm;)
Yet he, not loth, in favour of thy claims
To reverence, suspends his own; submitting
All that the God of Nature hath conferred,
All that he holds in common with the stars,
To the memorial majesty of Time
Impersonated in thy calm decay!
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Take, then, thy seat, Vicegerent unreproved! Now, while a farewell gleam of evening light Is fondly lingering on thy shattered front, Do thou, in turn, be paramount; and rule Over the pomp and beauty of a scene Whose mountains, torrents, lake, and woods, unite To pay thee homage; and with these are joined, In willing admiration and respect, Two Hearts, which in thy presence might be called Youthful as Spring.—Shade of departed Power, Skeleton of unfleshed humanity, The chronicle were welcome that should call Into the compass of distinct regard The toils and struggles of thy infant years! Yon foaming flood seems motionless as ice; Its dizzy turbulence eludes the eye, Frozen by distance; so, majestic Pile, To the perception of this Age, appear Thy fierce beginnings, softened and subdued And quieted in character—the strife, The pride, the fury uncontrollable, Lost on the aerial heights of the Crusades!

Published 1827

XI

ROB ROY'S GRAVE

The history of Rob Roy is sufficiently known; his grave is near the head of Loch Ketterine, in one of those small pinfold-like Burial-grounds, of neglected and desolate appearance, which the traveller meets with in the Highlands of Scotland.

A FAMOUS man is Robin Hood, The English ballad-singer's joy! And Scotland has a thief as good, An outlaw of as daring mood; She has her brave Rob Roy! Then clear the weeds from off his Grave, And let us chant a passing stave, In honour of that Hero brave!

Heaven gave Rob Roy a dauntless heart And wondrous length and strength of arm: Nor craved he more to quell his foes, Or keep his friends from harm.

1 The tradition is, that the Castle was built by a Lady during the absence of her Lord in Palestine.
Yet was Rob Roy as wise as brave;
Forgive me if the phrase be strong;—
A Poet worthy of Rob Roy
Must scorn a timid song.

Say, then, that he was wise as brave;
As wise in thought as bold in deed:
For in the principles of things
He sought his moral creed.

Said generous Rob, 'What need of books?
Burn all the statutes and their shelves:
They stir us up against our kind;
And worse, against ourselves.

'We have a passion—make a law,
Too false to guide us or control!
And for the law itself we fight
In bitterness of soul.

'And, puzzled, blinded thus, we lose
Distinctions that are plain and few:
These find I graven on my heart:
That tells me what to do.

'The creatures see of flood and field,
And those that travel on the wind!
With them no strife can last; they live
In peace, and peace of mind.

'For why?—because the good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

'A lesson that is quickly learned,
A signal this which all can see!
Thus nothing here provokes the strong
To wanton cruelty.

'All freakishness of mind is checked;
He tamed, who foolishly aspires;
While to the measure of his might
Each fashions his desires.

'All kinds, and creatures, stand and fall
By strength of prowess or of wit:
'Tis God's appointment who must sway,
And who is to submit.
'Since, then, the rule of right is plain,  
And longest life is but a day;  
To have my ends, maintain my rights,  
I'll take the shortest way.'

And thus among these rocks he lived,  
Through summer heat and winter snow:  
The Eagle, he was lord above,  
And Rob was lord below.

So was it—would, at least, have been  
But through untowardness of fate;  
For Polity was then too strong—  
He came an age too late;

Or shall we say an age too soon?  
For, were the bold Man living now,  
How might he flourish in his pride,  
With buds on every bough!

Then rents and factors, rights of chase,  
Sheriffs, and lairds and their domains,  
Would all have seemed but paltry things,  
Not worth a moment's pains.

Rob Roy had never lingered here,  
To these few meagre Vales confined;  
But thought how wide the world, the times  
How fairly to his mind!

And to his Sword he would have said,  
'Do Thou my sovereign will enact  
From land to land through half the earth!  
Judge thou of law and fact!'  

'Tis fit that we should do our part,  
Becoming that mankind should learn  
That we are not to be surpassed  
In fatherly concern.

'Of old things all are over old,  
Of good things none are good enough:—  
We'll show that we can help to frame  
A world of other stuff.

'I, too, will have my kings that take  
From me the sign of life and death:  
Kingdoms shall shift about, like clouds,  
'Obedient to my breath.'
And, if the word had been fulfilled,
As might have been, then, thought of joy!
France would have had her present Boast,
And we our own Rob Roy!

Oh! say not so; compare them not;
I would not wrong thee, Champion brave!
Would wrong thee nowhere; least of all
Here standing by thy grave.

For Thou, although with some wild thoughts,
Wild Chieftain of a savage Clan!
Hadst this to boast of; thou didst love
The liberty of man.

And, had it been thy lot to live
With us who now behold the light,
Thou wouldst have nobly stirred thyself,
And battled for the Right.

For thou wert still the poor man's stay,
The poor man's heart, the poor man's hand;
And all the oppressed, who wanted strength,
Had thine at their command.

Bear witness many a pensive sigh
Of thoughtful Herdsman when he strays
Alone upon Loch Veol's heights,
And by Loch Lomond's braes.

And, far and near, through vale and hill,
Are faces that attest the same;
The proud heart flashing through the eyes,
At sound of Rob Roy's name.

Between 1803 and 1805

XII

SONNET

COMPOSED AT ----- CASTLE

DEGENERATE Douglas! oh, the unworthy Lord!
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
And love of havoc, (for with such disease
Fame taxes him,) that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horde,  
A brotherhood of venerable Trees,  
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these,  
Beggared and outraged!—Many hearts deplored  
The fate of those old Trees; and oft with pain  
The traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze  
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed:  
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,  
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,  
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.  
Sept. 1803

XIII

YARROW UNVISITED

See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton beginning—

‘Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,  
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow!’

FROM Stirling castle we had seen  
The mazy Forth unravelled;  
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,  
And with the Tweed had travelled;  
And when we came to Clovenford,  
Then said my ‘winsome Marrow,’  
‘Whate’er betide, we’ll turn aside,  
And see the Braes of Yarrow.’

‘Let Yarrow folk, frae Selkirk town,  
Who have been buying, selling,  
Go back to Yarrow, ’tis their own;  
Each maiden to her dwelling!  
On Yarrow’s banks let herons feed,  
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!  
But we will downward with the Tweed,  
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

‘There’s Galla Water, Leader Haughs,  
Both lying right before us;  
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed  
The lintwhites sing in chorus;  
There’s pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land  
Made blithe with plough and harrow:  
Why throw away a needful day  
To go in search of Yarrow?’
‘What’s Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder.’
—Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn;
My True-love sighed for sorrow;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

‘Oh! green,’ said I, ‘are Yarrow’s holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,\(^1\)
But we will leave it growing.
O’er hilly path, and open Strath,
We’ll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

‘Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow,
The swan on still St. Mary’s Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There’s such a place as Yarrow.

‘Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We’ll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we’re there, although ’tis fair,
’Twill be another Yarrow!

‘If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
’Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!’

\(^1\) See Hamilton’s Ballad as above.
XIV
SONNET
IN THE PASS OF KILLCRANKY
An invasion being expected, October 1803

SIX thousand veterans practised in war's game,
Tried men, at Killicranky were arrayed
Against an equal host that wore the plaid,
Shepherds and herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind came
The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame;
And Garry, thundering down his mountain-road,
Was stopped, and could not breathe beneath the load
Of the dead bodies.—'Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.
O for a single hour of that Dundee,
Who on that day the word of onset gave!
Like conquest would the Men of England see;
And her Foes find a like inglorious grave.

Oct. 1803

XV
THE MATRON OF JEDBOROUGH AND HER HUSBAND

At Jedborough, my companion and I went into private lodgings for a few
days; and the following Verses were called forth by the character and
domestic situation of our Hostess.

AGE! twine thy brows with fresh spring
flowers,
And call a train of laughing Hours;
And bid them dance, and bid them sing;
And thou, too, mingle in the ring!
Take to thy heart a new delight;
If not, make merry in despite
That there is One who scorns thy power:—
But dance! for under Jedborough Tower
A Matron dwells who, though she bears
The weight of more than seventy years,
Lives in the light of youthful glee,
And she will dance and sing with thee.

Nay! start not at that Figure—there!
Him who is rooted to his chair!
Look at him—look again! for he
Hath long been of thy family.
With legs that move not, if they can,
And useless arms, a trunk of man,
He sits, and with a vacant eye;
A sight to make a stranger sigh!
Deaf, drooping, that is now his doom:
His world is in this single room:
Is this a place for mirthful cheer?
Can merry-making enter here?

The joyous Woman is the Mate
Of him in that forlorn estate!
He breathes a subterraneous damp;
But bright as Vesper shines her lamp:
He is as mute as Jedborough Tower:
She jocund as it was of yore,
With all its bravery on; in times
When, all alive with merry chimes,
Upon a sun-bright morn of May,
It roused the Vale to holiday.

I praise thee, Matron! and thy due
Is praise, heroic praise, and true!
With admiration I behold
Thy gladness unsubdued and bold:
Thy looks, thy gestures, all present
The picture of a life well spent:
This do I see; and something more;
A strength unthought of heretofore!
Delighted am I for thy sake;
And yet a higher joy partake:
Our Human-nature throws away
Its second twilight, and looks gay;
A land of promise and of pride
Unfolding, wide as life is wide.

Ah! see her helpless Charge! enclosed
Within himself as seems, composed;
To fear of loss, and hope of gain,
The strife of happiness and pain,
Utterly dead! yet in the guise
Of little infants, when their eyes
Begin to follow to and fro
The persons that before them go,
He tracks her motions, quick or slow.
Her buoyant spirit can prevail
Where common cheerfulness would fail;
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

She strikes upon him with the heat
Of July suns; he feels it sweet;
An animal delight though dim!
'Tis all that now remains for him!

The more I looked, I wondered more—
And, while I scanned them o'er and o'er,
Some inward trouble suddenly
Broke from the Matron's strong black eye—
A remnant of uneasy light,
A flash of something over-bright!
Nor long this mystery did detain
My thoughts;—she told in pensive strain
That she had borne a heavy yoke,
Been stricken by a twofold stroke;
Ill health of body; and had pined
Beneath worse ailments of the mind.

So be it!—but let praise ascend
To Him who is our lord and friend!
Who from disease and suffering
Hath called for thee a second spring;
Repaid thee for that sore distress
By no untimely joyousness;
Which makes of thine a blissful state;
And cheers thy melancholy Mate!

Between 1803 and 1805

XVI

FLY, some kind Harbinger, to Grasmere-dale!
Say that we come, and come by this day's light;
Fly upon swiftest wing round field and height,
But chiefly let one Cottage hear the tale;
There let a mystery of joy prevail,
The kitten frolic, like a gamesome sprite,
And Rover whine, as at a second sight
Of near-approaching good that shall not fail:
And from that Infant's face let joy appear;
Yea, let our Mary's one companion child—
That hath her six weeks' solitude beguiled
With intimations manifold and dear,
While we have wandered over wood and wild—
Smile on his Mother now with bolder cheer.

Sept. 25, 1803
THE BLIND HIGHLAND BOY

A TALE TOLD BY THE FIRE-SIDE, AFTER RETURNING TO THE VALE OF GRASMERE

NOW we are tired of boisterous joy,
Have romped enough, my little Boy!
Jane hangs her head upon my breast,
And you shall bring your stool and rest;
This corner is your own.

There! take your seat, and let me see
That you can listen quietly:
And, as I promised, I will tell
That strange adventure which befell
A poor blind Highland Boy.

A Highland Boy!—why call him so?
Because, my Darlings, ye must know
That, under hills which rise like towers,
Far higher hills than these of ours!
He from his birth had lived.

He ne'er had seen one earthly sight;
The sun, the day; the stars, the night;
Or tree, or butterfly, or flower,
Or fish in stream, or bird in bower,
Or woman, man, or child.

And yet he neither drooped nor pined,
Nor had a melancholy mind;
For God took pity on the Boy,
And was his friend; and gave him joy
Of which we nothing know.

His Mother, too, no doubt, above
Her other children him did love:
For, was she here, or was she there,
She thought of him with constant care,
And more than mother's love.

And proud she was of heart, when clad
In crimson stockings, tartan plaid,
And bonnet with a feather gay,
To Kirk he on the sabbath day
Went hand in hand with her.
A dog too had he; not for need,
But one to play with and to feed;
Which would have led him, if bereft
Of company or friends, and left
Without a better guide.

And then the bagpipes he could blow—
And thus from house to house would go;
And all were pleased to hear and see,
For none made sweeter melody
Than did the poor blind Boy.

Yet he had many a restless dream;
Both when he heard the eagles scream,
And when he heard the torrents roar,
And heard the water beat the shore
Near which their cottage stood.

Beside a lake their cottage stood,
Not small like ours, a peaceful flood;
But one of mighty size, and strange;
That, rough or smooth, is full of change,
And stirring in its bed.

For to this lake, by night and day,
The great Sea-water finds its way
Through long, long windings of the hills,
And drinks up all the pretty rills
And rivers large and strong:

Then hurries back the road it came—
Returns, on errand still the same;
This did it when the earth was new;
And this for evermore will do,
As long as earth shall last.

And, with the coming of the tide,
Come boats and ships that safely ride
Between the woods and lofty rocks;
And to the shepherds with their flocks
Bring tales of distant lands.

And of those tales, whate'er they were,
The blind Boy always had his share;
Whether of mighty towns, or vales
With warmer suns and softer gales,
Or wonders of the Deep.
THE BLIND HIGHLAND BOY

Yet more it pleased him, more it stirred,
When from the water-side he heard
The shouting, and the jolly cheers;
The bustle of the mariners
   In stillness or in storm.

But what do his desires avail?
For He must never handle sail;
Nor mount the mast, nor row, nor float
In sailor's ship, or fisher's boat,
   Upon the rocking waves.

His Mother often thought, and said,
What sin would be upon her head
If she should suffer this: 'My Son,
Whate'er you do, leave this undone;
   The danger is so great.'

Thus lived he by Loch Leven's side
Still sounding with the sounding tide,
And heard the billows leap and dance,
Without a shadow of mischance,
   Till he was ten years old.

When one day (and now mark me well,
Ye soon shall know how this befell)
He in a vessel of his own
On the swift flood is hurrying down,
   Down to the mighty Sea.

In such a vessel never more
May human creature leave the shore!
If this or that way he should stir,
Woe to the poor blind Mariner!
   For death will be his doom.

But say what bears him?—Ye have seen
The Indian's bow, his arrows keen,
Rare beasts, and birds with plumage bright;
Gifts which, for wonder or delight,
   Are brought in ships from far.

Such gifts had those seafaring men
Spread round that haven in the glen;
Each hut, perchance, might have its own;
And to the Boy they all were known—
   He knew and prized them all.
The rarest was a Turtle-shell
Which he, poor Child, had studied well;
A shell of ample size, and light
As the pearly car of Amphitrite,
That sportive dolphins drew.

And, as a Coracle that braves
On Vaga's breast the fretful waves,
This shell upon the deep would swim,
And gaily lift its fearless brim
Above the tossing surge.

And this the little blind Boy knew;
And he a story strange yet true
Had heard, how in a shell like this
An English Boy, O thought of bliss!
Had stoutly launched from shore;

Launched from the margin of a bay
Among the Indian isles, where lay
His father's ship, and had sailed far—
To join that gallant ship of war,
In his delightful shell.

Our Highland Boy oft visited
The house that held this prize; and, led
By choice or chance, did thither come
One day when no one was at home,
And found the door unbarred.

While there he sate, alone and blind,
That story flashed upon his mind;—
A bold thought roused him, and he took
The shell from out its secret nook,
And bore it on his head.

He launched his vessel,—and in pride
Of spirit, from Loch Leven's side,
Stepped into it—his thoughts all free
As the light breezes that with glee
Sang through the adventurer's hair.

A while he stood upon his feet;
He felt the motion—took his seat;
Still better pleased as more and more
The tide retreated from the shore,
And sucked, and sucked him in.
THE BLIND HIGHLAND BOY

And there he is in face of Heaven.
How rapidly the Child is driven!
The fourth part of a mile, I ween,
He thus had gone, ere he was seen
     By any human eye.

But when he was first seen, oh me
What shrieking and what misery!
For many saw; among the rest
His Mother, she who loved him best,
     She saw her poor blind Boy.

But for the child, the sightless Boy,
It is the triumph of his joy!
The bravest traveller in balloon,
Mounting as if to reach the moon,
     Was never half so blessed.

And let him, let him go his way,
Alone, and innocent, and gay!
For, if good Angels love to wait
On the forlorn unfortunate,
     This Child will take no harm.

But now the passionate lament,
Which from the crowd on shore was sent,
The cries which broke from old and young
In Gaelic, or the English tongue,
     Are stifled—all is still.

And quickly with a silent crew
A boat is ready to pursue;
And from the shore their course they take,
And swiftly down the running lake
     They follow the blind Boy.

But soon they move with softer pace;
So have ye seen the fowler chase
On Grasmere's clear unruffled breast
A youngling of the wild-duck's nest
     With deftly-lifted oar;

Or as the wily sailors crept
To seize (while on the Deep it slept)
The hapless creature which did dwell
Erewhile within the dancing shell,
     They steal upon their prey.
With sound the least that can be made,
They follow, more and more afraid,
More cautious as they draw more near;
But in his darkness he can hear,
    And guesses their intent.

'Lei-gha—Lei-gha'—he then cried out,
'Lei-gha—Lei-gha'—with eager shout;
Thus did he cry, and thus did pray,
And what he meant was, 'Keep away,
    And leave me to myself!'

Alas! and when he felt their hands——
You've often heard of magic wands,
That with a motion overthrow
A palace of the proudest show,
    Or melt it into air:

So all his dreams—that inward light
With which his soul had shone so bright——
All vanished;—'twas a heartfelt cross
To him, a heavy, bitter loss,
    As he had ever known.

But hark! a gratulating voice,
With which the very hills rejoice:
'Tis from the crowd, who tremblingly
Have watched the event, and now can see
    That he is safe at last.

And then, when he was brought to land,
Full sure they were a happy band,
Which, gathering round, did on the banks
Of that great Water give God thanks,
    And welcomed the poor Child.

And in the general joy of heart
The blind Boy's little dog took part;
He leapt about, and oft did kiss
His master's hands in sign of bliss,
    With sound like lamentation.

But most of all, his Mother dear,
She who had fainted with her fear,
Rejoiced when waking she espies
The Child; when she can trust her eyes,
    And touches the blind Boy.
THE BLIND HIGHLAND BOY

She led him home, and wept amain,
When he was in the house again:
Tears flowed in torrents from her eyes;
She kissed him—how could she chastise?
She was too happy far.

Thus, after he had fondly braved
The perilous Deep, the Boy was saved;
And, though his fancies had been wild,
Yet he was pleased and reconciled
To live in peace on shore.

And in the lonely Highland dell
Still do they keep the Turtle-shell;
And long the story will repeat
Of the blind Boy's adventurous feat,
And how he was preserved.

Note.—It is recorded in Dampier's Voyages, that a boy, son of the captain of a Man-of-War, seated himself in a Turtle-shell, and floated in it from the shore to his father's ship, which lay at anchor at the distance of half a mile. In deference to the opinion of a Friend, I have substituted such a shell for the less elegant vessel in which my blind Voyager did actually entrust himself to the dangerous current of Loch Leven, as was related to me by an eye-witness.
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN
SCOTLAND, 1814

I

SUGGESTED BY A BEAUTIFUL RUIN UPON ONE OF THE ISLANDS OF
LOCH LOMOND, A PLACE CHOSEN FOR THE RETREAT OF A SOLITARY INDIVIDUAL, FROM WHOM THIS HABITATION ACQUIRED
THE NAME OF

THE BROWNIE'S CELL

I

To barren heath, bleak moor, and quaking fen,
Or depth of labyrinthine glen;
Or into trackless forest set
With trees, whose lofty umbrage met;
World-wearied Men withdrew of yore;
(Penance their trust, and prayer their store;)
And in the wilderness were bound
To such apartments as they found;
Or with a new ambition raised;
That God might suitably be praised.

II

High lodged the Warrior, like a bird of prey;
Or where broad waters round him lay:
But this wild Ruin is no ghost
Of his devices—buried, lost!
Within this little lonely isle
There stood a consecrated Pile;
Where tapers burned, and mass was sung,
For them whose timid Spirits clung
To mortal succour, though the tomb
Had fixed, for ever fixed, their doom!

III

Upon those servants of another world
When madding Power her bolts had hurled,
Their habitation shook;—it fell,
And perished, save one narrow cell;
Whither, at length, a Wretch retired
Who neither grovelled nor aspired:
He, struggling in the net of pride,
The future scorned, the past defied;
Still tempering, from the unguilty forge
Of vain conceit, an iron scourge!

iv

Proud Remnant was he of a fearless Race,
Who stood and flourished face to face
With their perennial hills;—but Crime,
Hastening the stern decrees of Time,
Brought low a Power, which from its home
Burst, when repose grew wearisome;
And, taking impulse from the sword,
And, mocking its own plighted word,
Had found, in ravage widely dealt,
Its warfare's bourn, its travel's belt!

v

All, all were dispossessed, save him whose smile
Shot lightning through this lonely Isle!
No right had he but what he made
To this small spot, his leafy shade;
But the ground lay within that ring
To which he only dared to cling;
Renouncing here, as worse than dead,
The craven few who bowed the head
Beneath the change; who heard a claim
How loud! yet lived in peace with shame.

vi

From year to year this shaggy Mortal went
(So seemed it) down a strange descent:
Till they, who saw his outward frame,
Fixed on him an unhallowed name;
Him, free from all malicious taint,
And guiding, like the Patmos Saint,
A pen unwearied—to indite,
In his lone Isle, the dreams of night;
Impassioned dreams, that strove to span
The faded glories of his Clan!

vii

Suns that through blood their western harbour sought,
And stars that in their courses fought;
Towers rent, winds combating with woods,
Lands deluged by unbridled floods;
And beast and bird that from the spell
Of sleep took import terrible;—
These types mysterious (if the show
Of battle and the routed foe
Had failed) would furnish an array
Of matter for the dawning day!

VIII

How disappeared He?—ask the newt and toad,
Inheritors of his abode;
The otter crouching undisturbed,
In her dank cleft;—but be thou curbed,
O froward Fancy! 'mid a scene
Of aspect winning and serene;
For those offensive creatures shun
The inquisition of the sun!
And in this region flowers delight,
And all is lovely to the sight.

IX

Spring finds not here a melancholy breast,
When she applies her annual test
To dead and living; when her breath
Quickens, as now, the withered heath;—
Nor flaunting Summer—when he throws
His soul into the briar-rose;
Or calls the lily from her sleep
Prolonged beneath the bordering deep;
Nor Autumn, when the viewless wren
Is warbling near the Brownie’s Den.

X

Wild Relique! beauteous as the chosen spot
In Nysa’s isle, the embellished grot,
Whither, by care of Libyan Jove,
(High Servant of paternal Love)
Young Bacchus was conveyed—to lie
Safe from his step-dame Rhea’s eye;
Where bud, and bloom, and fruitage, glowed,
Close-crowding round the infant-god;
All colours,—and the liveliest streak
A foil to his celestial cheek!

Published 1820
II

COMPOSED AT CORA LINN

IN SIGHT OF WALLACE'S TOWER

'—How Wallace fought for Scotland, left the name
Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
All over his dear Country; left the deeds
Of Wallace, like a family of ghosts,
To people the steep rocks and river banks,
Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
Of independence and stern liberty.'—MS.

LORD of the vale! astounding Flood;
The dullest leaf in this thick wood
Quakes—conscious of thy power;
The caves reply with hollow moan;
And vibrates, to its central stone,
Yon time-cemented Tower!

And yet how fair the rural scene!
For thou, O Clyde, hast ever been
Beneficent as strong;
Pleased in refreshing dews to steep
The little trembling flowers that peep
Thy shelving rocks among.

Hence all who love their country, love
To look on thee—delight to rove
Where they thy voice can hear;
And, to the patriot-warrior's Shade,
Lord of the vale! to Heroes laid
In dust, that voice is dear!

Along thy banks, at dead of night
Sweeps visibly the Wallace Wight;
Or stands, in warlike vest,
Aloft, beneath the moon's pale beam,
A Champion worthy of the stream,
Yon grey tower's living crest!

But clouds and envious darkness hide
A Form not doubtfully descried:—
Their transient mission o'er,
O say to what blind region flee
These Shapes of awful phantasy?
To what untrodden shore?
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Less than divine command they spurn;
But this we from the mountains learn,
And this the valleys show;
That never will they deign to hold
Communion where the heart is cold
To human weal and woe.

The man of abject soul in vain
Shall walk the Marathonian plain;
Or thrid the shadowy gloom,
That still invests the guardian Pass,
Where stood, sublime, Leonidas
Devoted to the tomb.

And let no Slave his head incline,
Or kneel, before the votive shrine
By Uri's lake, where Tell
Leapt, from his storm-vext boat, to land,
Heaven's Instrument, for by his hand
That day the Tyrant fell.

Published 1820

III

EFFUSION

IN THE PLEASURE-GROUND ON THE BANKS OF THE BRAN,
NEAR DUNKELD

' The waterfall, by a loud roaring, warned us when we must expect it. We were first, however, conducted into a small apartment, where the Gardener desired us to look at a picture of Ossian, which, while he was telling the history of the young Artist who executed the work, disappeared, parting in the middle—flying asunder as by the touch of magic—and lo! we are at the entrance of a splendid apartment, which was almost dizzy and alive with waterfalls, that tumbled in all directions; the great cascade, opposite the window, which faced us, being reflected in innumerable mirrors upon the ceiling and against the walls.'—Extract from the Journal of my Fellow Traveller.

WHAT! He—who, 'mid the kindred throng
Of Heroes that inspired his song,
Doth yet frequent the hill of storms,
The stars dim-twinkling through their forms!
What! Ossian here—a painted Thrall,
Mute fixture on a stuccoed wall;
To serve—an unsuspected screen
For show that must not yet be seen;
And, when the moment comes, to part
And vanish by mysterious art;
Head, harp, and body, split asunder,
For ingress to a world of wonder;
A gay saloon, with waters dancing
Upon the sight wherever glancing;
One loud cascade in front, and lo!
A thousand like it, white as snow—
Streams on the walls, and torrent-foam
As active round the hollow dome,
Illusive cataracts! of their terrors
Not stripped, nor voiceless in the mirrors,
That catch the pageant from the flood
Thundering adown a rocky wood.
What pains to dazzle and confound!
What strife of colour, shape and sound
In this quaint medley, that might seem
Devised out of a sick man's dream!
Strange scene, fantastic and uneasy
As ever made a maniac dizzy,
When disenchanted from the mood
That loves on sullen thoughts to brood!

O Nature—in thy changeful visions,
Through all thy most abrupt transitions
Smooth, graceful, tender, or sublime—
Ever averse to pantomime,
Thee neither do they know nor us
Thy servants, who can trifle thus;
Else verily the sober powers
Of rock that frowns, and stream that roars,
Exalted by congenial sway
Of Spirits, and the undying Lay,
And Names that moulder not away,
Had wakened some redeeming thought
More worthy of this favoured Spot;
Recalled some feeling—to set free
The Bard from such indignity!

The Effigies of a valiant Wight
I once beheld, a Templar Knight;
Not prostrate, not like those that rest
On tombs, with palms together prest,
But sculptured out of living stone,
And standing upright and alone,
Both hands with rival energy
Employed in setting his sword free
From its dull sheath—stern sentinel
Intent to guard St. Robert's cell;

1 On the banks of the river Nid, near Knaresborough.
As if with memory of the affray
Far distant, when, as legends say,
The Monks of Fountains thronged to force
From its dear home the Hermit's corse,
That in their keeping it might lie,
To crown their abbey's sanctity.
So had they rushed into the grot
Of sense despised, a world forgot,
And torn him from his loved retreat,
Where altar-stone and rock-hewn seat
Still hint that quiet best is found,
Even by the Living, under ground;
But a bold Knight, the selfish aim
Defeating, put the Monks to shame,
There where you see his Image stand
Bare to the sky, with threatening brand
Which lingering Nin is proud to show
Reflected in the pool below.

Thus, like the men of earliest days,
Our sires set forth their grateful praise:
Uncouth the workmanship, and rude!
But, nursed in mountain solitude,
Might some aspiring artist dare
To seize whate'er, through misty air,
A ghost, by glimpses, may present
Of imitable lineament,
And give the phantom an array
That less should scorn the abandoned clay;
Then let him hew with patient stroke
An Ossian out of mural rock,
And leave the figurative Man—
Upon thy margin, roaring Bran!—
Fixed, like the Templar of the steep,
An everlasting watch to keep;
With local sanctities in trust,
More precious than a hermit's dust;
And virtues through the mass infused,
Which old idolatry abused.

What though the Granite would deny
All fervour to the sightless eye;
And touch from rising suns in vain
Solicit a Memnonian strain;
Yet, in some fit of anger sharp,
The wind might force the deep-grooved harp
To utter melancholy moans
Not unconnected with the tones
Of soul-sick flesh and weary bones;
While grove and river notes would lend,
Less deeply sad, with these to blend!

Vain pleasures of luxurious life,
For ever with yourselves at strife;
Through town and country both deranged
By affectations interchanged,
And all the perishable gauds
That heaven-deserted man applauds;
When will your hapless patrons learn
To watch and ponder—to discern
The freshness, the everlasting youth,
Of admiration sprung from truth;
From beauty infinitely growing
Upon a mind with love o'erflowing—
To sound the depths of every Art
That seeks its wisdom through the heart?

Thus (where the intrusive Pile, ill-graced
With baubles of theatric taste,
O'erlooks the torrent breathing showers
On motley bands of alien flowers
In stiff confusion set or sown,
Till Nature cannot find her own,
Or keep a remnant of the sod
Which Caledonian Heroes trod)
I mused; and, thirsting for redress,
Recoiled into the wilderness.

IV

YARROW VISITED

SEPTEMBER, 1814

AND is this—Yarrow?—This the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!
Yet why?—a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice—
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves,  
Behold a Ruin hoary!  
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,  
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,  
For sportive youth to stray in;  
For manhood to enjoy his strength;  
And age to wear away!  
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,  
A covert for protection  
Of tender thoughts, that nestle there—  
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,  
The wild-wood fruits to gather,  
And on my True-love's forehead plant  
A crest of blooming heather!  
And what if I enwreathed my own!  
'Twere no offence to reason;  
The sober Hills thus deck their brows  
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,  
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;  
A ray of fancy still survives—  
Her sunshine plays upon thee!  
Thy ever-youthful waters keep  
A course of lively pleasure;  
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,  
 Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,  
They melt, and soon must vanish;  
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—  
Sad thought, which I would banish,  
But that I know, where'er I go,  
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!  
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,  
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

1814
POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

PART I

I

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802

FAIR Star of evening, Splendour of the west,
Star of my Country!—on the horizon’s brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England’s bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Shouldst be my Country’s emblem; and shouldst wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory!—I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

II

CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802

IS it a reed that’s shaken by the wind,
Or what is it that ye go forth to see?
Lords, lawyers, statesmen, squires of low degree,
Men known, and men unknown, sick, lame, and blind,
Post forward all, like creatures of one kind,
With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend the knee
In France, before the new-born Majesty.
’Tis ever thus. Ye men of prostrate mind,
A seemly reverence may be paid to power;
But that’s a loyal virtue, never sown
In haste, nor springing with a transient shower:
When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown,
What hardship had it been to wait an hour?
Shame on you, feeble Heads, to slavery prone!
COMPOSED NEAR CALAIS, ON THE ROAD LEADING TO ARDRES, AUGUST 7, 1802

JONES! as from Calais southward you and I
Went pacing side by side, this public Way
Streamed with the pomp of a too-credulous day,¹
When faith was pledged to new-born Liberty:
A homeless sound of joy was in the sky:
From hour to hour the antiquated Earth
Beat like the heart of Man: songs, garlands, mirth,
Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh!
And now, sole register that these things were,
Two solitary greetings have I heard,
'Good morrow, Citizen!' a hollow word,
As if a dead man spake it! Yet despair
Touches me not, though pensive as a bird
Whose vernal coverts winter hath laid bare.²

IV
1801

I GRIEVED for Buonaparté, with a vain
And an unthinking grief! The tenderest mood
Of that Man's mind—what can it be? what food
Fed his first hopes? what knowledge could he gain?
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The Governor who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business: these are the degrees
By which true Sway doth mount; this is the stalk
True Power doth grow on; and her rights are these.
May 21, 1802

V
CALAIS, AUGUST 15, 1802

FESTIVALS have I seen that were not names:
This is young Buonaparté's natal day,
And his is henceforth an established sway—
Consul for life. With worship France proclaims

¹ July 14, 1790. ² See Note.
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Her approbation, and with pomps and games.
Heaven grant that other Cities may be gay!
Calais is not: and I have bent my way
To the sea-coast, noting that each man frames
His business as he likes. Far other show
My youth here witnessed, in a prouder time;
The senselessness of joy was then sublime!
Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
The destiny of Man, and live in hope.

VI
ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

Once did she hold the gorgeous east in fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great is passed away.

Probably Aug. 1802

VII
THE KING OF SWEDEN

The Voice of song from distant lands shall call
To that great King: shall hail the crowned Youth
Who, taking counsel of unbending Truth,
By one example hath set forth to all
How they with dignity may stand; or fall,
If fall they must. Now, whither doth it tend?
And what to him and his shall be the end?
That thought is one which neither can appal
Nor cheer him; for the illustrious Swede hath done
The thing which ought to be; is raised above
All consequences: work he hath begun
Of fortitude, and piety, and love,
Which all his glorious ancestors approve:
The heroes bless him, him their rightful son.1

1 See Note.
VIII

TO TOUSSAINT L'O VertURE

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies; to
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

Probably Aug. 1802

IX

SEPTEMBER 1, 1802

Among the capricious acts of tyranny that disgraced those times, was the
chasing of all Negroes from France by decree of the government: we had a
Fellow-passenger who was one of the expelled.

WE had a female Passenger who came
From Calais with us, spotless in array,—
A white-robed Negro, like a lady gay,
Yet downcast as a woman fearing blame;
Meek, destitute, as seemed, of hope or aim
She sate, from notice turning not away,
But on all proffered intercourse did lay
A weight of languid speech, or to the same
No sign of answer made by word or face:
Yet still her eyes retained their tropic fire,
That, burning independent of the mind,
Joined with the lustre of her rich attire
To mock the Outcast—O ye Heavens, be kind!
And feel, thou Earth, for this afflicted Race!

1802

X

COMPOSED IN THE VALLEY NEAR DOVER, ON THE DAY OF LANDING

HERE, on our native soil, we breathe once more.
The cock that crows, the smoke that curls, that
sound
Of bells;—those boys who in yon meadow-ground
In white-sleeved shirts are playing; and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore;—
All, all are English. Oft have I looked round
With joy in Kent’s green vales; but never found
Myself so satisfied in heart before.
Europe is yet in bonds; but let that pass,
Thought for another moment. Thou art free,
For one hour’s perfect bliss, to tread the grass
Of England once again, and hear and see,
With such a dear Companion at my side.

Aug. 30, 1802

XI

SEPTEMBER, 1802. NEAR DOVER

I

LAND, within a hollow vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
The coast of France—the coast of France how near!
Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
I shrunk; for verily the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters; yet what power is there!
What mightiness for evil and for good!
Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity;
Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to them, and said that by the soul
Only, the Nations shall be great and free.

Sept. 1802

XII

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

TWO Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought’st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

1807
XIII

WRITTEN IN LONDON. SEPTEMBER, 1802

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
   For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

XIV

LONDON, 1802

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
   England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

XV

GREAT men have been among us; hands that penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom—better none:
The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend.
These moralists could act and comprehend:
They knew how genuine glory was put on;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendour: what strength was, that would not bend
But in magnanimous meekness. France, 'tis strange,
Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.  
Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
No single volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road;
But equally a want of books and men!

Published 1807

XVI

IT is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, ' with pomp of waters, unwithstood,'
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:  
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In every thing we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

Published 1803

XVII

WHEN I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

Published 1803

XVIII

OCTOBER, 1803

ONE might believe that natural miseries
Had blasted France, and made of it a land
Unfit for men; and that in one great band
Her sons were bursting forth, to dwell at ease.
But 'tis a chosen soil, where sun and breeze
Shed gentle favours: rural works are there,
And ordinary business without care;
Spot rich in all things that can soothe and please!
How piteous then that there should be such dearth
Of knowledge; that whole myriads should unite
To work against themselves such fell despite:
Should come in frenzy and in drunken mirth,
Impatient to put out the only light
Of Liberty that yet remains on earth!

Oct. 1803

XIX

THERE is a bondage worse, far worse, to bear
Than his who breathes, by roof, and floor, and wall,
Pent in, a Tyrant's solitary Thrall:
'Tis his who walks about in the open air,
One of a Nation who, henceforth, must wear
Their fetters in their souls. For who could be,
Who, even the best, in such condition, free
From self-reproach, reproach that he must share
With Human-nature? Never be it ours
To see the sun how brightly it will shine,
And know that noble feelings, manly powers,
Instead of gathering strength, must droop and pine;
And earth with all her pleasant fruits and flowers
Fade, and participate in man's decline.

Published 1807

XX

OCTOBER, 1803

THESE times strike monied worldlings with dismay:
   Even rich men, brave by nature, taint the air
With words of apprehension and despair:
While tens of thousands, thinking on the affray,
Men unto whom sufficient for the day
And minds not stinted or untilled are given,
Sound, healthy, children of the God of heaven,
Are cheerful as the rising sun in May.
What do we gather hence but firmer faith
That every gift of noble origin
Is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual breath;
That virtue and the faculties within
Are vital,—and that riches are akin
To fear, to change, to cowardice, and death?

Oct. 1803
XXI

ENGLAND! the time is come when thou shouldst wean
Thy heart from its emasculating food;
The truth should now be better understood;
Old things have been unsettled; we have seen
Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
But for thy trespasses; and, at this day,
If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
Aught good were destined, thou wouldst step between.
England! all nations in this charge agree:
But for thy trespasses;
And, at this day,
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XXII

OCTOBER, 1803

WHEN, looking on the present face of things,
I see one man, of men the meanest too!
Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo,
With mighty Nations for his underlings,
The great events with which old story rings
Seem vain and hollow; I find nothing great:
Nothing is left which I can venerate;
So that a doubt almost within me springs
Of Providence, such emptiness at length
Seems at the heart of all things. But, great God!
I measure back the steps which I have trod;
And tremble, seeing whence proceeds the strength
Of such poor Instruments, with thoughts sublime
I tremble at the sorrow of the time.

Oct. 1803

XXIII

TO THE MEN OF KENT. OCTOBER, 1803

VANGUARD of Liberty, ye men of Kent,
Ye children of a Soil that doth advance
Her haughty brow against the coast of France,
Now is the time to prove your hardiment!
To France be words of invitation sent!
They from their fields can see the countenance
Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance,
And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
Left single, in bold parley, ye, of yore,
Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath;
Confirmed the charters that were yours before;—
No parleying now! In Britain is one breath;
We all are with you now from shore to shore:—
Ye men of Kent, ’tis victory or death!

Oct. 1803

XXIV

WHAT if our numbers barely could defy
The arithmetic of babes, must foreign hordes,
Slaves, vile as ever were befooled by words,
Striking through English breasts the anarchy
Of Terror, bear us to the ground, and tie
Our hands behind our backs with felon cords?
Yields every thing to discipline of swords?
Is man as good as man, none low, none high?—
Nor discipline nor valour can withstand
The shock, nor quell the inevitable rout,
When in some great extremity breaks out
A people, on their own beloved Land
Risen, like one man, to combat in the sight
Of a just God for liberty and right.

Begin 1803 Published 1837

XXV

LINES ON THE EXPECTED INVASION, 1803

COME ye—who, if (which Heaven avert!) the Land
Were with herself at strife, would take your stand,
Like gallant Falkland, by the Monarch’s side,
And, like Montrose, make Loyalty your pride—
Come ye—who, not less zealous, might display
Banners at enmity with regal sway,
And, like the Pyms and Miltons of that day,
Think that a State would live in sounder health
If Kingship bowed its head to Commonwealth—
Ye too—whom no discreditable fear
Would keep, perhaps with many a fruitless tear,
Uncertain what to choose and how to steer—
And ye—who might mistake for sober sense
And wise reserve the plea of indolence—
Come ye—what’er your creed—O waken all,
What’er your temper, at your Country’s call;
Resolving (this a free-born Nation can)
To have one Soul, and perish to a man,
Or save this honoured Land from every Lord
But British reason and the British sword.

XXVI

ANTICIPATION. OCTOBER, 1803

SHOUT, for a mighty Victory is won!
On British ground the Invaders are laid low;
The breath of Heaven has drifted them like snow,
And left them lying in the silent sun,
Never to rise again!—the work is done.
Come forth, ye old men, now in peaceful show
And greet your sons! drums beat and trumpets blow!
Make merry, wives! ye little children, stun
Your grandame's ears with pleasure of your noise!
Clap, infants, clap your hands! Divine must be
That triumph, when the very worst, the pain,
And even the prospect of our brethren slain,
Hath something in it which the heart enjoys:—
In glory will they sleep and endless sanctity.

XXVII

NOVEMBER, 1806

ANOTHER year!—another deadly blow!
Another mighty Empire overthrown!
And We are left, or shall be left, alone;
The last that dare to struggle with the Foe.
'Tis well! from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought;
That by our own right hands it must be wrought;
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.
O dastard whom such foretaste doth not cheer!
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant; not a servile band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.

XXVIII

ODE

WHO rises on the banks of Seine,
And binds her temples with the civic wreath?
What joy to read the promise of her mien!
How sweet to rest her wide-spread wings beneath!
But they are ever playing,
And twinkling in the light,
And, if a breeze be straying,
That breeze she will invite;
And stands on tiptoe, conscious she is fair,
And calls a look of love into her face,
And spreads her arms, as if the general air
Alone could satisfy her wide embrace.
—Melt, Principalities, before her melt!
Her love ye hailed—her wrath have felt!
But she through many a change of form hath gone,
And stands amidst you now an armed creature,
Whose panoply is not a thing put on,
But the live scales of a portentous nature;
That, having forced its way from birth to birth,
Stalks round—abhorred by Heaven, a terror to the Earth!

II

I marked the breathings of her dragon crest:
My Soul, a sorrowful interpreter,
In many a midnight vision bowed
Before the ominous aspect of her spear;
Whether the mighty beam, in scorn upheld,
Threatened her foes,—or, pompously at rest,
Seemed to bisect her orbèd shield,
As stretches a blue bar of solid cloud
Across the setting sun and all the fiery west.

III

So did she daunt the Earth, and God defy!
And, wheresoe'er she spread her sovereignty,
Pollution tainted all that was most pure.
—Have we not known—and live we not to tell—
That Justice seemed to hear her final knell?
Faith buried deeper in her own deep breast
Her stores, and sighed to find them insecure!
And Hope was maddened by the drops that fell
From shades, her chosen place of short-lived rest.
Shame followed shame, and woe supplanted woe—
Is this the only change that time can show?
How long shall vengeance sleep? Ye patient Heavens,
how long?
—Infirm ejaculation! from the tongue
Of Nations wanting virtue to be strong
Up to the measure of accorded might,
And daring not to feel the majesty of right!
IV

Weak Spirits are there—who would ask,
Upon the pressure of a painful thing,
The lion’s sinews, or the eagle’s wing;
Or let their wishes loose, in forest-glade,

Among the lurking powers

Of herbs and lowly flowers,

Or seek, from saints above, miraculous aid—
That Man may be accomplished for a task
Which his own nature hath enjoined;—and why?
If, when that interference hath relieved him,
He must sink down to languish

In worse than former helplessness—and lie

Till the caves roar,—and, imbecility
Again engendering anguish,
The same weak wish returns, that had before deceived him.

v

But Thou, supreme Disposer! may’st not speed
The course of things, and change the creed
Which hath been held aloft before men’s sight
Since the first framing of societies,
Whether, as bards have told in ancient song,
Built up by soft seducing harmonies;
Or prest together by the appetite,
And by the power, of wrong.

Probably 1816

PART II

I

ON A CELEBRATED EVENT IN ANCIENT HISTORY

A

ROMAN Master stands on Grecian ground,
And to the people at the Isthmian Games
Assembled, He, by a herald’s voice, proclaims
The Liberty of Greece:—the words rebound
Until all voices in one voice are drowned;
Glad acclamation by which air was rent!
And birds, high flying in the element,
Dropped to the earth, astonished at the sound!
Yet were the thoughtful grieved; and still that voice
Haunts, with sad echoes, musing Fancy’s ear:

Ah! that a Conqueror’s words should be so dear:
Ah! that a boon could shed such rapturous joys!
A gift of that which is not to be given  
By all the blended powers of Earth and Heaven.  
Published 1815

II

UPON THE SAME EVENT

WHEN, far and wide, swift as the beams of morn  
The tidings passed of servitude repealed,  
And of that joy which shook the Isthmian Field,  
The rough Ætolians smiled with bitter scorn.  
‘'Tis known,’ cried they, ‘that he, who would adorn  
His envied temples with the Isthmian crown,  
Must either win, through effort of his own,  
The prize, or be content to see it worn  
By more deserving brows.—Yet so ye prop,  
Sons of the brave who fought at Marathon,  
Your feeble spirits! Greece her head hath bowed,  
As if the wreath of liberty thereon  
Would fix itself as smoothly as a cloud,  
Which, at Jove's will, descends on Pelion's top.'

Published 1815

III

TO THOMAS CLARKSON, ON THE FINAL PASSING OF THE BILL FOR  
THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE. MARCH, 1807

CLARKSON! it was an obstinate hill to climb:  
How toilsome—nay, how dire—it was, by thee  
Is known; by none, perhaps, so feelingly:  
But thou, who, starting in thy fervent prime,  
Didst first lead forth that enterprise sublime,  
Hast heard the constant Voice its charge repeat,  
Which, out of thy young heart's oracular seat,  
First roused thee.—O true yoke-fellow of Time,  
Duty's intrepid liegeman, see, the palm  
Is won, and by all Nations shall be worn!  
The blood-stained Writing is for ever torn;  
And thou henceforth wilt have a good man's calm,  
A great man's happiness; thy zeal shall find  
Repose at length, firm friend of human kind!

March 1807

IV

A PROPHECY. FEBRUARY, 1807

HIGH deeds, O Germans, are to come from you!  
Thus in your books the record shall be found,  
'A watchword was pronounced, a potent sound—  
ARMINIUS!—all the people quaked like dew
Stirred by the breeze; they rose, a Nation, true,
True to herself—the mighty Germany,
She of the Danube and the Northern Sea,
She rose, and off at once the yoke she threw.
All power was given her in the dreadful trance;
Those new-born Kings she withered like a flame.'
—Woe to them all! but heaviest woe and shame
To that Bavarian who could first advance
His banner in accursed league with France,
First open traitor to the German name!

V

LOUDS, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
Through the grey west; and lo! these waters,
steeled
By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield
A vivid repetition of the stars;
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
Amid his fellows beautously revealed
At happy distance from earth's groaning field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.
Is it a mirror?—or the nether Sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds
Her own calm fires?—But list! a voice is near;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds,
'Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!'

VI

Go back to antique ages, if thine eyes
The genuine mien and character would trace
Of the rash Spirit that still holds her place,
Prompting the world's audacious vanities!
Go back, and see the Tower of Babel rise;
The pyramid extend its monstrous base,
For some Aspirant of our short-lived race,
Anxious an aery name to immortalize.
There, too, ere wiles and politic dispute
Gave specious colouring to aim and act,
See the first mighty Hunter leave the brute—
To chase mankind, with men in armies packed
For his field-pastime high and absolute.
While, to dislodge his game, cities are sacked!

Published 1827
VII

COMPOSED WHILE THE AUTHOR WAS ENGAGED IN WRITING A TRACT OCCASIONED BY THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA, 1808

NOT 'mid the World's vain objects that enslave
The free-born Soul—that World whose vaunted skill
In selfish interest perverts the will,
Whose factions lead astray the wise and brave—
Not there; but in dark wood and rocky cave,
And hollow vale which foaming torrents fill
With omnipresent murmur as they rave
Down their steep beds, that never shall be still:
Here, mighty Nature! in this school sublime
I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain;
For her consult the auguries of time,
And through the human heart explore my way;
And look and listen—gathering, whence I may,
Triumph, and thoughts no bondage can restrain.

Nov. or Dec. 1808

VIII

COMPOSED AT THE SAME TIME AND ON THE SAME OCCASION

I DROPPED my pen; and listened to the Wind
That sang of trees up-torn and vessels tost—
A midnight harmony; and wholly lost
To the general sense of men by chains confined
Of business, care, or pleasure; or resigned
To timely sleep. Thought I, the impassioned strain,
Which, without aid of numbers, I sustain,
Like acceptation from the World will find.
Yet some with apprehensive ear shall drink
A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows past;
And to the attendant promise will give heed—
The prophecy,—like that of this wild blast,
Which, while it makes the heart with sadness shrink,
Tells also of bright calms that shall succeed.

IX

HOFER

OF mortal parents is the Hero born
By whom the undaunted Tyrolese are led?
Or is it Tell's great Spirit, from the dead
Returned to animate an age forlorn?
He comes like Phoebus through the gates of morn
When dreary darkness is discomfited,
Yet mark his modest state! upon his head,
That simple crest, a heron's plume, is worn.
O Liberty! they stagger at the shock
From van to rear—and with one mind would flee,
But half their host is buried:—rock on rock
Descends:—beneath this godlike Warrior, see!
Hills, torrents, woods, embodied to bemock
The Tyrant, and confound his cruelty.

1809

ADVANCE—come forth from thy Tyrolean ground,
Dear Liberty! stern Nymph of soul untamed;
Sweet Nymph, O rightly of the mountains named!
Through the long chain of Alps from mound to mound
And o'er the eternal snows, like Echo, bound;
Like Echo, when the hunter train at dawn
Have roused her from her sleep: and forest-lawn,
Cliffs, woods and caves, her viewless steps resound
And babble of her pastime!—On, dread Power!
With such invisible motion speed thy flight,
Through hanging clouds, from craggy height to height,
Through the green vales and through the herdsman's bower—
That all the Alps may gladden in thy might,
Here, there, and in all places at one hour.

1809

XI

FEELINGS OF THE TYROLESE

The Land we from our fathers had in trust,
And to our children will transmit, or die:
This is our maxim, this our piety;
And God and Nature say that it is just.
That which we would perform in arms—we must!
We read the dictate in the infant's eye;
In the wife's smile; and in the placid sky;
And, at our feet, amid the silent dust
Of them that were before us.—Sing aloud
Old songs, the precious music of the heart!
Give, herds and flocks, your voices to the wind!
While we go forth, a self-devoted crowd,
With weapons grasped in fearless hands, to assert
Our virtue, and to vindicate mankind.

1809
XII

ALAS! what boots the long laborious quest
Of moral prudence, sought through good and ill;
Or pains abstruse—to elevate the will,
And lead us on to that transcendent rest
Where every passion shall the sway attest
Of Reason, seated on her sovereign hill;
What is it but a vain and curious skill,
If sapient Germany must lie deprest,
Beneath the brutal sword?—Her haughty Schools
Shall blush; and may not we with sorrow say,
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules,
Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
More for mankind at this unhappy day
Than all the pride of intellect and thought?

1809

XIII

AND is it among rude untutored Dales,
There, and there only, that the heart is true?
And, rising to repel or to subdue,
Is it by rocks and woods that man prevails?
Ah no! though Nature's dread protection fails,
There is a bulwark in the soul. This knew
Iberian Burghers when the sword they drew
In Zaragoza, naked to the gales
Of fiercely-breathing war. The truth was felt
By Palafox, and many a brave compeer,
Like him of noble birth and noble mind;
By ladies, meek-eyed women without fear;
And wanderers of the street, to whom is dealt
The bread which without industry they find.

1809

XIV

O'ER the wide earth, on mountain and on plain,
Dwells in the affections and the soul of man
A Godhead, like the universal Pan;
But more exalted, with a brighter train:
And shall his bounty be dispensed in vain,
Showered equally on city and on field,
And neither hope nor steadfast promise yield
In these usurping times of fear and pain?
Such doom awaits us. Nay, forbid it Heaven!
We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
Even to the death:—else wherefore should the eye
Of man converse with immortality?

XV

ON THE FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE TYROLESE

It was a moral end for which they fought;
Else how, when mighty Thrones were put to shame,
Could they, poor Shepherds, have preserved an aim,
A resolution, or enlivening thought?
Nor hath that moral good been vainly sought;
For in their magnanimity and fame
Powers have they left, an impulse, and a claim
Which neither can be overthrown nor bought.
Sleep, Warriors, sleep! among your hills repose!
We know that ye, beneath the stern control
Of awful prudence, keep the unvanquished soul:
And when, impatient of her guilt and woes,
Europe breaks forth; then, Shepherds! shall ye rise
For perfect triumph o'er your Enemies.

XVI

HAIL, Zaragoza! If with unwet eye
We can approach, thy sorrow to behold,
Yet is the heart not pitiless nor cold;
Such spectacle demands not tear nor sigh.
These desolate remains are trophies high
Of more than martial courage in the breast
Of peaceful civic virtue: they attest
Thy matchless worth to all posterity.
Blood flowed before thy sight without remorse;
Disease consumed thy vitals; War upheaved
The ground beneath thee with volcanic force:
Dread trials! yet encountered and sustained
Till not a wreck of help or hope remained,
And law was from necessity received.

XVII

SAY, what is Honour?—'Tis the finest sense
Of justice which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffered or done. When lawless violence
Invades a Realm, so pressed that in the scale
Of perilous war her weightiest armies fail,
Honour is hopeful elevation,—whence
Glory, and triumph. Yet with politic skill
Endangered States may yield to terms unjust;
Stoop their proud heads, but not unto the dust—
A Foe’s most favourite purpose to fulfil:
Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust
Are forfeited; but infamy doth kill.

Published 1815

XVIII

The martial courage of a day is vain,
An empty noise of death the battle’s roar,
If vital hope be wanting to restore,
Or fortitude be wanting to sustain,
Armies or kingdoms. We have heard a strain
Of triumph, how the labouring Danube bore
A weight of hostile corses: drenched with gore
Were the wide fields, the hamlets heaped with slain.
Yet see (the mighty tumult overpast)
Austria a Daughter of her Throne hath sold!
And her Tyrolean Champion we behold
Murdered, like one ashore by shipwreck cast,
Murdered without relief. Oh! blind as bold,
To think that such assurance can stand fast!

1810

XIX

Brave Schill! by death delivered, take thy flight
From Prussia’s timid region. Go, and rest
With heroes, ’mid the islands of the Blest,
Or in the fields of empyrean light.
A meteor wert thou crossing a dark night:
Yet shall thy name, conspicuous and sublime,
Stand in the spacious firmament of time,
Fixed as a star: such glory is thy right.
Alas! it may not be: for earthly fame
Is Fortune’s frail dependant; yet there lives
A Judge, who, as man claims by merit, gives;
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed.

1809
XX

CALL not the royal Swede unfortunate,
Who never did to Fortune bend the knee;
Who slighted fear; rejected steadfastly
Temptation; and whose kingly name and state
Have 'perished by his choice, and not his fate!'
Hence lives He, to his inner self endeared;
And hence, wherever virtue is revered,
He sits a more exalted Potentate,
Throned in the hearts of men. Should Heaven ordain
That this great Servant of a righteous cause
Must still have sad or vexing thoughts to endure,
Yet may a sympathising spirit pause,
Admonished by these truths, and quench all pain
In thankful joy and gratulation pure.1

1809

XXI

LOOK now on that Adventurer who hath paid
His vows to Fortune; who, in cruel slight
Of virtuous hope, of liberty, and right,
Hath followed wheresoe'er a way was made
By the blind Goddess,—ruthless, undismayed;
And so hath gained at length a prosperous height,
Round which the elements of worldly might
Beneath his haughty feet, like clouds, are laid.
O joyless power that stands by lawless force!
Curses are his dire portion, scorn, and hate,
Internal darkness and unquiet breath;
And, if old judgments keep their sacred course,
Him from that height shall Heaven precipitate
By violent and ignominious death.

1809

XXII

IS there a power that can sustain and cheer
The captive chieftain, by a tyrant's doom,
Forced to descend into his destined tomb—
A dungeon dark! where he must waste the year,
And lie cut off from all his heart holds dear;
What time his injured country is a stage
Whereon deliberate Valour and the rage
Of righteous Vengeance side by side appear,

1 See Note to Sonnet vii., page 42.
Filling from morn to night the heroic scene
With deeds of hope and everlasting praise:
Say can he think of this with mind serene
And silent fetters?  Yes, if visions bright
Shine on his soul, reflected from the days
When he himself was tried in open light.

Probably 1809

XXIII

1810

AH! where is Palafox?  Nor tongue nor pen
Reports of him, his dwelling or his grave!
Does yet the unheard-of vessel ride the wave?
Or is she swallowed up, remote from ken
Of pitying human-nature?  Once again
Methinks that we shall hail thee, Champion brave,
Redeemed to baffle that imperial Slave,
And through all Europe cheer desponding men
With new-born hope.  Unbounded is the might
Of martyrdom, and fortitude, and right.
Hark, how thy Country triumphs!—Smilingly
The Eternal looks upon her sword that gleams,
Like his own lightning, over mountains high,
On rampart, and the banks of all her streams.

1810

XXIV

In due observance of an ancient rite,
The rude Biscayans, when their children lie
Dead in the sinless time of infancy,
Attire the peaceful corse in vestments white;
And, in like sign of cloudless triumph bright,
They bind the unoffending creature's brows
With happy garlands of the pure white rose:
Then do a festal company unite
In choral song; and, while the uplifted cross
Of Jesus goes before, the child is borne
Uncovered to his grave: 'tis closed,—her loss
The Mother then mourns, as she needs must mourn;
But soon, through Christian faith, is grief subdued:
And joy returns, to brighten fortitude.
XXV

FEELINGS OF A NOBLE BISCAYAN AT ONE OF THOSE FUNERALS
1810

YET, yet, Biscayans! we must meet our Foes
   With firmer soul, yet labour to regain
Our ancient freedom; else 'twere worse than vain
   To gather round the bier these festal shows.
A garland fashioned of the pure white rose
Becomes not one whose father is a slave:
Oh, bear the infant covered to his grave!
These venerable mountains now enclose
A people sunk in apathy and fear.
If this endure, farewell, for us, all good!
The awful light of heavenly innocence
Will fail to illuminate the infant's bier;
And guilt and shame, from which is no defence,
Descend on all that issues from our blood.

XXVI

THE OAK OF GUERNICA

The ancient oak of Guernica, says Laborde in his account of Biscay, is a
most venerable natural monument. Ferdinand and Isabella, in the year
1476, after hearing Mass in the church of Santa Maria de la Antigua, re-
paired to this tree, under which they swore to the Biscayans to maintain
their fueros (privileges). What other interest belongs to it in the minds of
this people will appear from the following

SUPPOSED ADDRESS TO THE SAME. 1810

OAK of Guernica! Tree of holier power
   Than that which in Dodona did enshrine
(So faith too fondly deemed) a voice divine
Heard from the depths of its aërial bower—
How canst thou flourish at this blighting hour?
What hope, what joy can sunshine bring to thee,
Or the soft breezes from the Atlantic sea,
The dews of morn, or April's tender shower?
Stroke merciful and welcome would that be
Which should extend thy branches on the ground,
If never more within their shady round
Those lofty-minded Lawgivers shall meet,
Peasant and lord, in their appointed seat,
Guardians of Biscay's ancient liberty.
INDIGNATION OF A HIGH-MINDED SPANIARD. 1810

We can endure that He should waste our lands,
Despoil our temples, and by sword and flame
Return us to the dust from which we came;
Such food a Tyrant's appetite demands:
And we can brook the thought that by his hands
Spain may be overpowered, and he possess,
For his delight, a solemn wilderness
Where all the brave lie dead. But, when of bands
Which he will break for us he dares to speak,
Of benefits, and of a future day
When our enlightened minds shall bless his sway;
Then, the strained heart of fortitude proves weak;
Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks declare
That he has power to inflict what we lack strength to bear.

AVAUNT all specious pliancy of mind
In men of low degree, all smooth pretence!
I better like a blunt indifference,
And self-respecting slowness, disinclined
To win me at first sight: and be there joined
Patience and temperance with this high reserve,
Honour that knows the path and will not swerve;
Affections which, if put to proof, are kind;
And piety towards God. Such men of old
Were England's native growth; and, throughout Spain,
(Thanks to high God) forests of such remain:
Then for that Country let our hopes be bold;
For matched with these shall policy prove vain,
Her arts, her strength, her iron, and her gold.

PROBABLY 1810

'ERWEENING Statesmen have full long relied
On fleets and armies, and external wealth:
But from within proceeds a Nation's health;
Which shall not fail, though poor men cleave with pride.
To the paternal floor; or turn aside,
In the thronged city, from the walks of gain,
As being all unworthy to detain
A Soul by contemplation sanctified.
There are who cannot languish in this strife,
Spaniards of every rank, by whom the good
Of such high course was felt and understood;
Who to their Country's cause have bound a life
Erewhile, by solemn consecration, given
To labour, and to prayer, to nature, and to heaven.¹

XXX
THE FRENCH AND THE SPANISH GUERILLAS

HUNGER, and sultry heat, and nipping blast
From bleak hill-top, and length of march by night
Through heavy swamp, or over snow-clad height—
These hardships ill-sustained, these dangers past,
The roving Spanish Bands are reached at last,
Charged, and dispersed like foam: but as a flight
Of scattered quails by signs do reunite,
So these,—and, heard of once again, are chased
With combinations of long-practised art
And newly-kindled hope; but they are fled—
Gone are they, viewless as the buried dead:
Where now?—Their sword is at the Foeman's heart!
And thus from year to year his walk they thwart,
And hang like dreams around his guilty bed.

XXXI
SPANISH GUERILLAS. 1811

THEY seek, are sought; to daily battle led,
Shrink not, though far outnumbered by their foes,
For they have learnt to open and to close
The ridges of grim war; and at their head
Are captains such as erst their country bred
Or fostered, self-supported chiefs,—like those
Whom hardy Rome was fearful to oppose;
Whose desperate shock the Carthaginian fled.

¹ See Laborde's character of the Spanish people; from him the sentiment of these last two lines is taken.
In One who lived unknown a shepherd's life
Redoubted Viriathus breathes again;
And Mina, nourished in the studious shade,
With that great Leader\(^1\) vies, who, sick of strife
And bloodshed, longed in quiet to be laid
In some green island of the western main.

XXXII

1811

The power of Armies is a visible thing,
Formal, and circumscribed in time and space;
But who the limits of that power shall trace
Which a brave People into light can bring
Or hide, at will,—for freedom combating
By just revenge inflamed? No foot may chase,
No eye can follow, to a fatal place
That power, that spirit, whether on the wing
Like the strong wind, or sleeping like the wind
Within its awful caves.—From year to year
Springs this indigenous produce far and near;
No craft this subtle element can bind,
Rising like water from the soil, to find
In every nook a lip that it may cheer.

XXXIII

1811

Here pause: the poet claims at least this praise,
That virtuous Liberty hath been the scope
Of his pure song, which did not shrink from hope
In the worst moment of these evil days;
From hope, the paramount duty that Heaven lays,
For its own honour, on man's suffering heart.
Never may from our souls one truth depart—
That an accursed thing it is to gaze
On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye;
Nor—touched with due abhorrence of their guilt
For whose dire ends tears flow, and blood is spilt,
And justice labours in extremity—
Forget thy weakness, upon which is built,
O wretched man, the throne of tyranny!

\(^1\) Sertorius.
XXXIV

THE FRENCH ARMY IN RUSSIA

1812-13

HUMANITY, delighting to behold
A fond reflection of her own decay,
Hath painted Winter like a traveller old,
Propped on a staff, and, through the sullen day,
In hooded mantle, limping o'er the plain,
As though his weakness were disturbed by pain:
Or, if a juster fancy should allow
An undisputed symbol of command,
The chosen sceptre is a withered bough,
Infirnely grasped within a palsied hand.
These emblems suit the helpless and forlorn,
But mighty Winter the device shall scorn.

For he it was—dread Winter! who beset,
Flinging round van and rear his ghastly net,
That host, when from the regions of the Pole
They shrunk, insane ambition's barren goal—
That host, as huge and strong as e'er defied
Their God, and placed their trust in human pride!
As fathers persecute rebellious sons,
He smote the blossoms of their warrior youth;
He called on Frost's inexorable tooth
Life to consume in Manhood's firmest hold;
Nor spared the reverend blood that feebly runs:
For why—unless for liberty enrolled
And sacred home—ah! why should hoary Age be bold?
Fleet the Tartar's reinless steed,
But fleeter far the pinions of the Wind,
Which from Siberian caves the Monarch freed,
And sent him forth, with squadrons of his kind,
And bade the Snow their ample backs bestride,
And to the battle ride.
No pitying voice commands a halt,
No courage can repel the dire assault;
Distracted, spiritless, benumbed, and blind,
Whole legions sink—and, in one instant, find
Burial and death: look for them—and descry,
When morn returns, beneath the clear blue sky,
A soundless waste, a trackless vacancy!

Feb. 1816
XXXV

ON THE SAME OCCASION

YE Storms, resound the praises of your King!
And ye mild Seasons—in a sunny clime,
Midway on some high hill, while father Time
Looks on delighted—meet in festal ring,
And loud and long of Winter's triumph sing!
Sing ye, with blossoms crowned, and fruits, and flowers,
Of Winter's breath surcharged with sleety showers,
And the dire flapping of his hoary wing!
Knit the blithe dance upon the soft green grass;
With feet, hands, eyes, looks, lips, report your gain;
Whisper it to the billows of the main,
And to the aërial zephyrs as they pass,
That old decrepit Winter—He hath slain
That Host, which rendered all your bounties vain!
Feb. 1816

XXXVI

BY Moscow self-devoted to a blaze
Of dreadful sacrifice; by Russian blood
Lavished in fight with desperate hardihood;
The unfeeling Elements no claim shall raise
To rob our Human-nature of just praise
For what she did and suffered. Pledges sure
Of a deliverance absolute and pure
She gave, if Faith might tread the beaten ways
Of Providence. But now did the Most High
Exalt his still small voice;—to quell that Host
Gathered his power, a manifest ally;
He, whose heaped waves confounded the proud boast
Of Pharaoh, said to Famine, Snow, and Frost,
'Finish the strife by deadliest victory!'
Perhaps 1822

XXXVII

THE GERMANS ON THE HEIGHTS OF HOCHHEIM

ABRUPTLY paused the strife;—the field throughout
Resting upon his arms each warrior stood,
Checked in the very act and deed of blood,
With breath suspended, like a listening scout.
O Silence! thou wert mother of a shout
That through the texture of yon azure dome
Cleaves its glad way, a cry of harvest home
Uttered to Heaven in ecstasy devout!
The barrier Rhine hath flashed, through battle-smoke,  
On men who gaze heart-smitten by the view,  
As if all Germany had felt the shock!  
—Fly, wretched Gauls! ere they the charge renew  
Who have seen—themselves now casting off the yoke—  
The unconquerable Stream his course pursue.  

XXXVIII  
NOVEMBER, 1813  

NOW that all hearts are glad, all faces bright,  
Our aged Sovereign sits, to the ebb and flow  
Of states and kingdoms, to their joy or woe,  
Insensible. He sits deprived of sight,  
And lamentably wrapped in twofold night,  
Whom no weak hopes deceived; whose mind ensued,  
Through perilous war, with regal fortitude,  
Peace that should claim respect from lawless Might.  
Dread King of Kings, vouchsafe a ray divine  
To his forlorn condition! let thy grace  
Upon his inner soul in mercy shine;  
Permit his heart to kindle, and to embrace  
(Though it were only for a moment’s space)  
The triumphs of this hour; for they are Thine!  

NOV. 1813

XXXIX  
ODE  
1814

WHEN the soft hand of sleep had closed the latch  
On the tired household of corporeal sense,  
And Fancy, keeping unreluctant watch,  
Was free her choicest favours to dispense;  
I saw, in wondrous perspective displayed,  
A landscape more august than happiest skill  
Of pencil ever clothed with light and shade;  
An intermingled pomp of vale and hill,
City, and naval stream, suburban grove,
And stately forest where the wild deer rove;
Nor wanted lurking hamlet, dusky towns,
And scattered rural farms of aspect bright;
And, here and there, between the pastoral downs,
The azure sea upswelled upon the sight.
Fair prospect, such as Britain only shows!
But not a living creature could be seen
Through its wide circuit, that, in deep repose,
And, even to sadness, lonely and serene,
Lay hushed; till—through a portal in the sky
Brighter than brightest loop-hole, in a storm,
Opening before the sun's triumphant eye—
Issued, to sudden view, a glorious Form!
Earthward it glided with a swift descent:
Saint George himself this Visitant must be;
And, ere a thought could ask on what intent
He sought the regions of humanity,
A thrilling voice was heard, that vivified
City and field and flood;—aloud it cried—

'Though from my celestial home,
Like a Champion, armed I come;
On my helm the dragon crest,
And the red cross on my breast;
I, the Guardian of this Land,
Speak not now of toilsome duty;
Well obeyed was that command—
Whence bright days of festive beauty;
Haste, Virgins, haste!—the flowers which summer gave
Have perished in the field;
But the green thickets plenteously shall yield
Fit garlands for the brave,
That will be welcome, if by you entwined;
Haste, Virgins, haste; and you, ye Matrons grave,
Go forth with rival youthfulness of mind,
And gather what ye find
Of hardy laurel and wild holly boughs—
To deck your stern Defenders' modest brows!
Such simple gifts prepare,
Though they have gained a worthier meed,
And in due time shall share
Those palms and amaranthine wreaths
Unto their martyred Countrymen decreed,
In realms where everlasting freshness breathes!'
II

And lo! with crimson banners proudly streaming,
And upright weapons innocently gleaming,
Along the surface of a spacious plain
Advance in order the redoubted Bands,
And there receive green chaplets from the hands
   Of a fair female train—
   Maids and Matrons, dight
   In robes of dazzling white;
While from the crowd bursts forth a rapturous noise
   By the cloud-capt hills retorted;
   And a throng of rosy boys
   In loose fashion tell their joys;
And grey-haired sires, on staffs supported,
Look round, and by their smiling seem to say,
'Thus strives a grateful Country to display
The mighty debt which nothing can repay!'

III

Anon before my sight a palace rose
Built of all precious substances,—so pure
And exquisite, that sleep alone bestows
Ability like splendour to endure:
Entered, with streaming thousands, through the gate,
I saw the banquet spread beneath a Dome of state,
A lofty Dome, that dared to emulate
The heaven of sable night
With starry lustre; yet had power to throw
Solemn effulgence, clear as solar light,
Upon a princely company below,
While the vault rang with choral harmony,
Like some Nymph-haunted grot beneath the roaring sea.
—No sooner ceased that peal, than on the verge
Of exultation hung a dirge
Breathed from a soft and lonely instrument,
   That kindled recollections
   Of agonised affections;
And, though some tears the strain attended,
   The mournful passion ended
In peace of spirit, and sublime content!
But garlands wither; festal shows depart,
Like dreams themselves; and sweetest sound—
(Albeit of effect profound)
It was—and it is gone!
Victorious England! bid the silent Art
Reflect, in glowing hues that shall not fade,
Those high achievements; even as she arrayed
With second life the deed of Marathon
Upon Athenian walls;
So may she labour for thy civic halls:
And be the guardian spaces
Of consecrated places,
As nobly graced by Sculpture's patient toil;
And let imperishable Columns rise
Fixed in the depths of this courageous soil;
Expressive signals of a glorious strife,
And competent to shed a spark divine
Into the torpid breast of daily life;—
Records on which, for pleasure of all eyes,
The morning sun may shine
With gratulation thoroughly benign!

And ye, Pierian Sisters, sprung from Jove
And sage Mnemosyne,—full long debarred
From your first mansions, exiled all too long
From many a hallowed stream and grove,
Dear native regions where ye wont to rove,
Chanting for patriot heroes the reward
Of never-dying song!
Now (for, though Truth descending from above
The Olympian summit hath destroyed for aye
Your kindred Deities, Ye live and move,
Spared for obeisance from perpetual love,
For privilege redeemed of godlike sway),
Now, on the margin of some spotless fountain,
Or top serene of un molested mountain,
Strike audibly the noblest of your lyres,
And for a moment meet the soul's desires!
That I, or some more favoured Bard, may hear
What ye, celestial Maids! have often sung
Of Britain's acts,—may catch it with rapt ear,
And give the treasure to our British tongue!
So shall the characters of that proud page
Support their mighty theme from age to age;
And, in the desert places of the earth,  
When they to future empires have given birth,  
So shall the people gather and believe  
The bold report, transferred to every clime;  
And the whole world, not envious but admiring,  
And to the like aspiring,  
Own—that the progeny of this fair Isle  
Had power as lofty actions to achieve  
As were performed in man's heroic prime;  
Nor wanted, when their fortitude had held  
Its even tenor, and the foe was quelled,  
A corresponding virtue to beguile  
The hostile purpose of wide-wasting Time—  
That not in vain they laboured to secure,  
For their great deeds, perpetual memory,  
And fame as largely spread as land and sea,  
By Works of spirit high and passion pure!  

1816

XL

FEELINGS OF A FRENCH ROYALIST, ON THE DISINTERMENT OF  
THE REMAINS OF THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN

DeAR Reliques! from a pit of vilest mould  
Uprisen—to lodge among ancestral kings;  
And to inflict shame's salutary stings  
On the remorseless hearts of men grown old  
In a blind worship; men perversely bold  
Even to this hour,—yet, some shall now forsake  
Their monstrous Idol—if the dead e'er spake,  
To warn the living; if truth were ever told'  
By aught redeemed out of the hollow grave:  
O murdered Prince! meek, loyal, pious, brave!  
The power of retribution once was given:  
But 'tis a rueful thought that willow bands  
So often tie the thunder-wielding hands  
Of Justice sent to earth from highest Heaven!  

1816

XLI

OCCASIONED BY THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO  
(The last six lines intended for an Inscription)  

FEBRUARY, 1816

INTREPID sons of Albion! not by you  
Is life despised; ah no, the spacious earth  
Ne'er saw a race who held, by right of birth,  
So many objects to which love is due:
Ye slight not life—to God and Nature true;  
But death, becoming death, is dearer far,  
When duty bids you bleed in open war:  
Hence hath your prowess quelled that impious crew.  
Heroes!—for instant sacrifice prepared;  
Yet filled with ardour and on triumph bent  
'Mid direst shocks of mortal accident—  
To you who fell, and you whom slaughter spared  
To guard the fallen, and consummate the event,  
Your Country rears this sacred Monument!  
Feb. 1816

XLII

SIEGE OF VIENNA RAISED BY JOHN SOBIESKI

FEBRUARY, 1816

O FOR a kindling touch from that pure flame  
Which ministered, erewhile, to a sacrifice  
Of gratitude, beneath Italian skies,  
In words like these: 'Up, Voice of song! proclaim  
Thy saintly rapture with celestial aim:  
For lo! the Imperial City stands released  
From bondage threatened by the embattled East,  
And Christendom respires; from guilt and shame  
Redeemed, from miserable fear set free  
By one day's feat, one mighty victory.  
—Chant the Deliverer's praise in every tongue!  
The Cross shall spread, the Crescent hath waxed dim;  
He conquering, as in joyful Heaven is sung,  
He conquering through God, and God by Him.'

Feb. 1816

XLIII

OCCASIONED BY THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

FEBRUARY, 1816

The Bard—whose soul is meek as dawning day,  
Yet trained to judgments righteously severe,  
Fervid, yet conversant with holy fear,  
As recognising one Almighty sway:  
He,—whose experienced eye can pierce the array  
Of past events; to whom, in vision clear,  
The aspiring heads of future things appear,  
Like mountain-tops whose mists have rolled away—

1See Filicaia's Ode.
Assoiled from all encumbrance of our time,\(^1\)
He only, if such breathe, in strains devout
Shall comprehend this victory sublime;
Shall worthily rehearse the hideous rout,
The triumph hail, which from their peaceful clime
Angels might welcome with a choral shout!  
Feb. 1816

**XLIV**

**EMPERORS** and Kings, how oft have temples rung
With impious thanksgiving, the Almighty’s scorn!
How oft above their altars have been hung
Trophies that led the good and wise to mourn
Triumphant wrong, battle of battle born,
And sorrow that to fruitless sorrow clung!
Now, from Heaven-sanctioned victory, Peace is sprung;
In this firm hour Salvation lifts her horn.
Glory to arms! But, conscious that the nerve
Of popular reason, long mistrusted, freed
Your thrones, ye Powers, from duty fear to swerve!
Be just, be grateful; nor, the oppressor’s creed
Reviving, heavier chastisement deserve
Than ever forced unpitied hearts to bleed.

Probably Feb. 1816

**XLV**

ODE

1815

1

**IMAGINATION**—ne’er before content,
But aye ascending, restless in her pride
From all that martial feats could yield
To her desires, or to her hopes present—
Stood to the Victory on that Belgic field
Achieved, this closing deed magnificent,
And with the embrace was satisfied.
—Fly, ministers of Fame,
With every help that ye from earth and heaven may
claim!
Bear through the world these tidings of delight!  
—Hours, Days, and Months, have borne them in the sight

\(^1\) ‘From all this world’s encumbrance did himself assoil.’—Spenser
[Faerie Queene, Bk. vi. canto v. stanza 37].
Of mortals, hurrying like a sudden shower  
That landward stretches from the sea,  
The morning's splendours to devour;  
But this swift travel scorns the company  
Of irksome change, or threats from saddening power.  
—The shock is given—the Adversaries bleed—  
Lo, Justice triumphs! Earth is freed!  
Joyful annunciation!—it went forth—  
It pierced the caverns of the sluggish North—  
It found no barrier on the ridge  
Of Andes—frozen gulfs became its bridge—  
The vast Pacific gladdens with the freight—  
Upon the Lakes of Asia 'tis bestowed—  
The Arabian desert shapes a willing road  
Across her burning breast,  
For this refreshing incense from the West!—  
—Where snakes and lions breed,  
Where towns and cities thick as stars appear,  
Wherever fruits are gathered, and where'er  
The upturned soil receives the hopeful seed—  
While the Sun rules, and cross the shades of night—  
The unwearied arrow hath pursued its flight!  
The eyes of good men thankfully give heed,  
And in its sparkling progress read  
Of virtue crowned with glory's deathless meed:  
Tyrants exult to hear of kingdoms won,  
And slaves are pleased to learn that mighty feats are done;  
Even the proud Realm, from whose distracted borders  
This messenger of good was launched in air,  
France, humbled France, amid her wild disorders,  
Feels, and hereafter shall the truth declare,  
That she too lacks not reason to rejoice,  
And utter England's name with sadly-plausive voice.

II

O genuine glory, pure renown!  
And well might it beseem that mighty Town  
Into whose bosom earth's best treasures flow,  
To whom all persecuted men retreat;  
If a new Temple lift her votive brow  
High on the shore of silver Thames—to greet  
The peaceful guest advancing from afar.  
Bright be the Fabric, as a star  
Fresh risen, and beautiful within!—there meet  
Dependence infinite, proportion just;  
A Pile that Grace approves, and Time can trust  
With his most sacred wealth, heroic dust.
But if the valiant of this land
In reverential modesty demand,
That all observance, due to them, be paid
Where their serene progenitors are laid;
Kings, warriors, high-souled poets, saint-like sages,
England's illustrious sons of long, long ages;
Be it not unordained that solemn rites,
Within the circuit of those Gothic walls,
Shall be performed at pregnant intervals;
Commemoration holy that unites
The living generations with the dead;
By the deep soul-moving sense
Of religious eloquence,—
By visual pomp, and by the tie
Of sweet and threatening harmony;
Soft notes, awful as the omen
Of destructive tempests coming,
And escaping from that sadness
Into elevated gladness;
While the white-robed choir attendant,
Under mouldering banners pendant,
Provoke all potent symphonies to raise
Songs of victory and praise,
For them who bravely stood unhurt, or bled
With medicable wounds, or found their graves
Upon the battle field, or under ocean's waves;
Or were conducted home in single state,
And long procession—there to lie,
Where their sons' sons, and all posterity,
Unheard by them, their deeds shall celebrate!

Nor will the God of peace and love
Such martial service disapprove.
He guides the Pestilence—the cloud
Of locusts travels on his breath;
The region that in hope was ploughed
His drought consumes, his mildew taints with death;
He springs the hushed Volcano's mine,
He puts the Earthquake on her still design,
Darkens the sun, hath bade the forest sink,
And, drinking towns and cities, still can drink
Cities and towns—'tis Thou—the work is Thine!
The fierce Tornado sleeps within Thy courts—
He hears the word—he flies—
And navies perish in their ports;
For Thou art angry with Thine enemies!
For these, and mourning for our errors,
And sins, that point their terrors,
We bow our heads before Thee, and we laud
And magnify Thy name, Almighty God!
But Man is Thy most awful instrument,
In working out a pure intent;
Thou cloth'st the wicked in their dazzling mail,
And for Thy righteous purpose they prevail;
Thine arm from peril guards the coasts
Of them who in Thy laws delight:
Thy presence turns the scale of doubtful fight,
Tremendous God of battles, Lord of Hosts!

Forbear:—to Thee—
Father and Judge of all, with fervent tongue,
But in a gentler strain
Of contemplation, by no sense of wrong
(Too quick and keen) incited to disdain
Of pity pleading from the heart in vain—
To Thee—To Thee,
Just God of christianised Humanity,
Shall praises be poured forth, and thanks ascend,
That Thou hast brought our warfare to an end,
And that we need no second victory!
Blest, above measure blest,
If on Thy love our Land her hopes shall rest,
And all the Nations labour to fulfil
Thy law, and live henceforth in peace, in pure good will.

XLVI
ODE

THE MORNING OF THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL THANKSGIVING. JANUARY 18, 1816

HAIL, orient Conqueror of gloomy Night!
Thou that canst shed the bliss of gratitude
On hearts howe'er insensible or rude;
Whether thy punctual visitations smite
The haughty towers where monarchs dwell;  
Or thou, impartial Sun, with presence bright  
Cheer'st the low threshold of the peasant's cell!  
Not unrejoiced I see thee climb the sky  
In naked splendour, clear from mist or haze,  
Or cloud approaching to divert the rays,  
Which even in deepest winter testify  
Thy power and majesty,  
Dazzling the vision that presumes to gaze.  
—Well does thine aspect usher in this Day;  
As aptly suits therewith that modest pace  
Submitted to the chains  
That bind thee to the path which God ordains  
That thou shalt trace,  
Till, with the heavens and earth, thou pass away!  
Nor less, the stillness of these frosty plains,  
Their utter stillness, and the silent grace  
Of yon ethereal summits white with snow  
(Whose tranquil pomp and spotless purity  
Report of storms gone by  
To us who tread below),  
Do with the service of this Day accord.  
—Divinest Object which the uplifted eye  
Of mortal man is suffered to behold;  
Thou, who upon those snow-clad Heights hast poured  
Meek lustre, nor forget'st the humble Vale;  
Thou who dost warm Earth's universal mould,  
And for thy bounty wert not unadored  
By pious men of old;  
Once more, heart-cheering Sun, I bid thee hail!  
Bright be thy course to-day, let not this promise fail!  

'Mid the deep quiet of this morning hour,  
All nature seems to hear me while I speak,  
By feelings urged that do not vainly seek  
Apt language, ready as the tuneful notes  
That stream in blithe succession from the throats  
Of birds, in leafy bower,  
Warbling a farewell to a vernal shower.  
—There is a radiant though a short-lived flame,  
That burns for Poets in the dawning east;  
And oft my soul hath kindled at the same,  
When the captivity of sleep had ceased;  
But He who fixed immovably the frame  
Of the round world, and built, by laws as strong,
A solid refuge for distress—
The towers of righteousness;
He knows that from a holier altar came
The quickening spark of this day's sacrifice;
Knows that the source is nobler whence doth rise
The current of this matin song;
    That deeper far it lies
Than aught dependent on the fickle skies.

III
Have we not conquered?—by the vengeful sword?
Ah no, by dint of Magnanimity;
That curbed the baser passions, and left free
A loyal band to follow their liege Lord
Clear-sighted Honour, and his staid Compeers,
Along a track of most unnatural years;
In execution of heroic deeds
Whose memory, spotless as the crystal beads
Of morning dew upon the untrodden meads,
Shall live enrolled above the starry spheres.
He, who in concert with an earthly string
    Of Britain's acts would sing,
He with enraptured voice will tell
Of One whose spirit no reverse could quell;
Of One that 'mid the failing never failed—
Who paints how Britain struggled and prevailed
Shall represent her labouring with an eye
    Of circumspect humanity;
Shall show her clothed with strength and skill
    All martial duties to fulfil;
Firm as a rock in stationary fight;
In motion rapid as the lightning's gleam;
Fierce as a flood-gate bursting at mid night
To rouse the wicked from their giddy dream—
Woe, woe to all that face her in the field!
Appalled she may not be, and cannot yield.

IV
And thus is missed the sole true glory
That can belong to human story!
At which they only shall arrive
    Who through the abyss of weakness dive.
The very humblest are too proud of heart;
And one brief day is rightly set apart
For Him who lifteth up and layeth low;
For that Almighty God to whom we owe.
Say not that we have vanquished—but that we survive.
How dreadful the dominion of the impure!
Why should the Song be tardy to proclaim
That less than power unbounded could not tame
That soul of Evil—which, from Hell let loose,
Had filled the astonished world with such abuse
As boundless patience only could endure?
—Wide-wasted regions—cities wrapt in flame—
Who sees, may lift a streaming eye
To Heaven;—who never saw, may heave a sigh;
But the foundation of our nature shakes,
And with an infinite pain the spirit aches,
When desolated countries, towns on fire,
Are but the avowed attire
Of warfare waged with desperate mind
Against the life of virtue in mankind;
Assaulting without ruth
The citadels of truth;
While the fair gardens of civility,
By ignorance defaced,
By violence laid waste,
Perish without reprieve for flower or tree!

A crouching purpose—a distracted will—
Opposed to hopes that battened upon scorn,
And to desires whose ever-waxing horn
Not all the light of earthly power could fill;
Opposed to dark, deep plots of patient skill,
And to celerities of lawless force;
Which, spurning God, had flung away remorse—
What could they gain but shadows of redress?
—So bad proceeded propagating worse;
And discipline was passion's dire excess.
Widens the fatal web, its lines extend,
And deadlier poisons in the chalice blend.
When will your trials teach you to be wise?
—O prostrate Lands, consult your agonies!

No more—the guilt is banish'd,
And, with the guilt, the shame is fled;
And, with the guilt and shame, the Woe hath vanish'd,
Shaking the dust and ashes from her head!
—No more—these lingerings of distress
Sully the limpid stream of thankfulness.
What robe can Gratitude employ
So seemly as the radiant vest of Joy?
What steps so suitable as those that move
In prompt obedience to spontaneous measures
Of glory, and felicity, and love,
Surrendering the whole heart to sacred pleasures?

VIII

O Britain! dearer far than life is dear,
If one there be
Of all thy progeny
Who can forget thy prowess, never more
Be that ungrateful Son allowed to hear
Thy green leaves rustle or thy torrents roar.
As springs the lion from his den,
As from a forest-brake
Upstarts a glistening snake,
The bold Arch-despot re-appeared;—again
Wide Europe heaves, impatient to be cast,
With all her arméd Powers,
On that offensive soil, like waves upon a thousand shores.
The trumpet blew a universal blast!
But Thou art foremost in the field:—there stand:
Receive the triumph destined to thy hand!
All States have glorified themselves;—their claims
Are weighed by Providence, in balance even;
And now, in preference to the mightiest names,
To Thee the exterminating sword is given.
Dread mark of approbation, justly gained!
Exalted office, worthily sustained!

IX

Preserve, O Lord! within our hearts
The memory of Thy favour,
That else insensibly departs,
And loses its sweet savour!
Lodge it within us!—as the power of light
Lives inexhaustibly in precious gems,
Fixed on the front of Eastern diadems,
So shine our thankfulness for ever bright!
What offering, what transcendent monument
Shall our sincerity to Thee present?
—Not work of hands; but trophies that may reach
To highest Heaven—the labour of the Soul;
That builds, as Thy unerring precepts teach,
Upon the internal conquests made by each,
Her hope of lasting glory for the whole.
Yet will not heaven disown nor earth gainsay
The outward service of this day;
Whether the worshippers entreat
Forgiveness from God's mercy-seat;
Or thanks and praises to His throne ascend
That He has brought our warfare to an end,
And that we need no second victory!—
Ha! what a ghastly sight for man to see;
And to the heavenly saints in peace who dwell,
For a brief moment, terrible;
But, to Thy sovereign penetration, fair,
Before whom all things are, that were,
All judgments that have been, or e'er shall be;
Links in the chain of Thy tranquillity!
Along the bosom of this favoured Nation,
Breathe Thou, this day, a vital undulation!
Let all who do this land inherit
Be conscious of Thy moving spirit!
Oh, 'tis a goodly Ordinance,—the sight,
Though sprung from bleeding war, is one of pure delight;
Bless Thou the hour, or ere the hour arrive,
When a whole people shall kneel down in prayer,
And, at one moment, in one rapture, strive
With lip and heart to tell their gratitude
For Thy protecting care,
Their solemn joy—praising the Eternal Lord
For tyranny subdued,
And for the sway of equity renewed,
For liberty confirmed, and peace restored!

x

But hark—the summons!—down the placid lake
Floats the soft cadence of the church-tower bells;
Bright shines the Sun, as if his beams would wake
The tender insects sleeping in their cells;
Bright shines the Sun—and not a breeze to shake
The drops that tip the melting icicles.

O, enter now his temple gate!
Inviting words—perchance already flung
(As the crowd press devoutly down the aisle
Of some old Minster's venerable pile)
From voices into zealous passion stung,
While the tubed engine feels the inspiring blast,
And has begun—its clouds of sound to cast
Forth towards empyreal Heaven,
As if the fretted roof were riven.

Us humbler ceremonies now await;
But in the bosom with devout respect
The banner of our joy we will erect,
And strength of love our souls shall elevate:
For to a few collected in His name,
Their heavenly Father will incline an ear
Gracious to service hallowed by its aim;
Awake! the majesty of God revere!
Go—and with foreheads meekly bowed
Present your prayers—go—and rejoice aloud—
The Holy One will hear!

And what, 'mid silence deep, with faith sincere,
Ye, in your low and undisturbed estate,
Shall simply feel and purely meditate—
Of warnings—from the unprecedented might,
Which, in our time, the impious have disclosed;
And of more arduous duties thence imposed
Upon the future advocates of right;
Of mysteries revealed,
And judgments unrepealed,
Of earthly revolution,
And final retribution,—
To His omniscience will appear
An offering not unworthy to find place,
On this high Day of Thanks, before the Throne
of Grace!
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

DEDICATION

(SENT WITH THESE POEMS, IN MS., TO ———)

Dear Fellow-travellers! think not that the Muse,
To You presenting these memorial Lays,
Can hope the general eye thereon would gaze,
As on a mirror that gives back the hues
Of living Nature; no—though free to choose
The greenest bowers, the most inviting ways,
The fairest landscapes and the brightest days—
Her skill she tried with less ambitious views.
For You she wrought: Ye only can supply
The life, the truth, the beauty: she confides
In that enjoyment which with You abides,
Trusts to your love and vivid memory;
Thus far contented, that for You her verse
Shall lack not power the 'meeting soul to pierce!'  

Rydal Mount, Nov. 1821

W. WORDSWORTH

I

FISH-WOMEN.—ON LANDING AT CALAIS

'Tis said, fantastic ocean doth enfold
The likeness of whate'er on land is seen;
But, if the Nereid Sisters and their Queen,
Above whose heads the tide so long hath rolled,
The Dames resemble whom we here behold,
How fearful were it down through opening waves
To sink, and meet them in their fretted caves,
Withered, grotesque, immeasurably old,
And shrill and fierce in accent!—Fear it not:
For they Earth's fairest daughters do excel;
Pure undecaying beauty is their lot;
Their voices into liquid music swell,
Thrilling each pearly cleft and sparry grot,
The undisturbed abodes where Sea-nymphs dwell!

1820 or 1821
INCIDENT AT BRUGÈS

II

BRUGÈS

BRUGÈS I saw attired with golden light
(Streamed from the west) as with a robe of power:
The splendour fled; and now the sunless hour,
That, slowly making way for peaceful night,
Best suits with fallen grandeur, to my sight
Offers the beauty, the magnificence,
And sober graces, left her for defence
Against the injuries of time, the spite
Of fortune, and the desolating storms
Of future war. Advance not—spare to hide.
O gentle Power of darkness! these mild hues;
Obscure not yet these silent avenues
Of stateliest architecture, where the Forms
Of nun-like females with soft motion, glide!

III

BRUGÈS

THE Spirit of Antiquity—enshrined
In sumptuous buildings, vocal in sweet song,
In picture, speaking with heroic tongue,
And with devout solemnities entwined—
Mounts to the seat of grace within the mind:
Hence Forms that glide with swan-like ease along,
Hence motions, even amid the vulgar throng,
To an harmonious decency confined:
As if the streets were consecrated ground,
The city one vast temple, dedicate
To mutual respect in thought and deed;
To leisure, to forbearances sedate;
To social cares from jarring passions freed;
A deeper peace than that in deserts found!

IV

INCIDENT AT BRUGÈS

IN Bruges town is many a street
Whence busy life hath fled;
Where, without hurry, noiseless feet
The grass-grown pavement tread.
There heard we, halting in the shade
Flung from a Convent-tower,
A harp that tuneful prelude made
To a voice of thrilling power.

The measure, simple truth to tell,
Was fit for some gay throng;
Though from the same grim turret fell
The shadow and the song.

When silent were both voice and chords,
The strain seemed doubly dear,
Yet sad as sweet,—for English words
Had fallen upon the ear.

It was a breezy hour of eve;
And pinnacle and spire
Quivered and seemed almost to heave,
Clothed with innocuous fire;
But, where we stood, the setting sun
Showed little of his state;
And, if the glory reached the Nun,
'Twas through an iron grate.

Not always is the heart unwise,
Nor pity idly born,
If even a passing Stranger sighs
For them who do not mourn.
Sad is thy doom, self-solaced dove,
Captive, whoe'er thou be!
Oh! what is beauty, what is love,
And opening life to thee?

Such feeling pressed upon my soul,
A feeling sanctified
By one soft trickling tear that stole
From the Maiden at my side;
Less tribute could she pay than this,
Borne gaily o'er the sea,
Fresh from the beauty and the bliss
Of English liberty?

1828

V

AFTER VISITING THE FIELD OF WATERLOO

A WINGED Goddess—clothed in vesture wrought
Of rainbow colours; One whose port was bold,
Whose overburthened hand could scarcely hold
The glittering crowns and garlands which it brought—
Hovered in air above the far-famed Spot.
She vanished; leaving prospect blank and cold
Of wind-swept corn that wide around us rolled
In dreary billows, wood, and meagre cot,
And monuments that soon must disappear:
Yet a dread local recompense we found;
While glory seemed betrayed, while patriot-zeal
Sank in our hearts, we felt as men should feel
With such vast hoards of hidden carnage near,
And horror breathing from the silent ground!

BETWEEN NAMUR AND LIEGE

WHAT lovelier home could gentle Fancy choose?
Is this the stream, whose cities, heights, and plains,
War's favourite playground, are with crimson stains
Familiar, as the Morn with pearly dews?
The Morn, that now, along the silver Meuse,
Spreading her peaceful ensigns, calls the swains
To tend their silent boats and ringing wains,
Or strip the bough whose mellow fruit bestrews
The ripening corn beneath it. As mine eyes
Turn from the fortified and threatening hill,
How sweet the prospect of yon watery glade,
With its grey rocks clustering in pensive shade—
That, shaped like old monastic turrets, rise
From the smooth meadow-ground, serene and still!

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE

Was it to disenchant, and to undo,
That we approached the Seat of Charlemaine?
To sweep from many an old romantic strain
That faith which no devotion may renew!
Why does this puny Church present to view
Her feeble columns? and that scantly chair!
This sword that one of our weak times might wear!
Objects of false pretence, or meanly true!
If from a traveller's fortune I might claim
A palpable memorial of that day,
Then would I seek the Pyrenean Breach
That Roland clove 'with huge two-handed sway,'
And to the enormous labour left his name,
Where unremitting frosts the rocky crescent bleach.
VIII

IN THE CATHEDRAL AT COLOGNE

O FOR the help of Angels to complete
This Temple—Angels governed by a plan
Thus far pursued (how gloriously!) by Man,
Studious that He might not disdain the seat
Who dwells in heaven! But that aspiring heat
Hath failed; and now, ye Powers! whose gorgeous wings
And splendid aspect yon emblazonings
But faintly picture, 'twere an office meet
For you, on these unfinished shafts to try
The midnight virtues of your harmony:
This vast design might tempt you to repeat
Strains that call forth upon empyreal ground
Immortal Fabrics, rising to the sound
Of penetrating harps and voices sweet!

IX

IN A CARRIAGE, UPON THE BANKS OF THE RHINE

A MID this dance of objects sadness steals
O'er the defrauded heart—while sweeping by,
As in a fit of Thespian jollity,
Beneath her vine-leaf crown the green Earth reels:
Backward, in rapid evanescence, wheels
The venerable pageantry of Time,
Each beetling rampart, and each tower sublime,
And what the Dell unwillingly reveals
Of lurking cloistral arch, through trees espied
Near the bright River's edge. Yet why repine?
To muse, to creep, to halt at will, to gaze—
Such sweet wayfaring—of life's spring the pride,
Her summer's faithful joy—that still is mine,
And in fit measure cheers autumnal days.

X

HYMN

FOR THE BOATMEN, AS THEY APPROACH THE RAPIDS UNDER
THE CASTLE OF HEIDELBERG

JESU! bless our slender Boat,
By the current swept along;
Loud its threatenings—let them not
Drown the music of a song
Breathed thy mercy to implore,
Where these troubled waters roar!
Saviour, for our warning, seen
   Bleeding on that precious Rood;
If, while through the meadows green
   Gently wound the peaceful flood,
We forgot Thee, do not Thou
Disregard Thy Suppiants now!

Hither, like yon ancient Tower
   Watching o'er the River's bed,
Fling the shadow of thy power,
   Else we sleep among the dead;
Thou who trod'st the billowy sea,
Shield us in our jeopardy!

Guide our Bark among the waves;
   Through the rocks our passage smooth;
Where the whirlpool frets and raves
   Let Thy love its anger soothe:
All our hope is placed in Thee;
Miserere Domine!  

XI

NOT, like his great Compeers, indignantly
Doth Danube spring to life!  

The wandering Stream
(Who loves the Cross, yet to the Crescent's gleam
Unfolds a willing breast) with infant glee
Slips from his prison walls: and Fancy, free
To follow in his track of silver light,
Mounts on rapt wing, and with a moment's flight
Hath reached the encincture of that gloomy sea
Whose waves the Orphian lyre forbade to meet
In conflict; whose rough winds forgot their jars
To waft the heroic progeny of Greece;
When the first Ship sailed for the Golden Fleece—
Argo—exalted for that daring feat
To fix in heaven her shape distinct with stars.

XII

ON APPROACHING THE STAUB-BACH, LAUTERBRUNNEN

Uttered by whom, or how inspired—designed
For what strange service, does this concert reach
Our ears, and near the dwellings of mankind!
'Mid fields familiarised to human speech?—

1 See Note.
No Mermaids warble—to allay the wind
Driving some vessel toward a dangerous beach—
More thrilling melodies; Witch answering Witch,
To chaunt a love-spell, never intertwined
Notes shrill and wild with art more musical:
Alas! that from the lips of abject Want
Or Idleness in tatters mendicant
The strain should flow—free Fancy to enthrall,
And with regret and useless pity haunt
This bold, this bright, this sky-born, Waterfall!

XIII

THE FALL OF THE AAR—HANDEC

From the fierce aspect of this River, throwing
His giant body o'er the steep rock's brink,
Back in astonishment and fear we shrink:
But, gradually a calmer look bestowing,
Flowers we espy beside the torrent growing;
Flowers that peep forth from many a cleft and chink,
And, from the whirlwind of his anger, drink
Hues ever fresh, in rocky fortress blowing:
They suck—from breath that, threatening to destroy,
Is more benignant than the dewy eve—
Beauty, and life, and motions as of joy:
Nor doubt but He to whom yon Pine-trees nod
Their heads in sign of worship, Nature's God,
These humbler adorations will receive.

XIV

MEMORIAL

NEAR THE OUTLET OF THE LAKE OF THUN

'DEM
ANDENKEN
MEINES FREUNDENS
ALOYS REDING
MDCCCLVIII'

Aloys Reding, it will be remembered, was Captain-General of the Swiss forces, which, with a courage and perseverance worthy of the cause, opposed the flagitious and too successful attempt of Buonaparte to subjugate their country.

A round a wild and woody hill
A gravelled pathway treading,
We reached a votive Stone that bears
The name of Aloys Reding.

1 See Note.
Well judged the Friend who placed it there
For silence and protection;
And haply with a finer care
Of dutiful affection.

The Sun regards it from the West;
And, while in summer glory
He sets, his sinking yields a type
Of that pathetic story:

And oft he tempts the patriot Swiss
Amid the grove to linger;
Till all is dim, save this bright Stone
Touched by his golden finger.

1820 or 1821

XV

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE CATHOLIC CANTONS

DOOMED as we are our native dust
To wet with many a bitter shower,
It ill befits us to disdain
The altar, to deride the fane,
Where simple Sufferers bend, in trust
To win a happier hour.

I love, where spreads the village lawn,
Upon some knee-worn cell to gaze:
Hail to the firm unmoving cross,
Aloft, where pines their branches toss!
And to the chapel far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways!

Where'er we roam—along the brink
Of Rhine—or by the sweeping Po,
Through Alpine vale, or champain wide,
Whate'er we look on, at our side
Be Charity!—to bid us think,
And feel, if we would know.

Probably 1820

XVI

AFTER-THOUGHT

O H Life! without thy chequered scene
Of right and wrong, of weal and woe,
Success and failure, could a ground
For magnanimity be found;
For faith, 'mid ruined hopes, serene?
Or whence could virtue flow?
Pain entered through a ghastly breach—
Nor while sin lasts must effort cease;
Heaven upon earth's an empty boast;
But, for the bowers of Eden lost,
Mercy has placed within our reach
A portion of God's peace.

Published 1837

XVII

SCENE ON THE LAKE OF BRIENTZ

WHAT know we of the Blest above
But that they sing and that they love?

Yet, if they ever did inspire
A mortal hymn, or shaped the choir,
Now, where those harvest Damsels float
Homeward in their rugged Boat
(While all the ruffling winds are fled—
Each slumbering on some mountain's head),
Now, surely, hath that gracious aid
Been felt, that influence is displayed.

Pupils of Heaven, in order stand
The rustic Maidens, every hand
Upon a Sister's shoulder laid,—
To chant, as glides the boat along,
A simple, but a touching, song;
To chant, as Angels do above,
The melodies of Peace in love!

1820 or 1821

XVIII

ENGELBERG, THE HILL OF ANGELS

FOR gentlest uses, oft-times Nature takes
The work of Fancy from her willing hands;
And such a beautiful creation makes
As renders needless spells and magic wands,
And for the boldest tale belief commands.
When first mine eyes beheld that famous Hill
The sacred ENGELBERG, celestial Bands,
With intermingling motions soft and still,
Hung round its top, on wings that changed their hues at will.

Clouds do not name those Visitants; they were
The very Angels whose authentic lays,
Sung from that heavenly ground in middle air,
Made known the spot where piety should raise
A holy Structure to the Almighty's praise.

1 See Note.
Resplendent Apparition! if in vain
My ears did listen, 'twas enough to gaze;
And watch the slow departure of the train,
Whose skirts the glowing Mountain thirsted to
detain.

1820 or 1821

XIX

OUR LADY OF THE SNOW

MEEK Virgin Mother, more benign
Than fairest Star, upon the height
Of thy own mountain,1 set to keep
Lone vigils through the hours of sleep,
What eye can look upon thy shrine
Untroubled at the sight?

These crowded offerings as they nang
In sign of misery relieved,
Even these, without intent of theirs,
Report of comfortless despairs,
Of many a deep and cureless pang
And confidence deceived.

To Thee, in this aerial cleft,
As to a common centre, tend
All sufferers that no more rely
On mortal succour—all who sigh
And pine, of human hope bereft,
Nor wish for earthly friend.

And hence, O Virgin Mother mild!
Though plenteous flowers around thee blow, 20
Not only from the dreary strife
Of Winter, but the storms of life,
Thee have thy Votaries aptly styled,
Our Lady of the Snow.

Even for the Man who stops not here,
But down the irriguous valley hies,
Thy very name, O Lady! flings,
O'er blooming fields and gushing springs,
A tender sense of shadowy fear,
And chastening sympathies!

1 Mount Right.
Nor falls that intermingling shade
To summer-gladness unkind:
It chastens only to requite
With gleams of fresher, purer, light;
While, o’er the flower-enamelled glade,
More sweetly breathes the wind.

But on!—a tempting downward way,
A verdant path before us lies;
Clear shines the glorious sun above;
Then give free course to joy and love,
Deeming the evil of the day
Sufficient for the wise.

1820 or 1821

XX

EFFUSION

IN PRESENCE OF THE PAINTED TOWER OF TELL, AT ALTORF

This Tower stands upon the spot where grew the Linden Tree against which his Son is said to have been placed, when the Father’s archery was put to proof under circumstances so famous in Swiss Story.

WHAT though the Italian pencil wrought not here,
Nor such fine skill as did the meed bestow
On Marathonian valour, yet the tear
Springs forth in presence of this gaudy show,
While narrow cares their limits overflow.
Thrice happy,burghers, peasants, warriors old,
Infants in arms, and ye, that as ye go
Homeward or schoolward, ape what ye behold;
Heroes before your time, in frolic fancy bold!

And when that calm Spectatress from on high
Looks down—the bright and solitary Moon,
Who never gazes but to beautify;
And snow-fed torrents, which the blaze of noon
Roused into fury, murmur a soft tune
That fosters peace, and gentleness recalls;
Then might the passing Monk receive a boon
Of saintly pleasure from these pictured walls,
While on the warlike groups the mellowing lustre falls.

How blest the souls who when their trials come
Yield not to terror or despondency,
But face like that sweet Boy their mortal doom,
Whose head the ruddy apple tops, while he
Expectant stands beneath the linden tree:
THE TOWN OF SCHWYTZ

He quakes not like the timid forest game,
But smiles—the hesitating shaft to free;
Assured that Heaven its justice will proclaim,
And to his Father give its own unerring aim.

1820 or 1821

XXI

THE TOWN OF SCHWYTZ

By antique Fancy trimmed—though lowly, bred
To dignity—in thee, O Schwytz! are seen
The genuine features of the golden mean;
Equality by Prudence governed,
Or jealous Nature ruling in her stead;
And, therefore, art thou blest with peace, serene
As that of the sweet fields and meadows green
In unambitious compass round thee spread.

Majestic Berne, high on her guardian steep,
Holding a central station of command,
Might well be styled this noble body’s head;
Thou, lodged ’mid mountainous entrenchments deep,
Its heart; and ever may the heroic Land
Thy name, O Schwytz, in happy freedom keep!

1820 or 1821

XXII

ON HEARING THE ‘RANZ DES VACHES’ ON THE TOP OF THE PASS OF ST. GOTHARD

I listen—but no faculty of mine
Avails those modulations to detect,
Which, heard in foreign lands, the Swiss affect
With tenderest passion; leaving him to pine
(So fame reports) and die,—his sweet-breath’d kine
Remembering, and green Alpine pastures decked
With vernal flowers. Yet may we not reject
The tale as fabulous.—Here while I recline,
Mindful how others by this simple strain
Are moved, for me—upon this mountain named
Of God himself from dread pre-eminence—
Aspiring thoughts, by memory reclaimed,
Yield to the Music’s touching influence;
And joys of distant home my heart enchain.

1820 or 1821

1 Nearly 500 years (says Ebel, speaking of the French Invasion) had elapsed, when, for the first time, foreign soldiers were seen upon the frontiers of this small Canton, to impose upon it the laws of their governors.
XXIII

FORT FUENTES

The Ruins of Fort Fuentes form the crest of a rocky eminence that rises from the plain at the head of the lake of Como, commanding views up the Valteline, and toward the town of Chiavenna. The prospect in the latter direction is characterised by melancholy sublimity. We rejoiced at being favoured with a distinct view of those Alpine heights; not, as we had expected from the breaking up of the storm, steeped in celestial glory, yet in communion with clouds floating or stationary—scatterings from heaven. The Ruin is interesting both in mass and in detail. An Inscription, upon elaborately-sculptured marble lying on the ground, records that the Fort had been erected by Count Fuentes in the year 1600, during the reign of Philip the Third; and the Chapel, about twenty years after, by one of his Descendants. Marble pillars of gateways are yet standing, and a considerable part of the Chapel walls: a smooth green turf has taken place of the pavement, and we could see no trace of altar or image; but everywhere something to remind one of former splendour, and of devastation and tumult. In our ascent we had passed abundance of wild vines intermingled with bushes; near the ruins were some ill tended, but growing willingly; and rock, turf, and fragments of the pile, are alike covered or adorned with a variety of flowers, among which the rose-coloured pink was growing in great beauty. While descending, we discovered on the ground, apart from the path, and at a considerable distance from the ruined Chapel, a statue of a Child in pure white marble, uninjured by the explosion that had driven it so far down the hill. 'How little,' we exclaimed, 'are these things valued here! Could we but transport this pretty Image to our own garden!'—Yet it seemed it would have been a pity any one should remove it from its couch in the wilderness, which may be its own for hundreds of years.—Extract from Journal.

Dread hour! when, upheaved by war's sulphurous blast,
This sweet-visaged Cherub of Parian stone
So far from the holy enclosure was cast,
To couch in this thicket of brambles alone,
To rest where the lizard may bask in the palm
Of his half-open hand pure from blemish or speck;
And the green, gilded snake, without troubling the calm
Of the beautiful countenance, twine round his neck;

Where haply (kind service to Piety due!)
When winter the grove of its mantle bereaves,
Some bird (like our own honoured redbreast) may strew
The desolate Slumberer with moss and with leaves.

Fuentes once harboured the good and the brave,
Nor to her was the dance of soft pleasure unknown;
Her banners for festal enjoyment did wave
While the thrill of her fifes thro' the mountains was blown:
Now gads the wild vine o'er the pathless ascent:—
O silence of Nature, how deep is thy sway,
When the whirlwind of human destruction is spent,
Our tumults appeased, and our strifes passed away! 20

XXIV

THE CHURCH OF SAN SALVADOR, SEEN FROM THE LAKE OF LUGANO

This Church was almost destroyed by lightning a few years ago, but the altar and the image of the Patron Saint were untouched. The Mount, upon the summit of which the Church is built, stands amid the intricacies of the Lake of Lugano; and is, from a hundred points of view, its principal ornament, rising to the height of 2000 feet, and, on one side, nearly perpendicular. The ascent is toilsome; but the traveller who performs it will be amply rewarded. Splendid fertility, rich woods and dazzling waters, seclusion and confinement of view contrasted with sea-like extent of plain fading into the sky; and this again, in an opposite quarter, with an horizon of the loftiest and boldest Alps—unite in composing a prospect more diversified by magnificence, beauty, and sublimity, than perhaps any other point in Europe, of so inconsiderable an elevation, commands.

THOU sacred Pile! whose turrets rise
From yon steep mountain's loftiest stage,
Guarded by lone San Salvador;
Sink (if thou must) as heretofore,
To sulphurous bolts a sacrifice,
But ne'er to human rage!

On Horeb's top, on Sinai, deigned
To rest the universal Lord:
Why leap the fountains from their cells
Where everlasting Bounty dwells?—
That, while the Creature is sustained,
His God may be adored.

Cliffs, fountains, rivers, seasons, times—
Let all remind the soul of heaven;
Our slack devotion needs them all;
And Faith—so oft of sense the thrall,
While she, by aid of Nature, climbs—
May hope to be forgiven.

Glory, and patriotic Love,
And all the Pomp of this frail 'spot
Which men call Earth,' have yearned to seek,
Associate with the simply meek,
Religion in the sainted grove,
And in the hallowed grot.
Thither, in time of adverse shocks,
Of fainting hopes and backward wills,
Did mighty Tell repair of old—
A Hero cast in Nature’s mould,
Deliverer of the steadfast rocks
And of the ancient hills!

He, too, of battle-martyrs chief!
Who, to recall his daunted peers,
For victory shaped an open space,
By gathering with a wide embrace,
Into his single breast, a sheaf
Of fatal Austrian spears.¹

XXV
THE ITALIAN ITINERANT, AND THE
SWISS GOATHERD

PART I

NOW that the farewell tear is dried,
Heaven prosper thee, be hope thy guide!
Hope be thy guide, adventurous Boy;
The wages of thy travel, joy!
Whether for London bound—to trill
Thy mountain notes with simple skill;
Or on thy head to poise a show
Of Images in seemly row;
The graceful form of milk-white Steed,
Or Bird that soared with Ganymede;
Or through our hamlets thou wilt bear
The sightless Milton, with his hair
Around his placid temples curled;
And Shakspeare at his side—a freight,
If clay could think and mind were weight,
For him who bore the world!
Hope be thy guide, adventurous Boy;
The wages of thy travel, joy!

But thou, perhaps (alert as free,
Though serving sage philosophy),
Wilt ramble over hill and dale,
A Vender of the well-wrought Scale,

¹ Arnold Winkelried, at the battle of Sempach, broke an Austrian phalanx in this manner. The event is one of the most famous in the annals of Swiss heroism; and pictures and prints of it are frequent throughout the country.
Whose sentient tube instructs to time
A purpose to a fickle clime:
Whether thou choose this useful part,
Or minister to finer art,
Though robbed of many a cherished dream,
And crossed by many a shattered scheme,
What stirring wonders wilt thou see
In the proud Isle of liberty!
Whether thou choose this useful part,
Or minister to finer art,
Though robbed of many a cherished dream,
And crossed by many a shattered scheme,
What stirring wonders wilt thou see
In the proud Isle of liberty!
Yet will the Wanderer sometimes pine
With thoughts which no delights can chase,
Recall a Sister’s last embrace,
His Mother’s neck entwine;
Nor shall forget the Maiden coy
That would have loved the bright-haired Boy!

My Song, encouraged by the grace
That beams from his ingenuous face,
For this Adventurer scruples not
To prophesy a golden lot;
Due recompense, and safe return
To Como’s steeps—his happy bourne!
Where he, aloft in garden-glade,
Shall tend, with his own dark-eyed Maid,
The towering maize, and prop the twig
That ill supports the luscious fig;
Or feed his eye in paths sun-proof
With purple of the trellis-roof,
That through the jealous leaves escapes
From Cadenabbia’s pendent grapes.
—Oh might he tempt that Goatherd-child
To share his wanderings! him whose look
Even yet my heart can scarcely brook,
So touchingly he smiled—
As with a rapture caught from heaven—
For unasked alms in pity given.

PART II

I

With nodding plumes, and lightly drest
Like foresters in leaf-green vest,
The Helvetian Mountaineers, on ground
For Tell’s dread archery renowned,
Before the target stood—to claim
The guerdon of the steadiest aim.
Loud was the rifle-gun's report—
A startling thunder quick and short!
But, flying through the heights around,
Echo prolonged a tell-tale sound
Of hearts and hands alike 'prepared
The treasures they enjoy to guard!' And, if there be a favoured hour
When Heroes are allowed to quit
The tomb, and on the clouds to sit
With tutelary power,
On their Descendants shedding grace—
This was the hour, and that the place.

II

But Truth inspired the Bards of old
When of an iron age they told,
Which to unequal laws gave birth,
And drove Astræa from the earth.
—A gentle Boy (perchance with blood
As noble as the best endued,
But seemingly a Thing despised;
Even by the sun and air unprized;
For not a tinge or flowery streak
Appeared upon his tender cheek)
Heart-deaf to those rebounding notes,
Apart, beside his silent goats,
Sate watching in a forest shed,
Pale, ragged, with bare feet and head;
Mute as the snow upon the hill,
And, as the saint he prays to, still.
Ah, what avails heroic deed?
What liberty? if no defence
Be won for feeble Innocence.
Father of all! though wilful Manhood read
His punishment in soul-distress,
Grant to the morn of life its natural blessedness!

XXVI

THE LAST SUPPER, BY LEONARDO DA VINCI, IN THE REFECTORY
OF THE CONVENT OF MARIA DELLA GRAZIA—MILAN

THO' searching damps and many an envious flaw
Have marred this Work; the calm ethereal grace,
The love deep-seated in the Saviour's face,
The mercy, goodness, have not failed to awe
The Elements; as they do melt and thaw

1 See Note.
The heart of the Beholder—and erase
(At least for one rapt moment) every trace
Of disobedience to the primal law.
The annunciation of the dreadful truth
Made to the Twelve, survives: lip, forehead, cheek,
And hand reposing on the board in ruth
Of what it utters, while the unguilty seek
Unquestionable meanings—still bespeak
A labour worthy of eternal youth!

1820 or 1821

XXVII

THE ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, 1820

HIGH on her speculative tower
Stood Science waiting for the hour
When Sol was destined to endure
That darkening of his radiant face
Which Superstition strove to chase,
Erewhile, with rites impure.

Afloat beneath Italian skies,
Through regions fair as Paradise
We gaily passed,—till Nature wrought
A silent and unlooked-for change,
That checked the desultory range
Of joy and sprightly thought.

Where'er was dipped the toiling oar,
The waves danced round us as before,
As lightly, though of altered hue,
'Mid recent coolness, such as falls
At noontide from umbrageous walls
That screen the morning dew.

No vapour stretched its wings; no cloud
Cast far or near a murky shroud;
The sky an azure field displayed;
'Twas sunlight sheathed and gently charmed,
Of all its sparkling rays disarmed,
And as in slumber laid,—

Or something night and day between,
Like moonshine—but the hue was green;
Still moonshine, without shadow, spread
On jutting rock, and curvèd shore,
Where gazed the peasant from his door,
And on the mountain's head.
It tinged the Julian steeps—it lay,  
Lugano! on thy ample bay;  
The solemnising veil was drawn  
O'er villas, terraces, and towers;  
To Albogasio's olive bowers,  
Porlezza's verdant lawn.  

But Fancy with the speed of fire  
Hath past to Milan's loftiest spire,  
And there alights 'mid that aërial host  
Of Figures human and divine, —  
White as the snows of Apennine  
Indurated by frost.  

Awe-stricken she beholds the array  
That guards the Temple night and day;  
Angels she sees—that might from heaven have flown,  
And Virgin-saints, who not in vain  
Have striven by purity to gain  
The beatific crown—  

Sees long-drawn files, concentric rings  
Each narrowing above each; —the wings,  
The uplifted palms, the silent marble lips,  
The starry zone of sovereign height  
All steeped in this portentous light!  
All suffering dim eclipse!  

Thus after Man had fallen (if aught  
These perishable spheres have wrought  
May with that issue be compared)  
Throng of celestial visages,  
Darkening like water in the breeze,  
A holy sadness shared.  

Lo! while I speak, the labouring Sun  
His glad deliverance has begun;  
The cypress waves her sombre plume  
More cheerily; and town and tower,  
The vineyard and the olive-bower,  
Their lustre re-assume!  

O Ye, who guard and grace my home  
While in far-distant lands we roam,  

1 See Note.  
2 Above the highest circle of figures is a zone of metallic stars.
What countenance hath this Day put on for you?
While we looked round with favoured eyes,
Did sullen mists hide lake and skies
And mountains from your view?

Or was it given you to behold
Like vision, pensive though not cold,
From the smooth breast of gay Winandermere?
Saw ye the soft yet awful veil
Spread over Grasmere's lovely dale,
Helvellyn's brow severe?

I ask in vain—and know far less
If sickness, sorrow, or distress
Have spared my Dwelling to this hour;
Sad blindness! but ordained to prove
Our faith in Heaven's unfailing love
And all-controlling power.

XXVIII

THE THREE COTTAGE GIRLS

HOW blest the Maid whose heart—yet free
From Love's uneasy sovereignty—
Beats with a fancy running high,
Her simple cares to magnify;
Whom Labour, never urged to toil,
Hath cherished on a healthful soil;
Who knows not pomp, who heeds not pelf;
Whose heaviest sin it is to look
Askance upon her pretty Self
Reflected in some crystal brook;
Whom grief hath spared—who sheds no tear
But in sweet pity; and can hear
Another's praise from envy clear.

II

Such (but O lavish Nature! why
That dark unfathomable eye,
Where lurks a Spirit that replies
To stillest mood of softest skies,
Yet hints at peace to be o'erthrown,
Another's first, and then her own?)
Such, haply, yon Italian Maid,
Our Lady's laggard Votress,
Halting beneath the chestnut shade
To accomplish there her loveliness:
Nice aid maternal fingers lend;
A Sister serves with slacker hand;
Then, glittering like a star, she joins the festal band.

III
How blest (if truth may entertain
Coy fancy with a bolder strain)
The Helvetian Girl—who daily braves,
In her light skiff, the tossing waves,
And quits the bosom of the deep
Only to climb the rugged steep!
—Say whence that modulated shout!
From Wood-nymph of Diana's throng?
Or does the greeting to a rout
Of giddy Bacchanals belong?
Jubilant outcry! rock and glade
Resounded—but the voice obeyed
The breath of an Helvetian Maid.

IV
Her beauty dazzles the thick wood;
Her courage animates the flood;
Her steps the elastic green-sward meets
Returning unreluctant sweets;
The mountains (as ye heard) rejoice
Aloud, saluted by her voice!
Blithe Paragon of Alpine grace,
Be as thou art—for through thy veins
The blood of Heroes runs its race!
And nobly wilt thou brook the chains
That, for the virtuous, Life prepares;
The fetters which the Matron wears;
The patriot Mother's weight of anxious cares!

V
1 'Sweet Highland Girl! a very shower
Of beauty was thy earthly dower,'
When thou didst flit before mine eyes,
Gay Vision under sullen skies,
While Hope and Love around thee played,
Near the rough Falls of Inversneyd!

1 See address 'To a Highland Girl,' above, p. 9.
A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

Have they, who nursed the blossom, seen
No breach of promise in the fruit?
Was joy, in following joy, as keen
As grief can be in grief's pursuit?
When youth had flown did hope still bless
Thy goings—or the cheerfulness
Of innocence survive to mitigate distress?

VI
But from our course why turn—to tread
A way with shadows overspread;
Where what we gladliest would believe
Is feared as what may most deceive?
Bright Spirit, not with amaranth crowned
But heath-bells from thy native ground,
Time cannot thin thy flowing hair,
Nor take one ray of light from Thee;
For in my Fancy thou dost share
The gift of immortality;
And there shall bloom, with Thee allied,
The Votaress by Lugano's side;
And that intrepid Nymph, on Uri's steep descried!

XXIX

THE COLUMN INTENDED BY BUONAPARTE FOR A TRIUMPHAL EDIFICE IN MILAN, NOW LYING BY THE WAY-SIDE IN THE SIMPLOON PASS

A MBITION—following down this far-famed slope
Her Pioneer, the snow-dissolving Sun,
While clarions prate of kingdoms to be won—
Perchance, in future ages, here may stop;
Taught to mistrust her flattering horoscope
By admonition from this prostrate Stone!
Memento uninscribed of Pride o'erthrown;
Vanity's hieroglyphic; a choice trope
In Fortune's rhetoric. Daughter of the Rock,
Rest where thy course was stayed by Power divine!
The Soul transported sees, from hint of thine,
Crimes which the great Avenger's hand provoke,
Hears combats whistling o'er the ensanguined heath:
What groans! what shrieks! what quietness in death!
XXX

STANZAS

COMPOSED IN THE SIMPLON PASS

VALLOMBROSA! I longed in thy shadiest wood
To slumber, reclined on the moss-covered floor,
When the stillness of evening hath deepened its roar;
To range through the Temples of Paestum, to muse
In Pompeii preserved by her burial in earth;
On pictures to gaze where they drank in their hues;
And murmur sweet songs on the ground of their birth!

The beauty of Florence, the grandeur of Rome,
Could I leave them unseen, and not yield to regret? 10
With a hope (and no more) for a season to come,
Which ne'er may discharge the magnificent debt?
Thou fortunate Region! whose Greatness inurned
Awoke to new life from its ashes and dust;
Twice-glorified fields! if in sadness I turned
From your infinite marvels, the sadness was just.

Now, risen ere the light-footed Chamois retires
From dew-sprinkled grass to heights guarded with snow,
Toward the mists that hang over the land of my Sires
From the climate of myrtles contented I go. 20
My thoughts become bright like yon edging of Pines
On the steep's lofty verge: how it blackened the air!
But, touched from behind by the Sun, it now shines
With threads that seem part of his own silver hair.

Though the toil of the way with dear Friends we divide,
Though by the same zephyr our temples be fanned
As we rest in the cool orange-bower side by side,
A yearning survives which few hearts shall withstand:
Each step hath its value while homeward we move;—
O joy when the girdle of England appears! 30
What moment in life is so conscious of love,
Of love in the heart made more happy by tears?

1820 or 1821
XXXI

ECHO, UPON THE GEMMI

WHAT beast of chase hath broken from the cover?
Stern Gemmi listens to as full a cry,
As multitudinous a harmony
Of sounds as rang the heights of Latmos over,
When, from the soft couch of her sleeping Lover
Up-starting, Cynthia skimmed the mountain-dew
In keen pursuit—and gave, where'er she flew,
Impetuous motion to the Stars above her.
A solitary Wolf-dog, ranging on
Through the bleak concave, wakes this wondrous chime
Of aëry voices locked in unison,—
Faint—far-off—near—deep—solemn and sublime!—
So, from the body of one guilty deed,
A thousand ghostly fears, and haunting thoughts,
proceed!

XXXII

PROCESSIONS

SUGGESTED ON A SABBATH MORNING IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNY

To appease the Gods; or public thanks to yield;
Or to solicit knowledge of events,
Which in her breast Futurity concealed;
And that the past might have its true intents
Feelingly told by living monuments—
Mankind of yore were prompted to devise
Rites such as yet Persepolis presents
Graven on her cankered walls, solemnities
That moved in long array before admiring eyes.

The Hebrews thus, carrying in joyful state
Thick boughs of palm, and willows from the brook,
Marched round the altar—to commemorate
How, when their course they through the desert took,
Guided by signs which ne'er the sky forsook,
They lodged in leafy tents and cabins low;
Green boughs were borne, while, for the blast that shook
Down to the earth the walls of Jericho,
Shouts rise, and storms of sound from lifted trumpets blow!
And thus, in order, 'mid the sacred grove
Fed in the Libyan waste by gushing wells,
The priests and damsels of Ammonian Jove
Provoked responses with shrill canticles;
While, in a ship begirt with silver bells,
They round his altar bore the hornèd God,
Old Cham, the solar Deity, who dwells
Aloft, yet in a tilting vessel rode,
When universal sea the mountains overflowed.

Why speak of Roman Pomp? the haughty claims
Of Chiefs triumphant after ruthless wars;
The feast of Neptune—and the Cereal Games,
With images, and crowns, and empty cars;
The dancing Salii—on the shields of Mars
Smiting with fury; and a deeper dread
Scattered on all sides by the hideous jars
Of Corybantian cymbals, while the head
Of Cybele was seen, sublimely turreted!

At length a Spirit more subdued and soft
 Appeared—to govern Christian pageantries:
The Cross, in calm procession, borne aloft
Moved to the chant of sober litanies.
Even such, this day, came wafted on the breeze
From a long train—in hooded vestments fair
Enwapt—and winding, between Alpine trees
Spiry and dark, around their House of prayer,
Below the icy, dark, around their House of prayer.

Still in the vivid freshness of a dream,
The pageant haunts me as it met our eyes!
Still, with those white-robed Shapes—a living Stream,
The glacier Pillars join in solemn guise
For the same service, by mysterious ties;
Numbers exceeding credible account
Of number, pure and silent Votaries
Issuing or issued from a wintry fount;
The impenetrable heart of that exalted Mount!

They, too, who send so far a holy gleam
While they the Church engird with motion slow,
A product of that awful Mountain seem,
Poured from his vaults of everlasting snow;
Not virgin lilies marshalled in bright row,
Nor swans descending with a stealthy tide,

1 See Note.
A livelier sisterly resemblance show
Than the fair Forms, that in long order glide,
Bear to the glacier band—those Shapes aloft descried.

Trembling, I look upon the secret springs
Of that licentious craving in the mind
To act the God among external things,
To bind, on apt suggestion, or unbind;
And marvel not that antique Faith inclined
To crowd the world with metamorphosis,
Vouchsafed in pity or in wrath assigned;
Such insolent temptations wouldst thou miss,
Avoid these sights; nor brood o'er Fable's dark abyss!

XXXIII

ELEGIAC STANZAS

The lamented Youth, whose untimely death gave occasion to these elegiac verses, was Frederick William Goddard, from Boston in North America. He was in his twentieth year; and had resided for some time with a clergyman in the neighbourhood of Geneva for the completion of his education. Accompanied by a fellow-pupil, a native of Scotland, he had just set out on a Swiss tour when it was his misfortune to fall in with a friend of mine who was hastening to join our party. The travellers, after spending a day together on the road from Berne and at Soleure, took leave of each other at night, the young men having intended to proceed directly to Zurich. But early in the morning my friend found his new acquaintances, who were informed of the object of his journey, and the friends he was in pursuit of, equipped to accompany him. We met at Lucerne the succeeding evening, and Mr. G. and his fellow-student became in consequence our travelling companions for a couple of days. We ascended the Righi together; and, after contemplating the sunrise from that noble mountain, we separated at an hour and on a spot well suited to the parting of those who were to meet no more. Our party descended through the valley of Our Lady of the Snow, and our late companions to Art. We had hoped to meet in a few weeks at Geneva; but on the third succeeding day (on the 21st of August) Mr. Goddard perished, being overset in a boat while crossing the Lake of Zurich. His companion saved himself by swimming, and was hospitably received in the mansion of a Swiss gentleman (M. Keller) situated on the eastern coast of the lake. The corpse of poor Goddard was cast ashore on the estate of the same gentleman, who generously performed all the rites of hospitality which could be rendered to the dead as well as to the living. He caused a handsome mural monument to be erected in the church of Küsnacht, which records the premature fate of the young American, and on the shores too of the lake the traveller may read an inscription pointing out the spot where the body was deposited by the waves.

Lulled by the sound of pastoral bells,
Rude Nature's Pilgrims did we go,
From the dread summit of the Queen
Of mountains, through a deep ravine,
Where, in her holy chapel, dwells
‘Our Lady of the Snow.’

1 Mount Righi—Regina Montium.
The sky was blue, the air was mild;
Free were the streams and green the bowers;
As if, to rough assaults unknown,
The genial spot had ever shown
A countenance that as sweetly smiled—
The face of summer-hours.

And we were gay, our hearts at ease;
With pleasure dancing through the frame
We journeyed; all we knew of care—
Our path that straggled here and there;
Of trouble—but the fluttering breeze;
Of Winter—but a name.

If foresight could have rent the veil
Of three short days—but hush—no more!
Calm is the grave, and calmer none
Than that to which thy cares are gone,
Thou Victim of the stormy gale;
Asleep on Zurich's shore!

Oh Goddard!—what art thou?—a name—
A sunbeam followed by a shade!
Nor more, for aught that time supplies,
The great, the experienced, and the wise:
Too much from this frail earth we claim,
And therefore are betrayed.

We met, while festive mirth ran wild,
Where, from a deep lake's mighty urn,
Forth slips, like an enfranchised slave,
A sea-green river, proud to lave,
With current swift and undefiled,
The towers of old Lucerne.

We parted upon solemn ground
Far-lifted towards the unfading sky;
But all our thoughts were then of Earth,
That gives to common pleasures birth;
And nothing in our hearts we found
That prompted even a sigh.

Fetch, sympathising Powers of air,
Fetch, ye that post o'er seas and lands,
Herbs moistened by Virginian dew,
A most untimely grave to strew,
Whose turf may never know the care
Of kindred human hands!
Beloved by every gentle Muse
He left his Transatlantic home:
Europe, a realised romance,
Had opened on his eager glance;
What present bliss!—what golden views!
What stores for years to come!

Though lodged within no vigorous frame,
His soul her daily tasks renewed,
Blithe as the lark on sun-gilt wings
High poised—or as the wren that sings
In shady places, to proclaim
Her modest gratitude.

Not vain is sadly-uttered praise;
The words of truth's memorial vow
Are sweet as morning fragrance shed
From flowers 'mid Goldau's ruins bred;
As evening's fondly-lingering rays,
On Righi's silent brow.

Lamented youth! to thy cold clay
Fit obsequies the Stranger paid;
And piety shall guard the Stone
Which hath not left the spot unknown
Where the wild waves resigned their prey—
And that which marks thy bed.

And, when thy Mother weeps for Thee,
Lost Youth! a solitary Mother;
This tribute from a casual Friend
A not unwelcome aid may lend,
To feed the tender luxury,
The rising pang to smother.1

XXXIV

SKY-PROSPECT—FROM THE PLAIN OF FRANCE

O! in the burning west, the craggy nape
Of a proud Ararat! and, thereupon,
The Ark, her melancholy voyage done!
Yon rampant cloud mimics a lion's shape;
There, combats a huge crocodile—agape

1 The persuasion here expressed was not groundless. The first human consolation that the afflicted Mother felt, was derived from this tribute to her son's memory, a fact which the author learned, at his own residence, from her Daughter, who visited Europe some years afterwards.—Goldau is one of the villages desolated by the fall of part of the Mountain Rossberg.
A golden spear to swallow! and that brown
And massy grove, so near yon blazing town,
Stirs and recedes—destruction to escape!
Yet all is harmless—as the Elysian shades
Where Spirits dwell in undisturbed repose—
Silently disappears, or quickly fades:
Meek Nature's evening comment on the shows
That for oblivion take their daily birth
From all the fuming vanities of Earth!

1820 or 1821

XXXV
ON BEING STRANDED NEAR THE HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE

WHY cast ye back upon the Gallic shore,
Ye furious waves! a patriotic Son
Of England—who in hope her coast had won,
His project crowned, his pleasant travel o'er?
Well—let him pace this noted beach once more,
That gave the Roman his triumphal shells;
That saw the Corsican his cap and bells
Haughtily shake, a dreaming Conqueror!—
Enough: my Country's cliffs I can behold,
And proudly think, beside the chafing sea,
Of checked ambition, tyranny controlled,
And folly cursed with endless memory:
These local recollections ne'er can cloy;
Such ground I from my very heart enjoy!

1820 or 1821

XXXVI
AFTER LANDING—THE VALLEY OF DOVER. NOVEMBER 1820

WHERE be the noisy followers of the game
Which faction breeds? the turmoil where, that passed
Through Europe, echoing from the newsman's blast,
And filled our hearts with grief for England's shame?
Peace greets us;—rambling on without an aim
We mark majestic herds of cattle, free
To ruminate, couched on the grassy lea;
And hear far-off the mellow horn proclaim
The Season's harmless pastime. Ruder sound
Stirs not; enrapt I gaze with strange delight,
While consciousnesses, not to be disowned,
Here only serve a feeling to invite
That lifts the spirit to a calmer height,
And makes this rural stillness more profound.

1820 or 1821

1 See Note.
AT DOVER

XXXVII

AT DOVER

FROM the Pier’s head, musing, and with increase
Of wonder, I have watched this sea-side Town,
Under the white cliff’s battlemented crown,
Hushed to a depth of more than Sabbath peace:
The streets and quays are thronged, but why disown
Their natural utterance: whence this strange release
From social noise—silence elsewhere unknown?
A Spirit whispered, ‘Let all wonder cease;
Ocean’s o’erpowering murmurs have set free
Thy sense from pressure of life’s common din;
As the dread Voice that speaks from out the sea
Of God’s eternal Word, the Voice of Time,
Doth deaden shocks of tumult, shrieks of crime,
The shouts of folly, and the groans of sin.’

Probably 1837

XXXVIII

DESULTORY STANZAS

UPON RECEIVING THE PRECEDING SHEETS FROM THE PRESS

IS then the final page before me spread,
Nor further outlet left to mind or heart?
Presumptuous Book! too forward to be read,
How can I give thee license to depart?
One tribute more: unbidden feelings start
Forth from their coverts; slighted objects rise;
My spirit is the scene of such wild art
As on Parnassus rules, when lightning flies,
Visibly leading on the thunder’s harmonies.

All that I saw returns upon my view,
All that I heard comes back upon my ear,
All that I felt this moment doth renew;
And where the foot with no unmanly fear
Recoiled—and wings alone could travel—there
I move at ease; and meet contending themes
That press upon me, crossing the career
Of recollections vivid as the dreams
Of midnight,—cities, plains, forests, and mighty streams.

Where Mortal never breathed I dare to sit
Among the interior Alps, gigantic crew,
Who triumphed o’er diluvian power!—and yet
What are they but a wreck and residue,
Whose only business is to perish!—true
To which sad course, these wrinkled Sons of Time
Labour their proper greatness to subdue;
Speaking of death alone, beneath a clime
Where life and rapture flow in plenitude sublime.

Fancy hath flung for me an airy bridge
Across thy long deep Valley, furious Rhone!
Arch that here rests upon the granite ridge
Of Monte Rosa—there on frailer stone
Of secondary birth, the Jung-frau's cone;
And, from that arch, down-looking on the Vale
The aspect I behold of every zone;
A sea of foliage, tossing with the gale,
Blithe Autumn's purple crown, and Winter's icy mail!

Far as St. Maurice, from yon eastern Forks, 1
Down the main avenue my sight can range:
And all its branchy vales, and all that lurks
Within them, church, and town, and hut, and grange,
For my enjoyment meet in vision strange;
Suns, torrents;—to the region's utmost bound,
Life, Death, in amicable interchange;—
But list! the avalanche—the hush profound
That follows—yet more awful than that awful sound!

Is not the chamois suited to his place?
The eagle worthy of her ancestry?
—Let Empires fall; but ne'er shall Ye disgrace
Your noble birthright, ye that occupy
Your council-seats beneath the open sky,
On Sarnen's Mount; 2 there judge of fit and right,
In simple democratic majesty;
Soft breezes fanning your rough brows—the might
And purity of nature spread before your sight!

From this appropriate Court, renowned Lucerne
Calls me to pace her honoured Bridge— that cheers
The Patriot's heart with pictures rude and stern,
An uncouth Chronicle of glorious years.
Like portraiture, from loftier source, endears
That work of kindred frame, which spans the lake
Just at the point of issue, where it fears
The form and motion of a stream to take;
Where it begins to stir, yet voiceless as a snake.

1 At the head of the Vallais. See Note.
2 See Note.
Volumes of sound, from the Cathedral rolled,
This long-roofed Vista penetrate—but see,
One after one, its tablets, that unfold
The whole design of Scripture history;
From the first tasting of the fatal Tree,
Till the bright Star appeared in eastern skies,
Announcing, One was born mankind to free;
His acts, his wrongs, his final sacrifice;
Lessons for every heart, a Bible for all eyes.

Our pride misleads, our timid likings kill.
—Long may these homely Works devised of old,
These simple efforts of Helvetian skill,
Aid, with congenial influence, to uphold
The State,—the Country's destiny to mould;
Turning, for them who pass, the common dust
Of servile opportunity to gold;
Filling the soul with sentiments august—
The beautiful, the brave, the holy, and the just!

No more; Time halts not in his noiseless march—
Nor turns, nor winds, as doth the liquid flood;
Life slips from underneath us, like that arch
Of airy workmanship whereon we stood,
Earth stretched below, heaven in our neighbourhood.
Go forth, my little Book! pursue thy way;
Go forth, and please the gentle and the good;
Nor be a whisper stifled, if it say
That treasures, yet untouched, may grace some future
Lay.

1822
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

Companion! by whose buoyant Spirit cheered,
In whose experience trusting, day by day
Treasures I gained with zeal that neither feared
The toils nor felt the crosses of the way,
These records take, and happy should I be
Were but the Gift a meet Return to thee
For kindnesses that never ceased to flow,
And prompt self-sacrifice to which I owe
Far more than any heart but mine can know.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
Rydal Mount,
Feb. 14th, 1842

The Tour of which the following Poems are very inadequate remembrances
was shortened by report, too well founded, of the prevalence of Cholera at
Naples. To make some amends for what was reluctantly left unseen in the
South of Italy, we visited the Tuscan Sanctuaries among the Apennines, and
the principal Italian Lakes among the Alps. Neither of those lakes, nor of
Venice, is there any notice in these Poems, chiefly because I have touched
upon them elsewhere. See, in particular, 'Descriptive Sketches,' 'Memo-
rials of a Tour on the Continent in 1820,' and a Sonnet upon the extinction
of the Venetian Republic.

I

MUSINGS NEAR AQUAPENDENTE

APRIL, 1837

Ye Apennines! with all your fertile vales
Deeply embosomed, and your winding shores
Of either sea, an Islander by birth,
A Mountaineer by habit, would resound
Your praise, in meet accordance with your claims
Bestowed by Nature, or from man's great deeds
Inherited:—presumptuous thought!—it fled
Like vapour, like a towering cloud, dissolved.
Not, therefore, shall my mind give way to sadness;—
Yon snow-white torrent-fall, plumb down it drops
Yet ever hangs or seems to hang in air,
Lulling the leisure of that high-perched town,
AQUAPENDENTE, in her lofty site
MUSINGS NEAR AQUAPENDENTE

Its neighbour and its namesake—town, and flood
Forth flashing out of its own gloomy chasm
Bright sunbeams—the fresh verdure of this lawn
Strewn with grey rocks, and on the horizon's verge,
O'er intervenient waste, through glimmering haze,
Unquestionably kenned, that cone-shaped hill
With fractured summit, no indifferent sight
To travellers, from such comforts as are thine,
Bleak Radicofani! escaped with joy—
These are before me; and the varied scene
May well suffice, till noon-tide's sultry heat
Relax, to fix and satisfy the mind
Passive yet pleased. What! with this Broom in flower
Close at my side! She bids me fly to greet
Her sisters, soon like her to be attired
With golden blossoms opening at the feet
Of my own Fairfield. The glad greeting given,
Given with a voice and by a look returned
Of old companionship, Time counts not minutes
Ere, from accustomed paths, familiar fields,
The local Genius hurries me aloft,
Transported over that cloud-wooing hill,
Seat Sandal, a fond suitor of the clouds,
With dream-like smoothness, to Helvellyn's top,
There to alight upon crisp moss and range,
Obtaining ampler boon, at every step,
Of visual sovereignty—hills multitudinous,
(Not Apennine can boast of fairer), hills
Pride of two nations, wood and lake and plains,
And prospect right below of deep coves shaped
By skeleton arms, that, from the mountain's trunk
Extended, clasp the winds, with mutual moan
Struggling for liberty, while undismayed
The shepherd struggles with them. Onward thence
And downward by the skirt of Greenside-fell,
And by Glenridding-screees, and low Glencoign,
Places forsaken now, though loving still
The muses, as they loved them in the days
Of the old minstrelsy and the border bards.—
But here am I fast bound; and let it pass,
The simple rapture;—who that travels far
To feed his mind with watchful eyes could share
Or wish to share it?—One there surely was,
'The Wizard of the North,' with anxious hope
Brought to this genial climate, when disease
Preyed upon body and mind—yet not the less
Had his sunk eye kindled at those dear words
That spake of bards and minstrels; and his spirit
Had flown with mine to old Helvellyn's brow,
Where once together, in his day of strength,
We stood rejoicing, as if earth were free
From sorrow, like the sky above our heads.

Years followed years, and when, upon the eve
Of his last going from Tweed-side, thought turned,
Or by another's sympathy was led,
To this bright land, Hope was for him no friend,
Knowledge no help; Imagination shaped
No promise. Still, in more than ear-deep seats,
Survives for me, and cannot but survive
The tone of voice which wedded borrowed words
To sadness not their own, when, with faint smile
Forced by intent to take from speech its edge,
He said, 'When I am there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow.' Prophecy
More than fulfilled, as gay Campania's shores
Soon witnessed, and the city of seven hills,
Her sparkling fountains, and her mouldering tombs;
And more than all, that Eminence which showed
Her splendours, seen, not felt, the while he stood
A few short steps (painful they were) apart
From Tasso's Convent-haven, and retired grave.

Peace to their Spirits! why should Poesy
Yield to the lure of vain regret, and hover
In gloom on wings with confidence outspread
To move in sunshine?—Utter thanks, my Soul!
Tempered with awe, and sweetened by compassion
For them who in the shades of sorrow dwell,
That I—so near the term to human life
Appointed by man's common heritage,
Frail as the frailest, one withal (if that
Deserve a thought) but little known to fame—
Am free to rove where Nature's loveliest looks,
Art's noblest relics, History's rich bequests,
Failed to reanimate and but feebly cheered
The whole world's Darling—free to rove at will
O'er high and low, and if requiring rest,
Rest from enjoyment only.

Thanks poured forth
For what thus far hath blessed my wanderings, thanks
Fervent but humble as the lips can breathe
Where gladness seems a duty—let me guard
Those seeds of expectation which the fruit.
Already gathered in this favoured Land
Enfolds within its core. The faith be mine,
That He who guides and governs all, approves
When gratitude, though disciplined to look
Beyond these transient spheres, doth wear a crown
Of earthly hope put on with trembling hand;
Nor is least pleased, we trust, when golden beams,
Reflected through the mists of age, from hours
Of innocent delight, remote or recent,
Shoot but a little way—'tis all they can—
Into the doubtful future. Who would keep
Power must resolve to cleave to it through life,
Else it deserts him, surely as he lives.
Saints would not grieve nor guardian angels frown
If one—while tossed, as was my lot to be,
In a frail bark urged by two slender oars
Over waves rough and deep, that, when they broke,
Dashed their white foam against the palace walls
Of Genoa the superb—should there be led
To meditate upon his own appointed tasks,
However humble in themselves, with thoughts
Raised and sustained by memory of Him
Who oftentimes within those narrow bounds
Rocked on the surge, there tried his spirit's strength
And grasp of purpose, long ere sailed his ship
To lay a new world open.

Nor less prized
Be those impressions which incline the heart
To mild, to lowly, and to seeming weak,
Bend that way her desires. The dew, the storm—
The dew whose moisture fell in gentle drops
On the small hyssop destined to become,
By Hebrew ordinance devoutly kept,
A purifying instrument—the storm
That shook on Lebanon the cedar's top,
And as it shook, enabling the blind roots
Further to force their way, endowed its trunk
With magnitude and strength fit to uphold
The glorious temple—did alike proceed
From the same gracious will, were both an offspring
Of bounty infinite.

Between Powers that aim
Higher to lift their lofty heads, impelled
By no profane ambition, Powers that thrive
By conflict, and their opposites, that trust
In lowliness—a mid-way tract there lies
Of thoughtful sentiment for every mind
Pregnant with good. Young, Middle-aged, and Old,
From century on to century, must have known

The emotion—nay, more fitly were it said—
The blest tranquillity that sunk so deep
Into my spirit, when I paced, enclosed
In Pisa's Campo Santo, the smooth floor
Of its Arcades paved with sepulchral slabs,
And through each window's open fretwork looked
O'er the blank Area of sacred earth
Fetch'd from Mount Calvary, or haply delved
In precincts nearer to the Saviour's tomb,

By hands of men, humble as brave, who fought
For its deliverance—a capacious field
That to descendants of the dead it holds
And to all living mute memento breathes,
More touching far than aught which on the walls
Is pictured, or their epitaphs can speak,
Of the changed City's long-departed power,
Glory, and wealth, which, perilous as they are,
Here did not kill, but nourished, Piety.

And, high above that length of cloistral roof,
Peering in air and backed by azure sky,
To kindred contemplations ministers
The Baptistery's dome, and that which swells
From the Cathedral pile; and with the twain
Conjoined in prospect mutable or fixed
(As hurry on in eagerness the feet,
Or pause) the summit of the Leaning-tower.

Nor less remuneration waits on him
Who having left the Cemetery stands
In the Tower's shadow, of decline and fall
Admonished not without some sense of fear,
Fear that soon vanishes before the sight
Of splendour unextinguished, pomp unscathed,
And beauty unimpaired. Grand in itself,
And for itself, the assemblage, grand and fair
To view, and for the mind's consenting eye
A type of age in man, upon its front
Bearing the world-acknowledged evidence
Of past exploits, nor fondly after more
Struggling against the stream of destiny,
But with its peaceful majesty content.
—Oh what a spectacle at every turn
The Place unfolds, from pavement skinned with moss,
Or grass-grown spaces, where the heaviest foot
Provokes no echoes, but must softly tread;
Where Solitude with Silence paired stops short
Of Desolation, and to Ruin's scythe
Decay submits not.

But where'er my steps
Shall wander, chiefly let me cull with care
Those images of genial beauty, oft
Too lovely to be pensive in themselves
But by reflexion made so, which do best
And fitliest serve to crown with fragrant wreaths
Life's cup when almost filled with years, like mine.
—How lovely robed in forenoon light and shade,
Each ministering to each, didst thou appear
Savona, Queen of territory fair
As aught that marvellous coast thro' all its length
Yields to the Stranger's eye. Remembrance holds
As a selected treasure thy one cliff,
That, while it wore for melancholy crest
A shattered Convent, yet rose proud to have
Clinging to its steep sides a thousand herbs
And shrubs, whose pleasant looks gave proof how kind
The breath of air can be where earth had else
Seemed churlish. And behold, both far and near,
Garden and field all decked with orange bloom,
And peach and citron, in Spring's mildest breeze
Expanding; and, along the smooth shore curved
Into a natural port, a tideless sea,
To that mild breeze with motion and with voice
Softly responsive; and, attuned to all
Those vernal charms of sight and sound, appeared
Smooth space of turf which from the guardian fort
Sloped seaward, turf whose tender April green,
In coolest climes too fugitive, might even here
Plead with the sovereign Sun for longer stay
Than his unmitigated beams allow,
Nor plead in vain, if beauty could preserve,
From mortal change, aught that is born on earth
Or doth on time depend.

While on the brink
Of that high Convent-crested cliff I stood,
Modest Savona! over all did brood
A pure poetic Spirit—as the breeze,
Mild—as the verdure, fresh—the sunshine, bright—
Thy gentle Chiabrera!—not a stone,
Mural or level with the trodden floor,
In Church or Chapel, if my curious quest
Missed not the truth, retains a single name
Of young or old, warrior, or saint, or sage,
To whose dear memories his sepulchral verse
Paid simple tribute, such as might have flowed
From the clear spring of a plain English heart,
Say rather, one in native fellowship
With all who want not skill to couple grief
With praise, as genuine admiration prompts.
The grief, the praise, are severed from their dust,
Yet in his page the records of that worth
Survive, uninjured;—glory then to words,
Honour to word-preserving Arts, and hail
Ye kindred local influences that still,
If Hope's familiar whispers merit faith,
Await my steps when they the breezy height
Shall range of philosophic Tusculum;
Or Sabine vales explored inspire a wish
To meet the shade of Horace by the side
Of his Bandusian fount; or I invoke
His presence to point out the spot where once
He sate, and eulogised with earnest pen
Peace, leisure, freedom, moderate desires;
And all the immunities of rural life
Extolled, behind Vacuna's crumbling fane.
Or let me loiter, soothed with what is given
Nor asking more, on that delicious Bay,
Parthenope's Domain—Virgilian haunt,
Illustrated with never-dying verse,
And, by the Poet's laurel-shaded tomb,
Age after age to Pilgrims from all lands
Endeared.

And who—if not a man as cold
In heart as dull in brain—while pacing ground
Chosen by Rome's legendary Bards, high minds
Out of her early struggles well inspired
To localise heroic acts—could look
Upon the spots with undelighted eye,
Though even to their last syllable the Lays
And very names of those who gave them birth
Have perished?—Verily, to her utmost depth,
Imagination feels what Reason fears not
To recognise, the lasting virtue lodged
In those bold fictions that, by deeds assigned
To the Valerian, Fabian, Curian Race,
And others like in fame, created Powers
With attributes from History derived,
By Poesy irradiate, and yet graced,
Through marvellous felicity of skill,
With something more propitious to high aims
Than either, pent within her separate sphere,
Can oft with justice claim. And not disdaining
Union with those primeval energies
To virtue consecrate, stoop ye from your height,
Christian Traditions! at my Spirit's call
Descend, and, on the brow of ancient Rome
As she survives in ruin, manifest
Your glories mingled with the brightest hues
Of her memorial halo, fading, fading,
But never to be extinct while Earth endures.
O come, if undishonoured by the prayer,
From all her Sanctuaries!—Open for my feet
Ye Catacombs, give to mine eyes a glimpse
Of the Devout, as, 'mid your glooms convened
For safety, they of yore enclasped the Cross
On knees that ceased from trembling, or intoned
Their orisons with voices half-suppressed,
But sometimes heard, or fancied to be heard,
Even at this hour.

And thou Mamertine prison,
Into that vault receive me from whose depth
Issues, revealed in no presumptuous vision,
Albeit lifting human to divine,
A Saint, the Church's Rock, the mystic Keys
Grasped in his hand; and lo! with upright sword
Prefiguring his own impendent doom,
The Apostle of the Gentiles; both prepared
To suffer pains with heathen scorn and hate
Inflicted;—blessed Men, for so to Heaven
They follow their dear Lord!

Time flows—nor winds,
Nor stagnates, nor precipitates his course,
But many a benefit borne upon his breast
For human-kind sinks out of sight, is gone,
No one knows how; nor seldom is put forth
An angry arm that snatches good away,
Never perhaps to reappear. The Stream
Has to our generation brought and brings
Innumerable gains; yet we, who now
Walk in the light of day, pertain full surely
To a chilled age, most pitiably shut out
From that which is and actuates, by forms,
Abstractions, and by lifeless fact to fact
Minutely linked with diligence uninspired,
Unrectified, unguided, unsustained,
By godlike insight. To this fate is doomed
Science, wide-spread and spreading still as be
Her conquests, in the world of sense made known.
So with the internal mind it fares; and so
With morals, trusting, in contempt or fear
Of vital principle's controlling law,
To her purblind guide Expediency; and so
Suffers religious faith. Elate with view
Of what is won, we overlook or scorn
The best that should keep pace with it, and must,
Else more and more the general mind will droop,
Even as if bent on perishing. There lives
No faculty within us which the Soul
Can spare, and humblest earthly Weal demands,
For dignity not placed beyond her reach,
Zealous co-operation of all means
Given or acquired, to raise us from the mire,
And liberate our hearts from low pursuits.
By gross Utilities enslaved we need
More of ennobling impulse from the past,
If to the future aught of good must come
Sounder and therefore holier than the ends
Which, in the giddiness of self-applause,
We covet as supreme. O grant the crown
That Wisdom wears, or take his treacherous staff
From Knowledge!—If the Muse, whom I have served
This day, be mistress of a single pearl
Fit to be placed in that pure diadem;
Then, not in vain, under these chestnut boughs
Reclined, shall I have yielded up my soul
To transports from the secondary founts
Flowing of time and place, and paid to both
Due homage; nor shall fruitlessly have striven,
By love of beauty moved, to enshrine in verse
Accordant meditations, which in times
Vexed and disordered, as our own, may shed
Influence, at least among a scattered few,
To soberness of mind and peace of heart
Friendly; as here to my repose hath been
This flowering broom's dear neighbourhood, the light
And murmur issuing from yon pendent flood,
And all the varied landscape. Let us now
Rise, and to-morrow greet magnificent Rome.1

1 See Note.
II

THE PINE OF MONTE MARIO AT ROME

I

SAW far off the dark top of a Pine
Look like a cloud—a slender stem the tie
That bound it to its native earth—poised high
'Mid evening hues, along the horizon line,
Striving in peace each other to outshine.
But when I learned the Tree was living there,
Saved from the sordid axe by Beaumont's care,
Oh, what a gush of tenderness was mine!
The rescued Pine-tree, with its sky so bright
And cloud-like beauty, rich in thoughts of home,
Death-parted friends, and days too swift in flight,
Supplanted the whole majesty of Rome
(Then first apparent from the Pincian Height)
Crowned with St. Peter's everlasting Dome.¹

III

AT ROME

I

S this, ye Gods, the Capitolian Hill?
Yon petty Steep in truth the fearful Rock,
Tarpeian named of yore, and keeping still
That name, a local Phantom proud to mock
The Traveller's expectation?—Could our Will
Destroy the ideal Power within, 'twere done
Thro' what men see and touch,—slaves wandering on,
Impelled by thirst of all but Heaven-taught skill.
Full oft, our wish obtained, deeply we sigh;
Yet not unrecompensed are they who learn,
From that depression raised, to mount on high
With stronger wing, more clearly to discern
Eternal things; and, if need be, defy
Change, with a brow not insolent, though stern.

IV

AT ROME—REGRETS—IN ALLUSION TO NIEBUHR AND OTHER MODERN HISTORIANS

THOSE old credulities, to nature dear,
Shall they no longer bloom upon the stock
Of History, stript naked as a rock
'Mid a dry desert? What is it we hear?

¹ See Note.
The glory of Infant Rome must disappear,  
Her morning splendours vanish, and their place  
Know them no more. If Truth, who veiled her face  
With those bright beams yet hid it not, must steer  
Henceforth a humbler course perplexed and slow,  
One solace yet remains for us who came  
Into this world in days when story lacked  
Severe research, that in our hearts we know  
How, for exciting youth’s heroic flame,  
Assent is power, belief the soul of fact.  

V  
CONTINUED  

COMPLACENT Fictions were they, yet the same  
Involved a history of no doubtful sense,  
History that proves by inward evidence  
From what a precious source of truth it came.  
Ne’er could the boldest Eulogist have dared  
Such deeds to paint, such characters to frame,  
But for coeval sympathy prepared  
To greet with instant faith their loftiest claim.  
None but a noble people could have loved  
Flattery in Ancient Rome’s pure-minded style:  
Not in like sort the Runic Scald was moved;  
He, nursed ’mid savage passions that defile  
Humanity, sang feats that well might call  
For the blood-thirsty mead of Odin’s riotous Hall.  

VI  
PLEA FOR THE HISTORIAN  

FORBEAR to deem the Chronicler unwise,  
Ungentle, or untouched by seemly ruth,  
Who, gathering up all that Time’s envious tooth  
Has spared of sound and grave realities,  
Firmly rejects those dazzling flatteries,  
Dear as they are to unsuspecting Youth,  
That might have drawn down Clio from the skies  
To vindicate the majesty of truth.  
Such was her office while she walked with men,  
A Muse, who, not unmindful of her Sire  
All-ruling Jove, whate’er the theme might be  
Revered her Mother, sage Mnemosyne,  
And taught her faithful servants how the lyre  
Should animate, but not mislead, the pen."
VII

AT ROME

THEY—who have seen the noble Roman's scorn
Break forth at thought of laying down his head,
When the blank day is over, garreted
In his ancestral palace, where, from morn
To night, the desecrated floors are worn
By feet of purse-proud strangers; they—who have read
In one meek smile, beneath a peasant's shed,
How patiently the weight of wrong is borne;
They—who have heard some learned Patriot treat
Of freedom, with mind grasping the whole theme
From ancient Rome, downwards through that bright dream
Of Commonwealths, each city a starlike seat
Of rival glory; they—fallen Italy—
Nor must, nor will, nor can, despair of Thee!

1841

VIII

NEAR ROME, IN SIGHT OF ST. PETER'S

LONG has the dew been dried on tree and lawn;
O'er man and beast a not unwelcome boon
Is shed, the languor of approaching noon;
To shady rest withdrawing or withdrawn
Mute are all creatures, as this couchant fawn,
Save insect-swarms that hum in air afloat,
Save that the Cock is crowing, a shrill note,
Startling and shrill as that which roused the dawn.
—Heard in that hour, or when, as now, the nerve
Shrinks from the note as from a mis-timed thing,
Oft for a holy warning may it serve,
Charged with remembrance of his sudden sting,
His bitter tears, whose name the Papal Chair
And yon resplendent Church are proud to bear.

1841

IX

AT ALBANO

DAYS passed—and Monte Calvo would not clear
His head from mist; and, as the wind sobbed through
Albano's dripping Ilex avenue,
My dull forebodings in a Peasant's ear
Found casual vent. She said, 'Be of good cheer;
Our yesterday's procession did not sue
In vain; the sky will change to sunny blue,
Thanks to our Lady's grace.' I smiled to hear,
But not in scorn:—the Matron's Faith may lack
The heavenly sanction needed to ensure
Fulfilment; but, we trust, her upward track
Stops not at this low point, nor wants the lure
Of flowers the Virgin without fear may own,
For by her Son's blest hand the seed was sown.

1841

X

NEAR Anio's stream I spied a gentle Dove
Perched on an olive branch, and heard her cooing
'Mid new-born blossoms that soft airs were wooing,
While all things present told of joy and love.
But restless Fancy left that olive grove
To hail the exploratory Bird renewing
Hope for the few, who, at the world's undoing,
On the great flood were spared to live and move.
O bounteous Heaven! signs true as dove and bough
Brought to the ark are coming evermore,
Given though we seek them not, but, while we plough
This sea of life without a visible shore,
Do neither promise ask nor grace implore
In what alone is ours, the living Now.

1841

XI

FROM THE ALBAN HILLS, LOOKING TOWARDS ROME

FORGIVE, illustrious Country! these deep sighs,
Heaved less for thy bright plains and hills
bestrown
With monuments decayed or overthrown,
For all that tottering stands or prostrate lies,
Than for like scenes in moral vision shown,
Ruin perceived for keener sympathies;
Faith crushed, yet proud of weeds, her gaudy crown;
Virtues laid low, and mouldering energies.
Yet why prolong this mournful strain?—Fallen Power,
Thy fortunes, twice exalted, might provoke
Verse to glad notes prophetic of the hour
When thou, uprisen, shalt break thy double yoke,
And enter, with prompt aid from the Most High,
On the third stage of thy great destiny.

1841
XII
NEAR THE LAKE OF THRASYMENE

WHEN here with Carthage Rome to conflict came,
An earthquake, mingling with the battle's shock,
Checked not its rage; unfelt the ground did rock,
Sword dropped not, javelin kept its deadly aim.—
Now all is sun-bright peace. Of that day's shame,
Or glory, not a vestige seems to endure,
Save in this Rill that took from blood the name
Which yet it bears, sweet Stream! as crystal pure.
So may all trace and sign of deeds aloof
From the true guidance of humanity,
Thro' Time and Nature's influence, purify
Their spirit; or, unless they for reproof
Or warning serve, thus let them all, on ground
That gave them being, vanish to a sound.

XIII
NEAR THE SAME LAKE

FOR action born, existing to be tried,
Powers manifold we have that intervene
To stir the heart that would too closely screen
Her peace from images to pain allied.
What wonder if at midnight, by the side
Of Sanguinetto or broad Thrasymene,
The clang of arms is heard, and phantoms glide,
Unhappy ghosts in troops by moonlight seen;
And singly thine, O vanquished Chief! whose corse,
Unburied, lay hid under heaps of slain:
But who is He?—the Conqueror. Would he force
His way to Rome? Ah, no,—round hill and plain
Wandering, he haunts, at fancy's strong command,
This spot,—his shadowy death-cup in his hand.

XIV
THE CUCKOO AT LAVERNA
MAY 25, 1837

LIST—'twas the Cuckoo.—O with what delight
Heard I that voice! and catch it now, though faint,
Far off and faint, and melting into air,
Yet not to be mistaken. Hark again!

1 Sanguinetto.
Those louder cries give notice that the Bird,
Although invisible as Echo's self,
Is wheeling hitherward. Thanks, happy Creature,
For this unthought-of greeting!

While allured
From vale to hill, from hill to vale led on,
We have pursued, through various lands, a long
And pleasant course; flower after flower has blown,
Embellishing the ground that gave them birth
With aspects novel to my sight; but still
Most fair, most welcome, when they drank the dew
In a sweet fellowship with kinds beloved,
For old remembrance sake. And oft—where Spring
Displayed her richest blossoms among files
Of orange-trees bedecked with glowing fruit
Ripe for the hand, or under a thick shade
Of Ilex, or, if better suited to the hour,
The lightsome Olive's twinkling canopy—
Oft have I heard the Nightingale and Thrush
Blending as in a common English grove
Their love-songs; but, where'er my feet might roam,
Whate'er assemblages of new and old,
Strange and familiar, might beguile the way,
A gratulation from that vagrant Voice
Was wanting;—and most happily till now.

For see, Laverna! mark the far-famed Pile,
High on the brink of that precipitous rock,
Implanted like a Fortress, as in truth
It is, a Christian Fortress, garrisoned
In faith and hope, and dutiful obedience,
By a few Monks, a stern society,
Dead to the world and scorning earthborn joys.
Nay—though the hopes that drew, the fears that drove,
St. Francis, far from Man's resort, to abide
Among these sterile heights of Apennine,
Bound him, nor, since he raised yon House, have ceased
To bind his spiritual Progeny, with rules
Stringent as flesh can tolerate and live;
His milder Genius (thanks to the good God
That made us) over those severe restraints
Of mind, that dread heart-freezing discipline,
Doth sometimes here predominate, and works
By unsought means for gracious purposes;
For earth through heaven, for heaven, by changeful
earth,
Illustrated, and mutually endeared.
Rapt though He were above the power of sense,
Familiarly, yet out of the cleansed heart
Of that once sinful Being overflowed
On sun, moon, stars, the nether elements,
And every shape of creature they sustain,
Divine affections; and with beast and bird
(Stilled from afar—such marvel story tells—
By casual outbreak of his passionate words,
And from their own pursuits in field or grove
Drawn to his side by look or act of love
Humane, and virtue of his innocent life)
He wont to hold companionship so free,
So pure, so fraught with knowledge and delight,
As to be likened in his Followers' minds
To that which our first Parents, ere the fall
From their high state darkened the Earth with fear,
Held with all Kinds in Eden's blissful bowers.

Then question not that, 'mid the austere Band,
Who breathe the air he breathed, tread where he trod,
Some true Partakers of his loving spirit
Do still survive, and, with those gentle hearts
Consorted, others, in the power, the faith,
Of a baptized imagination, prompt
To catch from Nature's humblest monitors
Whate'er they bring of impulses sublime.

Thus sensitive must be the Monk, though pale
With fasts, with vigils worn, depressed by years,
Whom in a sunny glade I chanced to see,
Upon a pine-tree's storm-uprooted trunk,
Seated alone, with forehead sky-ward raised,
Hands clasped above the crucifix he wore
Appended to his bosom, and lips closed
By the joint pressure of his musing mood
And habit of his vow. That ancient Man—
Nor haply less the Brother whom I marked,
As we approached the Convent gate, aloft
Looking far forth from his aërial cell,
A young Ascetic—Poet, Hero, Sage,
He might have been, Lover belike he was—
If they received into a conscious ear
The notes whose first faint greeting startled me,
Whose sedulous iteration thrilled with joy
My heart—may have been moved like me to think,
Ah! not like me who walk in the world's ways,
On the great Prophet, styled the Voice of One
Crying amid the Wilderness, and given,
Now that their snows must melt, their herbs and flowers
Revive, their obstinate winter pass away,
That awful name to Thee, thee, simple Cuckoo,
Wandering in solitude, and evermore
Foretelling and proclaiming, ere thou leave
This thy last haunt beneath Italian skies
To carry thy glad tidings over heights
Still loftier, and to climes more near the Pole.

Voice of the Desert, fare-thee-well; sweet Bird!
If that substantial title please thee more,
Farewell!—but go thy way, no need hast thou
Of a good wish sent after thee; from bower
To bower as green, from sky to sky as clear,
Thee gentle breezes waft—or airs that meet
Thy course and sport around thee softly fan—
Till Night, descending upon hill and vale,
Grants to thy mission a brief term of silence,
And folds thy pinions up in blest repose.

XV

AT THE CONVENT OF CAMALDOLI

GRIEVE for the Man who hither came bereft,
And seeking consolation from above;
Nor grieve the less that skill to him was left
To paint this picture of his lady-love:
Can she, a blessed saint, the work approve?
And O, good Brethren of the cowl, a thing
So fair, to which with peril he must cling,
Destroy in pity, or with care remove.
That bloom—those eyes—can they assist to bind
Thoughts that would stray from Heaven? The dream
must cease
To be; by Faith, not sight, his soul must live;
Else will the enamoured Monk too surely find
How wide a space can part from inward peace
The most profound repose his cell can give.

XVI

CONTINUED

THE world forsaken, all its busy cares
And stirring interests shunned with desperate flight,
All trust abandoned in the healing might
Of virtuous action; all that courage dares,
Labour accomplishes, or patience bears—
Those helps rejected, they, whose minds perceive
How subtly works man's weakness, sighs may heave
For such a One beset with cloistral snares.
Father of Mercy! rectify his view,
If with his vows this object ill agree;
Shed over it Thy grace, and thus subdue
Imperious passion in a heart set free:
That earthly love may to herself be true,
Give him a soul that cleaveth unto Thee.

XVII

AT THE EREMITE OR UPPER CONVENT OF CAMALDOLI

WHAT aim had they, the Pair of Monks, in size
Enormous, dragged, while side by side they sate,
By panting steers up to this convent gate?
How, with empurpled cheeks and pampered eyes,
Dare they confront the lean austerities
Of Brethren who, here fixed, on Jesu wait
In sackcloth, and God's anger deprecate
Through all that humbles flesh and mortifies?
Strange contrast!—verily the world of dreams,
Where mingle, as for mockery combined,
Things in their very essences at strife,
Shows not a sight incongruous as the extremes
That everywhere, before the thoughtful mind,
Meet on the solid ground of waking life.

XVIII

AT VALLOMBROSA

Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where Etrurian shades
High over-arch'd embower.

'VALLOMBROSA—I longed in thy shadiest wood
To slumber, reclined on the moss-covered floor!
Fond wish that was granted at last, and the Flood,
That lulled me asleep, bids me listen once more.
Its murmur how soft! as it falls down the steep,
Near that Cell—yon sequestered Retreat high in air—
Where our Milton was wont lonely vigils to keep
For converse with God, sought through study and prayer.

1 See Notes.
2 See for the two first lines, 'Stanzas composed in the Simplon Pass,' above, p. 106.
The Monks still repeat the tradition with pride,
And its truth who shall doubt? for his Spirit is here;
In the cloud-piercing rocks doth her grandeur abide,
In the pines pointing heavenward her beauty austere;
In the flower-besprent meadows his genius we trace
Turned to humbler delights, in which youth might confide,
That would yield him fit help while prefiguring that Place
Where, if Sin had not entered, Love never had died.

When with life lengthened out came a desolate time,
And darkness and danger had compassed him round,
With a thought he would flee to these haunts of his prime,
And here once again a kind shelter be found.
And let me believe that when nightly the Muse
Did waft him to Sion, the glorified hill,
Here also, on some favoured height, he would choose
to wander, and drink inspiration at will.

Vallombrosa! of thee I first heard in the page
Of that holiest of Bards, and the name for my mind
Had a musical charm, which the winter of age
And the changes it brings had no power to unbind.
And now, ye Miltonian shades! under you
I repose, nor am forced from sweet fancy to part,
While your leaves I behold and the brooks they will strew,
And the realised vision is clasped to my heart.

Even so, and unblamed, we rejoice as we may
In Forms that must perish, frail objects of sense;
Unblamed—if the Soul be intent on the day
When the Being of Beings shall summon her hence.
For he and he only with wisdom is blest
Who, gathering true pleasures wherever they grow,
Looks up in all places, for joy or for rest,
To the Fountain whence Time and Eternity flow.

XIX

AT FLORENCE

Under the shadow of a stately Pile,
The dome of Florence, pensive and alone,
Nor giving heed to aught that passed the while,
I stood, and gazed upon a marble stone,
The laurelled Dante's favourite seat. A throne,
In just esteem, it rivals; though no style
Be there of decoration to beguile
The mind, depressed by thought of greatness flown.
As a true man, who long had served the lyre,
I gazed with earnestness, and dared no more.
But in his breast the mighty Poet bore
A Patriot's heart, warm with undying fire.
Bold with the thought, in reverence I sate down,
And, for a moment, filled that empty Throne.

XX

BEFORE THE PICTURE OF THE BAPTIST, BY RAPHAEL,
IN THE GALLERY AT FLORENCE

THE Baptist might have been ordained to cry
Forth from the towers of that huge Pile, wherein
His Father served Jehovah; but how win
Due audience, how for aught but scorn defy
The obstinate pride and wanton revelry
Of the Jerusalem below, her sin
And folly, if they with united din
Drown not at once mandate and prophecy?
Therefore the Voice spake from the Desert, thence
To Her, as to her opposite in peace,
Silence, and holiness, and innocence,
To Her and to all Lands its warning sent,
Crying with earnestness that might not cease,
'Make straight a highway for the Lord—repent!'

XXI

AT FLORENCE—FROM MICHAEL ANGELO

RAPT above earth by power of one fair face,
Hers in whose sway alone my heart delights,
I mingle with the blest on those pure heights
Where Man, yet mortal, rarely finds a place.
With Him who made the Work that Work accords
So well, that by its help and through His grace
I raise my thoughts, inform my deeds and words,
Clasping her beauty in my soul's embrace.
Thus, if from two fair eyes mine cannot turn,
I feel how in their presence doth abide
Light which to God is both the way and guide;
And, kindling at their lustre, if I burn,
My noble fire emits the joyful ray
That through the realms of glory shines for aye.

XXII

AT FLORENCE—FROM MICHAEL ANGELO

ETERNAL Lord! eased of a cumbrous load,
And loosened from the world, I turn to Thee;
Shun, like a shattered bark, the storm, and flee
To thy protection for a safe abode.
The crown of thorns, hands pierced upon the tree,
The meek, benign, and lacerated face,
To a sincere repentance promise grace,
To the sad soul give hope of pardon free.
With justice mark not Thou, O Light divine,
My fault, nor hear it with thy sacred ear;
Neither put forth that way thy arm severe;
Wash with thy blood my sins; thereto incline
More readily the more my years require
Help, and forgiveness speedy and entire.

XXIII

AMONG THE RUINS OF A CONVENT IN THE APENNINES

Ye Trees! whose slender roots entwine
Altars that piety neglects;
Whose infant arms enclasp the shrine
Which no devotion now respects;
If not a straggler from the herd
Here ruminate, nor shrouded bird,
Chanting her low-voiced hymn, take pride
In aught that ye would grace or hide—
How sadly is your love misplaced,
Fair Trees, your bounty run to waste!

Ye, too, wild Flowers! that no one heeds,
And ye—full often spurned as weeds—
In beauty clothed, or breathing sweetness
From fractured arch and mouldering wall—
Do but more touchingly recall
Man’s headstrong violence and Time’s fleetness,
Making the precincts ye adorn
Appear to sight still more forlorn.
SONNETS

XXIV

IN LOMBARDY

See, where his difficult way that Old Man wins
Bent by a load of Mulberry leaves!—most hard
Appears his lot, to the small Worm's compared,
For whom his toil with early day begins.
Acknowledging no task-master, at will
(As if her labour and her ease were twins)
She seems to work, at pleasure to lie still;
And softly sleeps within the thread she spins.
So fare they—the Man serving as her Slave.
Ere long their fates do each to each conform:
Both pass into new being,—but the Worm,
Transfigured, sinks into a hopeless grave;
His volant Spirit will, he trusts, ascend
To bliss unbounded, glory without end.

XXV

AFTER LEAVING ITALY

Fair Land! Thee all men greet with joy; how few,
Whose souls take pride in freedom, virtue, fame,
Part from thee without pity dyed in shame:
I could not—while from Venice we withdrew,
Led on till an Alpine strait confined our view
Within its depths, and to the shore we came
Of Lago Morto, dreary sight and name,
Which o'er sad thoughts a sadder colouring threw.
Italia! on the surface of thy spirit,
(Too aptly emblemed by that torpid lake)
Shall a few partial breezes only creep?
—Be its depths quickened; what thou dost inherit
Of the world's hopes, dare to fulfil; awake,
Mother of Heroes, from thy death-like sleep!

XXVI

CONTINUED

As indignation mastered grief, my tongue
Spake bitter words; words that did ill agree
With those rich stores of Nature's imagery,
And divine Art, that fast to memory clung—
Thy gifts, magnificent Region, ever young
In the sun's eye, and in his sister's sight
How beautiful! how worthy to be sung
In strains of rapture, or subdued delight!
I feign not; witness that unwelcome shock
That followed the first sound of German speech,
Caught the far-winding barrier Alps among.
In that announcement, greeting seemed to mock
Parting; the casual word had power to reach
My heart, and filled that heart with conflict strong.

XXVII

COMPOSED AT RYDAL ON MAY MORNING, 1838

If with old love of you, dear Hills! I share
New love of many a rival image brought
From far, forgive the wanderings of my thought:
Nor art thou wronged, sweet May! when I compare
Thy present birth-morn with thy last, so fair,
So rich to me in favours. For my lot
Then was, within the famed Egerian Grot
to sit and muse, fanned by its dewy air
Mingling with thy soft breath! That morning too,
Warblers I heard their joy unbosoming
Amid the sunny, shadowy, Colosseum;
Heard them, unchecked by aught of saddening hue,
For victories there won by flower-crowned Spring,
Chant in full choir their innocent Te Deum.

XXVIII

THE PILLAR OF TRAJAN

Where towers are crushed, and unforbidden
Weeds
O'er mutilated arches shed their seeds;
And temples, doomed to milder change, unfold
A new magnificence that vies with old;
Firm in its pristine majesty hath stood
A votive Column, spared by fire and flood:—
And, though the passions of man's fretful race
Have never ceased to eddy round its base,
Not injured more by touch of meddling hands
Than a lone obelisk, 'mid Nubian sands,
Or aught in Syrian deserts left to save
From death the memory of the good and brave.
THE PILLAR OF TRAJAN

Historic figures round the shaft embost
Ascend, with lineaments in air not lost:
Still as he turns, the charmed spectator sees
Group winding after group with dream-like ease;
Triumphs in sunbright gratitude displayed,
Or softly stealing into modest shade.
—So, pleased with purple clusters to entwine
Some lofty elm-tree, mounts the daring vine;
The woodbine so, with spiral grace, and breathes
Wide-spreading odours from her flowery wreaths.

Borne by the Muse from rills in shepherds' ears
Murmuring but one smooth story for all years,
I gladly commune with the mind and heart
Of him who thus survives by classic art,
His actions witness, venerate his mien,
And study Trajan as by Pliny seen;
Behold how fought the Chief whose conquering sword
Stretched far as earth might own a single lord;
In the delight of moral prudence schooled,
How feelingly at home the Sovereign ruled;
Best of the good—in pagan faith allied
To more than Man, by virtue deified.

Memorial Pillar! 'mid the wrecks of Time
Preserve thy charge with confidence sublime—
The exultations, pomps, and cares of Rome,
Whence half the breathing world received its doom;
Things that recoil from language; that, if shown
By apter pencil, from the light had flown.
A Pontiff, Trajan here the Gods implores,
There greets an Embassy from Indian shores;
Lo! he harangues his cohorts—there the storm
Of battle meets him in authentic form!
Unharnessed, naked, troops of Moorish horse
Sweep to the charge; more high, the Dacian force,
To hoof and finger mailed;—yet, high or low,
None bleed, and none lie prostrate but the foe;
In every Roman, through all turns of fate,
Is Roman dignity inviolate;
Spirit in him pre-eminent, who guides,
Supports, adorns, and over all presides;
Distinguished only by inherent state
From honoured Instruments that round him wait;
Rise as he may, his grandeur scorns the test
Of outward symbol, nor will deign to rest
On aught by which another is deprest.
—Alas! that One thus disciplined could toil
To enslave whole nations on their native soil;
So emulous of Macedonian fame,
That, when his age was measured with his aim,
He drooped, 'mid else unclouded victories,
And turned his eagles back with deep-drawn sighs.
O weakness of the Great! O folly of the Wise!

Where now the haughty Empire that was spread
With such fond hope? her very speech is dead;
Yet glorious Art the power of Time defies,
And Trajan still, through various enterprise,
Mounts, in this fine illusion, toward the skies:
Still are we present with the imperial Chief,
Nor cease to gaze upon the bold Relief
Till Rome, to silent marble unconfined,
Becomes with all her years a vision of the Mind.
THE EGYPTIAN MAID

OR, THE ROMANCE OF THE WATER LILY

For the names and persons in the following poem see the 'History of the renowned Prince Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table'; for the rest the Author is answerable; only it may be proper to add that the Lotus, with the bust of the Goddess appearing to rise out of the full-blown flower, was suggested by the beautiful work of ancient art, once included among the Townley Marbles, and now in the British Museum.

WHILE Merlin paced the Cornish sands,
Forth-looking toward the rocks of Scilly,
The pleased Enchanter was aware
Of a bright Ship that seemed to hang in air,
Yet was she work of mortal hands,
And took from men her name—The Water Lily.

Soft was the wind, that landward blew;
And, as the Moon, o'er some dark hill ascendant,
Grows from a little edge of light
To a full orb, this Pinnace bright
Became, as nearer to the coast she drew,
More glorious, with spread sail and streaming pendant.

Upon this wingèd Shape so fair
Sage Merlin gazed with admiration:
Her lineaments, thought he, surpass
Aught that was ever shown in magic glass;
Was ever built with patient care;
Or, at a touch, produced by happiest transformation.

Now, though a Mechanist, whose skill
Shames the degenerate grasp of modern science,
Grave Merlin (and belike the more
For practising occult and perilous lore)
Was subject to a freakish will
That sapped good thoughts, or scared them with defiance.
Provoked to envious spleen, he cast
An altered look upon the advancing Stranger
Whom he had hailed with joy, and cried,
‘My Art shall help to tame her pride—’
Anon the breeze became a blast,
And the waves rose, and sky portended danger.

With thrilling word, and potent sign
Traced on the beach, his work the Sorcerer urges;
The clouds in blacker clouds are lost,
Like spiteful Fiends that vanish, crossed
By Fiends of aspect more malign;
And the winds roused the Deep with fiercer scourges.

But worthy of the name she bore
Was this Sea-flower, this buoyant Galley;
Supreme in loveliness and grace
Of motion, whether in the embrace
Of trusty anchorage, or scudding o’er
The main flood roughened into hill and valley.

Behold, how wantonly she laves
Her sides, the Wizard’s craft confounding;
Like something out of Ocean sprung
To be for ever fresh and young,
Breasts the sea-flashes, and huge waves
Top-gallant high, rebounding and rebounding!

But Ocean under magic heaves,
And cannot spare the Thing he cherished:
Ah! what avails that she was fair,
Luminous, blithe, and debonair?
The storm has stripped her of her leaves;
The Lily floats no longer!—She hath perished

Grieve for her, she deserves no less;
So like, yet so unlike, a living Creature!
No heart had she, no busy brain;
Though loved, she could not love again;
Though pitied, feel her own distress;
Nor aught that troubles us, the fools of Nature.

Yet is there cause for gushing tears;
So richly was this Galley laden,
A fairer than herself she bore,
And, in her struggles, cast ashore;
A lovely One, who nothing hears
Of wind or wave—a meek and guileless Maiden.
THE EGYPTIAN MAID

Into a cave had Merlin fled
From mischief, caused by spells himself had muttered;
And while, repentant all too late,
In moody posture there he sate,
He heard a voice, and saw, with half-raised head,
A Visitant by whom these words were uttered:—

'On Christian service this frail Bark
Sailed (hear me, Merlin!) under high protection,
Though on her prow a sign of heathen power
Was carved—a Goddess with a Lily flower,
The old Egyptian's emblematic mark
Of joy immortal and of pure affection.

'Her course was for the British strand;
Her freight, it was a Damsel peerless;
God reigns above, and Spirits strong
May gather to avenge this wrong
Done to the Princess, and her Land
Which she in duty left, sad but not cheerless.

'And to Caerleon's loftiest tower
Soon will the Knights of Arthur's Table
A cry of lamentation send;
And all will weep who there attend,
To grace that Stranger's bridal hour,
For whom the sea was made unnavigable.

'Shame! should a Child of royal line
Die through the blindness of thy malice?'
Thus to the Necromancer spake
Nina, the Lady of the Lake,
A gentle Sorceress, and benign,
Who ne'er embittered any good man's chalice.

'What boots,' continued she, 'to mourn?
To expiate thy sin endeavour:
From the bleak isle where she is laid,
Fetched by our art, the Egyptian Maid
May yet to Arthur's court be borne
Cold as she is, ere life be fled for ever.

'My pearly Boat, a shining Light,
That brought me down that sunless river,
Will bear me on from wave to wave,
And back with her to this sea-cave:—
Then Merlin! for a rapid flight
Through air, to thee my Charge will I deliver.
'The very swiftest of thy cars
Must, when my part is done, be ready;
Meanwhile, for further guidance, look
Into thy own prophetic book;
And, if that fail, consult the Stars
To learn thy course; farewell! be prompt and steady.'

This scarcely spoken, she again
Was seated in her gleaming shallop,
That, o'er the yet-distempered Deep,
Pursued its way with bird-like sweep,
Or like a steed, without a rein,
Urged o'er the wilderness in sportive gallop.

Soon did the gentle Nina reach
That Isle without a house or haven;
Landing, she found not what she sought,
Nor saw of wreck or ruin aught
But a carved Lotus cast upon the beach
By the fierce waves, a flower in marble graven.

Sad relique, but how fair the while!
For gently each from each retreating
With backward curve, the leaves revealed
The bosom half, and half concealed,
Of a Divinity, that seemed to smile
On Nina, as she passed, with hopeful greeting.

No quest was hers of vague desire,
Of tortured hope and purpose shaken;
Following the margin of a bay,
She spied the lonely Cast-away,
Unmarred, unstripped of her attire,
But with closed eyes,—of breath and bloom forsaken.

Then Nina, stooping down, embraced,
With tenderness and mild emotion,
The Damsel, in that trance embound;
And, while she raised her from the ground,
And in the pearly shallop placed,
Sleep fell upon the air, and stilled the ocean.

The turmoil hushed, celestial springs
Of music opened, and there came a blending
Of fragrance, underived from earth,
With gleams that owed not to the sun their birth,
And that soft rustling of invisible wings
Which Angels make, on works of love descending.
And Nina heard a sweeter voice
Than if the Goddess of the flower had spoken:
‘Thou hast achieved, fair Dame! what none
Less pure in spirit could have done;
Go, in thy enterprise rejoice!
Air, earth, sea, sky, and heaven, success betoken.’

So cheered, she left that Island bleak,
A bare rock of the Scilly cluster;
And, as they traversed the smooth brine,
The self-illumined Brigantine
Shed, on the Slumberer’s cold wan cheek
And pallid brow, a melancholy lustre.

Fleet was their course, and when they came
To the dim cavern, whence the river
Issued into the salt-sea flood,
Merlin, as fixed in thought he stood,
Was thus accosted by the Dame:
‘Behold to thee my Charge I now deliver!
‘But where attends thy chariot—where?’—
Quoth Merlin, ‘Even as I was bidden,
So have I done; as trusty as thy barge
My vehicle shall prove—O precious Charge!
If this be sleep, how soft! if death, how fair!
Much have my books disclosed, but the end is hidden.’

He spake; and gliding into view
Forth from the grotto’s dimmest chamber
Came two mute Swans, whose plumes of dusky white
Changed, as the pair approached the light,
Drawing an ebon car, their hue
(Like clouds of sunset) into lucid amber.

Once more did gentle Nina lift
The Princess, passive to all changes:
The car received her:—then up-went
Into the ethereal element
The Birds with progress smooth and swift
As thought, when through bright regions memory ranges.

Sage Merlin, at the Slumberer’s side,
Instructs the Swans their way to measure;
And soon Caerleon’s towers appeared,
And notes of minstrelsy were heard
From rich pavilions spreading wide,
For some high day of long-expected pleasure.
Awe-stricken stood both Knights and Dames
Ere on firm ground the car alighted;
Eftsoons astonishment was past,
For in that face they saw the last
Last lingering look of clay, that tames
All pride; by which all happiness is blighted.

Said Merlin: 'Mighty King, fair Lords,
Away with feast and tilt and tourney!
Ye saw, throughout this royal House,
Ye heard, a rocking marvellous
Of turrets, and a clash of swords
Self-shaken, as I closed my airy journey.

'Lo! by a destiny well known
To mortals, joy is turned to sorrow;
This is the wished-for Bride, the Maid
Of Egypt, from a rock conveyed
Where she by shipwreck had been thrown;
Ill sight! but grief may vanish ere the morrow.'

'Though vast thy power, thy words are weak,'
Exclaimed the King, 'a mockery hateful;
Dutiful Child, her lot how hard!
Is this her piety's reward?
Those watery locks, that bloodless cheek!
O winds without remorse! O shore ungrateful!

'Rich robes are fretted by the moth;
Towers, temples, fall by stroke of thunder;
Will that, or deeper thoughts, abate
A Father's sorrow for her fate?
He will repent him of his troth;
His brain will burn, his stout heart split asunder.

'Alas! and I have caused this woe;
For, when my prowess from invading Neighbours
Had freed his Realm, he plighted word
That he would turn to Christ our Lord,
And his dear Daughter on a Knight bestow
Whom I should choose for love and matchless labours.

'Her birth was heathen; but a fence
Of holy Angels round her hovered:
A Lady added to my court
So fair, of such divine report
And worship, seemed a recompense
For fifty kingdoms by my sword recovered.
'Ask not for whom, O Champions true!
She was reserved by me her life’s betrayer;
She who was meant to be a bride
Is now a corse: then put aside
Vain thoughts, and speed ye, with observance due
Of Christian rites, in Christian ground to lay her.'

'The tomb,' said Merlin, 'may not close
Upon her yet, earth hide her beauty;
Not froward to thy sovereign will
Esteem me, Liege! if I, whose skill
Wafted her hither, interpose
To check this pious haste of erring duty.

'My books command me to lay bare
The secret thou art bent on keeping:
Here must a high attest be given,
*What* Bridegroom was for her ordained by Heaven:
And in my glass significant there are
Of things that may to gladness turn this weeping.

'For this, approaching, One by One,
Thy Knights must touch the cold hand of the Virgin;
So, for the favoured One, the Flower may bloom
Once more: but, if unchangeable her doom,
If life departed be for ever gone,
Some blest assurance, from this cloud emerging,

'May teach him to bewail his loss;
Not with a grief that, like a vapour, rises
And melts; but grief devout that shall endure,
And a perpetual growth secure
Of purposes which no false thought shall cross,
A harvest of high hopes and noble enterprises.'

'So be it,' said the King;—'anon,
Here, where the Princess lies, begin the trial;
Knights each in order as ye stand
Step forth.'—To touch the pallid hand
Sir Agravaine advanced; no sign he won
From Heaven or earth;—Sir Kaye had like denial.

Abashed, Sir Dinas turned away;
Even for Sir Percival was no disclosure;
Though he, devoutest of all Champions, ere
He reached that ebon car, the bier
Whereon diffused like snow the Damsel lay,
Full thrice had crossed himself in meek composure.
Imagine (but ye Saints! who can?)
How in still air the balance trembled—
The wishes, peradventure the despites
That overcame some not ungenerous Knights;
And all the thoughts that lengthened out a span
Of time to Lords and Ladies thus assembled.

What patient confidence was here!
And there how many bosoms panted!
While drawing toward the car Sir Gawaine, mailed
For tournament, his beaver vailed,
And softly touched; but, to his princely cheer
And high expectancy, no sign was granted.

Next, disencumbered of his harp,
Sir Tristram, dear to thousands as a brother,
Came to the proof, nor grieved that there ensued
No change;—the fair Izonda he had wooed
With love too true, a love with pangs too sharp,
From hope too distant, not to dread another.

Not so Sir Launcelot;—from Heaven's grace
A sign he craved, tired slave of vain contrition;
The royal Guinever looked passing glad
When his touch failed.—Next came Sir Galahad;
He paused, and stood entranced by that still face
Whose features he had seen in noontide vision.

For late, as near a murmuring stream
He rested 'mid an arbour green and shady,
Nina, the good Enchantress, shed
A light around his mossy bed;
And, at her call, a waking dream
Prefigured to his sense the Egyptian Lady.

Now, while his bright-haired front he bowed,
And stood, far-kenned by mantle furred with ermine,
As o'er the insensate Body hung
The enrapt, the beautiful, the young,
Belief sank deep into the crowd
That he the solemn issue would determine.

Nor deem it strange; the Youth had worn
That very mantle on a day of glory,
The day when he achieved that matchless feat,
The marvel of the Perilous Seat,
Which whoso'er approached of strength was shorn,
Though King or Knight the most renowned in story.
He touched with hesitating hand—
And lo! those Birds, far-famed through Love's
dominions,
The Swans, in triumph clap their wings;
And their necks play, involved in rings,
Like sinless snakes in Eden's happy land;—
'Mine is she,' cried the Knight;—again they clapped
their pinions.

'Mine was she—mine she is, though dead,
And to her name my soul shall cleave in sorrow';
Whereat a tender twilight streak
Of colour dawned upon the Damsel's cheek;
And her lips, quickening with uncertain red,
Seemed from each other a faint warmth to borrow.

Deep was the awe, the rapture high,
Of love emboldened, hope with dread entwining,
When, to the mouth, relenting Death
Allowed a soft and flower-like breath,
Precursor to a timid sigh,
To lifted eyelids, and a doubtful shining.

In silence did King Arthur gaze
Upon the signs that pass away or tarry;
In silence watched the gentle strife
Of Nature leading back to life;
Then eased his soul at length by praise
Of God, and Heaven's pure Queen—the blissful Mary.

Then said he, 'Take her to thy heart,
Sir Galahad! a treasure, that God giveth,
Bound by indissoluble ties to thee
Through mortal change and immortality;
Be happy and unenvied, thou who art
A goodly Knight that hath no peer that liveth!'

Not long the Nuptials were delayed;
And sage tradition still rehearses
The pomp, the glory of that hour
When toward the altar from her bower
King Arthur led the Egyptian Maid,
And Angels carolled these far-echoed verses;—

Who shrinks not from alliance
Of evil with good Powers,
To God proclaims defiance,
And mocks whom he adores.
A Ship to Christ devoted
From the Land of Nile did go;
Alas! the bright Ship floated,
An Idol at her prow.

By magic domination,
The Heaven-permitted vent
Of purblind mortal passion,
Was wrought her punishment.

The Flower, the Form within it,
What served they in her need?
Her port she could not win it,
Nor from mishap be freed.

The tempest overcame her,
And she was seen no more;
But gently, gently blame her—
She cast a Pearl ashore.

The Maid to Jesu hearkened,
And kept to Him her faith,
Till sense in death was darkened,
Or sleep akin to death.

But Angels round her pillow
Kept watch, a viewless band;
And, billow favouring billow,
She reached the destined strand.

Blest Pair! whate'er befall you,
Your faith in Him approve
Who from frail earth can call you
To bowers of endless love!

1830
THE RIVER DUDDON

A SERIES OF SONNETS

The river Duddon rises upon Wrynose Fell, on the confines of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire; and, having served as a boundary to the two last Counties for the space of about twenty-five miles, enters the Irish Sea, between the Isle of Walney and the Lordship of Millum.

TO THE REV. DR. WORDSWORTH

(WITH THE SONNETS TO THE RIVER DUDDON, AND OTHER POEMS IN THIS COLLECTION, 1820)

The Minstrels played their Christmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage-eaves;
While, smitten by a lofty moon,
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

Through hill and valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings:
Keen was the air, but could not freeze,
Nor check, the music of the strings;
So stout and hardy were the band
That scraped the chords with strenuous hand!

And who but listened?—till was paid
Respect to every Inmate's claim:
The greeting given, the music played,
In honour of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And 'merry Christmas' wished to all!

O Brother! I revere the choice
That took thee from thy native hills;
And it is given thee to rejoice:
Though public care full often tills
(Heaven only witness of the toil)
A barren and ungrateful soil.

Yet, would that Thou, with me and mine,
Hadst heard this never-failing rite;
And seen on other faces shine
A true revival of the light
Which Nature and these rustic Powers,
In simple childhood, spread through ours!

1 See Note. These Sonnets were composed on various occasions between 1806 and 1820.
For pleasure hath not ceased to wait
On these expected annual rounds;
Whether the rich man's sumptuous gate
Call forth the unelaborate sounds,
Or they are offered at the door
That guards the lowliest of the poor.

How touching, when, at midnight, sweep
Snow-muffled winds, and all is dark,
To hear—and sink again to sleep!
Or, at an earlier call, to mark,
By blazing fire, the still suspense
Of self-complacent innocence;

The mutual nod,—the grave disguise
Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er;
And some unbidden tears that rise
For names once heard, and heard no more;
Tears brightened by the serenade
For infant in the cradle laid.

Ah! not for emerald fields alone,
With ambient streams more pure and bright
Than fabled Cytherea's zone
Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,
Is to my heart of hearts endear'd
The ground where we were born and reared!

Hail, ancient Manners! sure defence,
Where they survive, of wholesome laws;
Remnants of love whose modest sense
Thus into narrow room withdraws;
Hail, Usages of pristine mould,
And ye that guard them, Mountains old!

Bear with me, Brother! quench the thought
That slights this passion, or condemns;
If thee fond Fancy ever brought
From the proud margin of the Thames,
And Lambeth's venerable towers,
To humbler streams, and greener bowers.

Yes, they can make, who fail to find,
Short leisure even in busiest days;
Moments, to cast a look behind,
And profit by those kindly rays
That through the clouds do sometimes steal,
And all the far-off past reveal.

Hence, while the imperial City's din
Beats frequent on thy satiate ear,
A pleased attention I may win
To agitations less severe,
That neither overwhelm nor cloy,
But fill the hollow vale with joy!

NOT envying Latian shades—if yet they throw
A grateful coolness round that crystal Spring,
Bandusia, prattling as when long ago
The Sabine Bard was moved her praise to sing;
Careless of flowers that in perennial blow
Round the moist marge of Persian fountains cling;
Heedless of Alpine torrents thundering
Through ice-built arches radiant as heaven's bow;
I seek the birthplace of a native Stream.—
All hail, ye mountains! hail, thou morning light!
Better to breathe at large on this clear height
Than toil in needless sleep from dream to dream:
Pure flow the verse, pure, vigorous, free, and bright,
For Duddon, long-loved Duddon, is my theme!

II

CHILD of the clouds! remote from every taint
Of sordid industry thy lot is cast;
Thine are the honours of the lofty waste;
Not seldom, when with heat the valleys faint,
Thy handmaid Frost with spangled tissue quaint
Thy cradle decks;—to chant thy birth, thou hast
No meaner Poet than the whistling Blast,
And Desolation is thy Patron-saint!
She guards thee, ruthless Power! who would not spare
Those mighty forests, once the bison's screen,
Where stalked the huge deer to his shaggy lair
Through paths and alleys roofed with darkest green;
Thousands of years before the silent air
Was pierced by whizzing shaft of hunter keen!

III

HOW shall I paint thee?—Be this naked stone
My seat, while I give way to such intent;
Pleased could my verse, a speaking monument,
Make to the eyes of men thy features known.
But as of all those tripping lambs not one
Outruns his fellows, so hath Nature lent
To thy beginning nought that doth present
Peculiar ground for hope to build upon.
To dignify the spot that gives thee birth,
No sign of hoar Antiquity's esteem
Appears, and none of modern Fortune's care;
Yet thou thyself hast round thee shed a gleam
Of brilliant moss, instinct with freshness rare;
Prompt offering to thy Foster-mother, Earth!

1 The deer alluded to is the Leigh, a gigantic species long since extinct.
IV

TAKE, cradled Nursling of the mountain, take
This parting glance, no negligent adieu!
A Protean change seems wrought while I pursue
The curves, a loosely-scattered chain doth make;
Or rather thou appear'st a glittering snake,
Silent, and to the gazer's eye untrue,
Thridding with sinuous lapse the rushes, through
Dwarf willows gliding, and by ferny brake.
Starts from a dizzy steep the undaunted Rill
Robed instantly in garb of snow-white foam;
And laughing dares the Adventurer, who hath clomb
So high, a rival purpose to fulfil;
Else let the dastard backward wend, and roam,
Seeking less bold achievement, where he will!

V

SOLE listener, Duddon! to the breeze that played
With thy clear voice, I caught the fitful sound
Wafted o'er sullen moss and craggy mound—
Unfruitful solitudes, that seemed to upbraid
The sun in heaven!—but now, to form a shade
For Thee, green alders have together wound
Their foliage; ashes flung their arms around;
And birch-trees risen in silver colonnade.
And thou hast also tempted here to rise,
'Mid sheltering pines, this Cottage rude and grey;
Whose ruddy children, by the mother's eyes
Carelessly watched, sport through the summer day,
Thy pleased associates:—light as endless May
On infant bosoms lonely Nature lies.

VI

FLOWERS

ERE yet our course was graced with social trees
It lacked not old remains of hawthorn bowers,
Where small birds warbled to their paramours;
And, earlier still, was heard the hum of bees;
I saw them ply their harmless robberies,
And caught the fragrance which the sundry flowers,
Fed by the stream with soft perpetual showers,
Plenteously yielded to the vagrant breeze.
There bloomed the strawberry of the wilderness; 
The trembling eyebright showed her sapphire blue; 
The thyme her purple, like the blush of Even; 
And if the breath of some to no caress 
Invited, forth they peeped so fair to view, 
All kinds alike seemed favourites of Heaven.

VII

'CHANGE me, some God, into that breathing rose!' 
The love-sick Stripling fancifully sighs, 
The envied flower beholding, as it lies 
On Laura's breast, in exquisite repose; 
Or he would pass into her bird, that throws 
The darts of song from out its wiry cage; 
Enraptured,—could he for himself engage 
The thousandth part of what the Nymph bestows; 
And what the little careless innocent 
Ungraciously receives. Too daring choice! 
There are whose calmer mind it would content 
To be an unculled floweret of the glen, 
Fearless of plough and scythe; or darkling wren 
That tunes on Duddon's banks her slender voice.

VIII

WHAT aspect bore the Man who roved or fled, 
First of his tribe, to this dark dell—who first 
In this pellucid Current slaked his thirst? 
What hopes came with him? what designs were spread 
Along his path? His unprotected bed 
What dreams encompassed? Was the intruder nursed 
In hideous usages, and rites accursed, 
That thinned the living and disturbed the dead? 
No voice replies;—both air and earth are mute; 
And Thou, blue Streamlet, murmuring yield'st no more 
Than a soft record, that, whatever fruit 
Of ignorance thou might'st witness heretofore, 
Thy function was to heal and to restore, 
To soothe and cleanse, not madden and pollute!

IX

THE STEPPING-STONES

THE struggling Rill insensibly is grown 
Into a Brook of loud and stately march, 
Crossed ever and anon by plank or arch; 
And, for like use, lo! what might seem a zone

1 See Note.
Chosen for ornament—stone matched with stone
In studied symmetry, with interspace
For the clear waters to pursue their race
Without restraint. How swiftly have they flown,
Succeeding—still succeeding! Here the Child
Puts, when the high-swoln Flood runs fierce and wild,
His budding courage to the proof; and here
Declining Manhood learns to note the sly
And sure encroachments of infirmity,
Thinking how fast time runs, life's end how near!

X

THE SAME SUBJECT

NOT so that Pair whose youthful spirits dance
With prompt emotion, urging them to pass;
A sweet confusion checks the Shepherd-lass;
Blushing she eyes the dizzy flood askance;
To stop ashamed—too timid to advance;
She ventures once again—another pause!
His outstretched hand He tauntingly withdraws—
She sues for help with piteous utterance!
Chidden she chides again; the thrilling touch
Both feel, when he renews the wished-for aid:
Ah! if their fluttering hearts should stir too much,
Should beat too strongly, both may be betrayed.
The frolic Loves, who, from yon high rock, see
The struggle, clap their wings for victory!

XI

THE FAERY CHASM

NO Fiction was it of the antique age:
A sky-blue stone, within this sunless cleft,
Is of the very footmarks unbereft
Which tiny Elves impressed;—on that smooth stage
Dancing with all their brilliant equipage
In secret revels—haply after theft
Of some sweet Babe—Flower stolen, and coarse Weed
left
For the distracted Mother to assuage
Her grief with, as she might!—But, where, oh! where
Is traceable a vestige of the notes
That ruled those dances wild in character?—
Deep underground? Or in the upper air,
On the shrill wind of midnight? or where floats
O'er twilight fields the autumnal gossamer?
HINTS FOR THE FANCY

ON, loitering Muse—the swift Stream chides us—on!
Albeit his deep-worn channel doth immure
Objects immense portrayed in miniature,
Wild shapes for many a strange comparison!
Niagaras, Alpine passes, and anon
Abodes of Naiads, calm abysses pure,
Bright liquid mansions, fashioned to endure
When the broad oak drops, a leafless skeleton,
And the solidities of mortal pride,
Palace and tower, are crumbled into dust!—
The Bard who walks with Duddon for his guide,
Shall find such toys of fancy thickly set:
Turn from the sight, enamoured Muse—we must;
And, if thou canst, leave them without regret!

OPEN PROSPECT

HAIl to the fields—with Dwellings sprinkled o'er,
And one small hamlet, under a green hill
Clustering, with barn and byre, and spouting mill!
A glance suffices;—should we wish for more,
Gay June would scorn us. But when bleak winds roar
Through the stiff lance-like shoots of pollard ash,
Dread swell of sound! loud as the gusts that lash
The matted forests of Ontario's shore
By wasteful steel unsmitten—then would I
Turn into port; and, reckless of the gale,
Reckless of angry Duddon sweeping by,
While the warm hearth exalts the mantling ale,
Laugh with the generous household heartily
At all the merry pranks of Donnerdale!

MOUNTAIN Stream! the Shepherd and his Cot
Are privileged Inmates of deep solitude;
Nor would the nicest Anchorite exclude
A field or two of brighter green, or plot
Of tillage-ground, that seemeth like a spot
Of stationary sunshine:—thou hast viewed
These only, Duddon! with their paths renewed
By fits and starts, yet this contents thee not.
Thee hath some awful Spirit impelled to leave,
Utterly to desert, the haunts of men,
Though simple thy companions were and few;
And through this wilderness a passage cleave
Attended but by thy own voice, save when
The clouds and fowls of the air thy way pursue!

Published 1807

XV

From this deep chasm, where quivering sunbeams
play
Upon its loftiest crags, mine eyes behold
A gloomy niche, capacious, blank, and cold;
A concave free from shrubs and mosses grey;
In semblance fresh, as if, with dire affray,
Some Statue, placed amid these regions old
For tutelary service, thence had rolled,
Startling the flight of timid Yesterday!
Was it by mortals sculptured?—weary slaves
Of slow endeavour! or abruptly cast
Into rude shape by fire, with roaring blast
Tempestuously let loose from central caves?
Or fashioned by the turbulence of waves,
Then, when o'er highest hills the Deluge passed?

XVI

American Tradition

Such fruitless questions may not long beguile
Or plague the fancy 'mid the sculptured shows
Conspicuous yet where Oroonoko flows;
There would the Indian answer with a smile
Aimed at the White Man's ignorance the while,
Of the Great Waters telling how they rose,
Covered the plains, and, wandering where they chose,
Mounted through every intricate defile,
Triumphant.—Inundation wide and deep,
O'er which his Fathers urged, to ridge and steep
Else unapproachable, their buoyant way;
And carved, on mural cliff's undreaded side,
Sun, moon, and stars, and beast of chase or prey;
Whate'er they sought, shunned, loved, or deified!

1 See Humboldt's Personal Narrative.
XVII

RETURN

A dark plume fetch me from yon blasted yew,
Perched on whose top the Danish Raven croaks;
Aloft, the imperial Bird of Rome invokes
Departed ages, shedding where he flew
Loose fragments of wild wailing, that bestrew
The clouds and thrill the chambers of the rocks;
And into silence hush the timorous flocks,
That, calmly couching while the nightly dew
Moistened each fleece, beneath the twinkling stars
Slept amid that lone Camp on Hardknot's height,
Whose Guardians bent the knee to Jove and Mars:
Or near that mystic Round of Druid frame
Tardily sinking by its proper weight
Deep into patient Earth, from whose smooth breast it came!

XVIII

SEATHWAITE CHAPEL

'Sacred Religion! mother of form and fear,'
Dread arbitress of mutable respect,
New rites ordaining when the old are wrecked,
Or cease to please the fickle worshipper;
Mother of Love! (that name best suits thee here)
Mother of Love! for this deep vale, protect
Truth's holy lamp, pure source of bright effect,
Gifted to purge the vapoury atmosphere
That seeks to stifle it;—as in those days
When this low Pile a Gospel Teacher knew,
Whose good works formed an endless retinue:
A Pastor such as Chaucer's verse portrays;
Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew;
And tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless praise!

XIX

TRIBUTARY STREAM

My frame hath often trembled with delight
When hope presented some far-distant good,
That seemed from heaven descending, like the flood
Of yon pure waters, from their aëry height

1 See Note.
Hurrying, with lordly Duddon to unite;
Who, 'mid a world of images imprest
On the calm depth of his transparent breast,
Appears to cherish most that Torrent white,
The fairest, softest, liveliest of them all!
And seldom hath ear listened to a tune
More lulling than the busy hum of Noon,
Swoln by that voice—whose murmur musical
Announces to the thirsty fields a boon
Dewy and fresh, till showers again shall fall.

XX

THE PLAIN OF DONNERDALE

The old inventive Poets, had they seen,
Or rather felt, the entrancement that detains
Thy waters, Duddon! 'mid these flowery plains;
The still repose, the liquid lapse serene,
Transferred to bowers imperishably green,
Had beautified Elysium! But these chains
Will soon be broken;—a rough course remains,
Rough as the past; where Thou, of placid mien,
Innocuous as a firstling of the flock,
And countenanced like a soft cerulean sky,
Shalt change thy temper; and, with many a shock
Given and received in mutual jeopardy,
Dance, like a Bacchanal, from rock to rock,
Tossing her frantic thyrsus wide and high!

XXI

WHENCE that low voice?—A whisper from the heart,
That told of days long past, when here I roved
With friends and kindred tenderly beloved;
Some who had early mandates to depart,
Yet are allowed to steal my path athwart
By Duddon's side; once more do we unite,
Once more beneath the kind Earth's tranquil light;
And smothered joys into new being start.
From her unworthy seat, the cloudy stall
Of Time, breaks forth triumphant Memory;
Her glistening tresses bound, yet light and free
As golden locks of birch, that rise and fall
On gales that breathe too gently to recall
Aught of the fading year's inclemency!
XXII

TRADITION

A LOVE-LORN Maid, at some far-distant time,
Came to this hidden pool, whose depths surpass
In crystal clearness Dian's looking-glass;
And, gazing, saw that Rose, which from the prime
Derives its name, reflected as the chime
Of echo doth reverberate some sweet sound:
The starry treasure from the blue profound
She longed to ravish;—shall she plunge, or climb
The humid precipice, and seize the guest
Of April, smiling high in upper air?

Desperate alternative! what fiend could dare
To prompt the thought?—Upon the steep rock's breast
The lonely Primrose yet renew its bloom,
Untouched memento of her hapless doom!

XXIII

SHEEP-WASHING

SAD thoughts, avaunt!—partake we their blithe cheer
Who gathered in betimes the unshorn flock
To wash the fleece, where haply bands of rock,
Checking the stream, make a pool smooth and clear
As this we look on. Distant Mountains hear,
Hear and repeat, the turmoil that unites
Clamour of boys with innocent despites
Of barking dogs, and bleatings from strange fear.
And what if Duddon's spotless flood receive
Unwelcome mixtures as the uncouth noise
Thickens, the pastoral River will forgive
Such wrong; nor need we blame the licensed joys,
Though false to Nature's quiet equipoise:
Frank are the sports, the stains are fugitive.

XXIV

THE RESTING-PLACE

MID-NOON is past;—upon the sultry mead
No zephyr breathes, no cloud its shadow throws:
If we advance unstrengthened by repose
Farewell the solace of the vagrant reed!
This Nook—with woodbine hung and straggling weed,
Tempting recess as ever pilgrim chose,
Half grot, half arbour—proffers to enclose
Body and mind, from molestation freed,
In narrow compass—narrow as itself:
Or if the Fancy, too industrious Elf,
Be loth that we should breathe awhile exempt
From new incitements friendly to our task,
Here wants not stealthy prospect, that may tempt
Loose Idless to forego her wily mask.

XXV

METHINKS 'twere no unprecedented feat
Should some benignant Minister of air
Lift, and encircle with a cloudy chair,
The One for whom my heart shall ever beat
With tenderest love;—or, if a safer seat
Atween his downy wings be furnished, there
Would lodge her, and the cherished burden bear
O'er hill and valley to this dim retreat!
Rough ways my steps have trod;—too rough and long
For her companionship; here dwells soft ease:
With sweets, that she partakes not, some distaste
Mingles, and lurking consciousness of wrong;
Languish the flowers; the waters seem to waste
Their vocal charm; their sparklings cease to please.

XXVI

RETURN, Content! for fondly I pursued,
Even when a child, the Streams—unheard, unseen;
Through tangled woods, impending rocks between;
Or, free as air, with flying inquest viewed
The sullen reservoirs whence their bold brood—
Pure as the morning, fretful, boisterous, keen,
Green as the salt-sea billows, white and green—
Poured down the hills, a choral multitude!
Nor have I tracked their course for scanty gains;
They taught me random cares and truant joys,
That shield from mischief and preserve from stains
Vague minds, while men are growing out of boys;
Maturer Fancy owes to their rough noise
Impetuous thoughts that brook not servile reins.
XXVII

FALLEN, and diffused into a shapeless heap,
Or quietly self-buried in earth's mould,
Is that embattled House, whose massy Keep
Flung from yon cliff a shadow large and cold.
There dwelt the gay, the bountiful, the bold;
Till nightly lamentations, like the sweep
Of winds—though winds were silent—struck a deep
And lasting terror through that ancient Hold.
Its line of Warriors fled;—they shrunk when tried
By ghostly power:—but Time's unsparing hand
Hath plucked such foes, like weeds, from out the land;
And now, if men with men in peace abide,
All other strength the weakest may withstand,
All worse assaults may safely be defied.

XXVIII

JOURNEY RENEWED

I ROSE while yet the cattle, heat-oppress'd,
Crowded together under rustling trees
Brushed by the current of the water-breeze;
And for their sakes, and love of all that rest,
On Duddon's margin, in the sheltering nest;
For all the startled scaly tribes that slink
Into his coverts, and each fearless link
Of dancing insects forged upon his breast;
For these, and hopes and recollections worn
Close to the vital seat of human clay;
Glad meetings, tender partings, that upstay
The drooping mind of absence, by vows sworn
In his pure presence near the trysting thorn—
I thanked the Leader of my onward way.

XXIX

No record tells of lance opposed to lance,
Horse charging horse, 'mid these retired domains;
Tells that their turf drank purple from the veins
Of heroes, fallen, or struggling to advance,
Till doubtful combat issued in a trance
Of victory, that struck through heart and reins
Even to the inmost seat of mortal pains,
And lightened o'er the pallid countenance.
Yet, to the loyal and the brave, who lie
In the blank earth, neglected and forlorn,
The passing Winds memorial tribute pay;
The Torrents chant their praise, inspiring scorn
Of power usurped; with proclamation high,
And glad acknowledgment, of lawful sway.

XXX

WHO swerves from innocence, who makes divorce
Of that serene companion—a good name,
Recovers not his loss; but walks with shame,
With doubt, with fear, and haply with remorse:
And oft-times he—who, yielding to the force
Of chance-temptation, ere his journey end,
From chosen comrade turns, or faithful friend—
In vain shall rue the broken intercourse.
Not so with such as loosely wear the chain
That binds them, pleasant River! to thy side:
Through the rough copse wheel thou with hasty stride;
I choose to saunter o'er the grassy plain,
Sure, when the separation has been tried,
That we, who part in love, shall meet again.

XXXI

THE Kirk of Ulpha to the pilgrim’s eye
Is welcome as a star, that doth present
Its shining forehead through the peaceful rent
Of a black cloud diffused o'er half the sky:
Or as a fruitful palm-tree towering high
O'er the parched waste beside an Arab's tent;
Or the Indian tree whose branches, downward bent,
Take root again, a boundless canopy.
How sweet were leisure! could it yield no more
Than 'mid that wave-washed Churchyard to recline,
From pastoral graves extracting thoughts divine;
Or there to pace, and mark the summits hoar
Of distant moon-lit mountains faintly shine,
Soothed by the unseen River's gentle roar.

XXXII

NOT hurled precipitous from steep to steep;
Lingering no more 'mid flower-enamelled lands
And blooming thickets; nor by rocky bands
Held; but in radiant progress toward the Deep
Where mightiest rivers into powerless sleep
Sink, and forget their nature—now expands
Majestic Duddon, over smooth flat sands
Gliding in silence with unfettered sweep!
Beneath an ampler sky a region wide
Is opened round him:—hamlets, towers, and towns,
And blue-topped hills, behold him from afar;
In stately mien to sovereign Thames allied
Spreading his bosom under Kentish downs,
With commerce freighted, or triumphant war.

XXXIII
CONCLUSION

BUT here no cannon thunders to the gale;
Upon the wave no haughty pendants cast
A crimson splendour: lowly is the mast
That rises here, and humbly spread, the sail;
While, less disturbed than in the narrow Vale
Through which with strange vicissitudes he passed,
The Wanderer seeks that receptacle vast
Where all his unambitious functions fail.
And may thy Poet, cloud-born Stream! be free—
The sweets of earth contentedly resigned,
And each tumultuous working left behind
At seemly distance—to advance like Thee;
Prepared, in peace of heart, in calm of mind
And soul, to mingle with Eternity!

XXXIV
AFTER-THOUGHT

I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away.—Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.
YARROW REVISITED, AND OTHER POEMS

COMPOSED (TWO EXCEPTED) DURING A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, AND ON THE ENGLISH BORDER, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1831

TO

SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.,

AS A TESTIMONY OF FRIENDSHIP AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF INTELLECTUAL OBLIGATIONS, THESE MEMORIALS ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 11, 1834

The following Stanzas are a memorial of a day passed with Sir Walter Scott and other Friends visiting the Banks of the Yarrow under his guidance, immediately before his departure from Abbotsford, for Naples.

The title 'Yarrow Revisited' will stand in no need of explanation for Readers acquainted with the Author's previous poems suggested by that celebrated Stream.

I

THE gallant Youth, who may have gained,
   Or seeks, a 'winsome Marrow'.
Was but an Infant in the lap
    When first I looked on Yarrow;
Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate
    Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
    Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,
   Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
   Were on the bough, or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—
   The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
   Transparence through the golden.
For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation:
No public and no private care
The freeborn mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of Youth,
With freaks of graceful folly,—
Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
Her Night not melancholy;
Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing;
If, then, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And Care waylays their steps—a Sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O Scott! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes;
And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot
For mild Sorento's breezy waves;
May classic Fancy, linking
With native Fancy her fresh aid,
Preserve thy heart from sinking!
Oh! while they minister to thee,
   Each vying with the other,
May Health return to mellow Age,
   With Strength, her venturous brother; 60
And Tiber, and each brook and rill
   Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
   Nor lose one ray of glory!

For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
   By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
   Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
   Wherever they invite Thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
   With gladness must requite Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
   Such looks of love and honour.
As thy own Yarrow gave to me
   When first I gazed upon her;
Beheld what I had feared to see,
   Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
   The holy and the tender. 70

And what, for this frail world, were all
   That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
   Memorial tribute offer?
Yea, what were mighty Nature's self?
   Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
   That hourly speaks within us?

Nor deem that localised Romance
   Plays false with our affections;
Unsanctifies our tears—made sport
   For fanciful dejections:
Ah, no! the visions of the past
   Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is—our changeful Life,
   With friends and kindred dealing.
SONNETS

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
In Yarrow's groves were centred;
Who through the silent portal arch
Of mouldering Newark entered;
And clomb the winding stair that once
Too timidly was mounted
By the 'last Minstrel,' (not the last!)
Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream!
Fulfil thy pensive duty,
Well pleased that future Bards should chant
For simple hearts thy beauty;
To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
Dear to the common sunshine,
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine!

1831

II

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM ABBOTSFORD,
FOR NAPLES

A Trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope!

Sept. 1831

III

A PLACE OF BURIAL IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

Part fenced by man, part by a rugged steep
That curbs a foaming brook, a Grave-yard lies;
The hare's best couching-place for fearless sleep;
Which moonlit elves, far seen by credulous eyes,
Enter in dance. Of church, or sabbath ties,
No vestige now remains; yet thither creep
Bereft Ones, and in lowly anguish weep
Their prayers out to the wind and naked skies.
Proud tomb is none; but rudely-sculptured knights,
By humble choice of plain old times, are seen
Level with earth, among the hillocks green;
Union not sad, when sunny daybreak smites
The spangled turf, and neighbouring thickets ring
With jubilate from the choirs of spring!

IV

ON THE SIGHT OF A MANSE IN THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

SAY, ye far-travelled clouds, far-seeing hills—
Among the happiest-looking homes of men
Scattered all Britain over, through deep glen,
On airy upland, and by forest rills,
And o'er wide plains cheered by the lark that trills
His sky-born warblings—does aught meet your ken
More fit to animate the Poet's pen,
Aught that more surely by its aspect fills
Pure minds with sinless envy, than the Abode
Of the good Priest: who, faithful through all hours
To his high charge, and truly serving God,
Has yet a heart and hand for trees and flowers,
Enjoys the walks his predecessors trod,
Nor covets lineal rights in lands and towers.

V

COMPOSED IN ROSLIN CHAPEL DURING A STORM

The wind is now thy organist;—a clank
(We know not whence) ministers for a bell
To mark some change of service. As the swell
Of music reached its height, and even when sank
The notes, in prelude, Roslin! to a blank
Of silence, how it thrilled thy sumptuous roof,
Pillars, and arches,—not in vain time-proof,
Though Christian rites be wanting! From what bank
Came those live herbs? by what hand were they sown
Where dew falls not, where rain-drops seem unknown?
Yet in the Temple they a friendly niche
Share with their sculptured fellows, that, green-grown,
Copy their beauty more and more, and preach,
Though mute, of all things blending into one.
VI
THE TROSACHS

THERE'S not a nook within this solemn Pass
But were an apt confessional for One
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

1831

VII

THE pibroch's note, discountenanced or mute;
The Roman kilt, degraded to a toy
Of quaint apparel for a half-spoilt boy;
The target mouldering like ungathered fruit;
The smoking steam-boat eager in pursuit,
As eagerly pursued; the umbrella spread
To weather-fend the Celtic herdsman's head—
All speak of manners withering to the root,
And of old honours, too, and passions high:
Then may we ask, though pleased that thought should range
Among the conquests of civility,
Survives imagination—to the change
Superior? Help to virtue does she give?
If not, O Mortals, better cease to live!

1831

VIII

COMPOSED IN THE GLEN OF LOCH ETIVE

'THIS Land of Rainbows spanning glens whose walls,
Rock-built, are hung with rainbow-coloured mists—
Of far-stretched Meres whose salt flood never rests—
Of tuneful Caves and playful Waterfalls—
Of Mountains varying momentarily their crests—
Proud be this Land! whose poorest huts are halls
Where Fancy entertains becoming guests;
While native song the heroic Past recalls.'
Thus, in the net of her own wishes caught,
The Muse exclaimed; but Story now must hide
Her trophies, Fancy crouch; the course of pride
Has been diverted, other lessons taught,
That make the Patriot-spirit bow her head
Where the all-conquering Roman feared to tread.

IX

EAGLES

Composed at Dunollie Castle in the Bay of Oban

DISHONOURED Rock and Ruin! that, by law
Tyrannic, keep the Bird of Jove embared
Like a lone criminal whose life is spared.
Vexed is he, and screams loud. The last I saw
Was on the wing; stooping, he struck with awe
Man, bird, and beast; then, with a consort paired,
From a bold headland, their loved aery’s guard,
Flew high above Atlantic waves, to draw
Light from the fountain of the setting sun.
Such was this Prisoner once; and, when his plumes
The sea-blast ruffles as the storm comes on,
Then, for a moment, he, in spirit, resumes
His rank ’mong freeborn creatures that live free,
His power, his beauty, and his majesty.

X

IN THE SOUND OF MULL

TRADITION, be thou mute! Oblivion, throw
Thy veil in mercy o’er the records, hung
Round strath and mountain, stamped by the ancient tongue
On rock and ruin darkening as we go,—
Spots where a word, ghost-like, survives to show
What crimes from hate, or desperate love, have sprung;
From honour misconceived, or fancied wrong,
What feuds, not quenched but fed by mutual woe.
Yet, though a wild vindictive Race, untamed
By civil arts and labours of the pen,
Could gentleness be scorned by those fierce Men,
Who, to spread wide the reverence they claimed
For patriarchal occupations, named
Yon towering Peaks, ‘Shepherds of Etive Glen?’

1 In Gaelic, Buachaill Eite.
XI
SUGGESTED AT TYNDRUM IN A STORM

ENOUGH of garlands, of the Arcadian crook, And all that Greece and Italy have sung
Of Swains reposing myrtle groves among! Ours couch on naked rocks,—will cross a brook
Swoln with chill rains, nor ever cast a look
This way or that, or give it even a thought
More than by smoothest pathway may be brought
Into a vacant mind. Can written book
Teach what they learn? Up, hardy Mountaineer!
And guide the Bard, ambitious to be One
Of Nature’s privy council, as thou art,
On cloud-sequestered heights, that see and hear
To what dread Powers He delegates his part
On earth, who works in the heaven of heavens, alone.

XII
THE EARL OF BREADALBANE’S RUINED MANSION, AND
FAMILY BURIAL-PLACE, NEAR KILLIN

WELL sang the Bard who called the grave, in strains
Thoughtful and sad, the ‘narrow house.’ No style
Of fond sepulchral flattery can beguile
Grief of her sting; nor cheat, where he detains
The sleeping dust, stern Death. How reconcile
With truth, or with each other, decked remains
Of a once warm Abode, and that new Pile,
For the departed, built with curious pains
And mausolean pomp? Yet here they stand
Together,—’mid trim walks and artful bowers,
To be looked down upon by ancient hills,
That, for the living and the dead, demand
And prompt a harmony of genuine powers;
Concord that elevates the mind, and stills.

XIII
‘REST AND BE THANKFUL’
At the Head of Glencroe

DOUBLING and doubling with laborious walk,
Who, that has gained at length the wished-for Height,
This brief this simple wayside Call can slight,
And rests not thankful? Whether cheered by talk
With some loved friend, or by the unseen hawk
Whistling to clouds and sky-born streams, that shine
At the sun’s outbreak, as with light divine,
Ere they descend to nourish root and stalk
Of valley flowers. Nor, while the limbs repose,
Will we forget that, as the fowl can keep
Absolute stillness, poised aloft in air,
And fishes front, unmoved, the torrent’s sweep,—
So may the Soul, through powers that Faith bestows,
Win rest, and ease, and peace, with bliss that Angels share.

XIV
HIGHLAND HUT

See what gay wild flowers deck this earth-built Cot,
Whose smoke, forth-issuing whence and how it may,
Shines in the greeting of the sun’s first ray:
Like wreaths of vapour without stain or blot.
The limpid mountain-rill avoids it not;
And why shouldst thou?—If rightly trained and bred,
Humanity is humble, finds no spot
Which her Heaven-guided feet refuse to tread.
The walls are cracked, sunk is the flowery roof,
Undressed the pathway leading to the door;
But love, as Nature loves, the lonely Poor;
Search, for their worth, some gentle heart wrong-proof,
Meek, patient, kind, and, were its trials fewer,
Belike less happy.—Stand no more aloof!

XV
THE HIGHLAND BROACH

The exact resemblance which the old Broach (still in use, though rarely met with, among the Highlanders) bears to the Roman Fibula must strike every one, and concurs with the plaid and kilt to recall to mind the communication which the ancient Romans had with this remote country.

To Tradition faith be due,
And echoes from old verse speak true,
Ere the meek Saint, Columba, bore
Glad tidings to Iona’s shore,
No common light of nature blessed
The mountain region of the west,
A land where gentle manners ruled
O’er men in dauntless virtues schooled,

1 See Note.
That raised, for centuries, a bar
Impervious to the tide of war:
Yet peaceful Arts did entrance gain
Where haughty Force had striven in vain;
And, 'mid the works of skilful hands,
By wanderers brought from foreign lands
And various climes, was not unknown
The clasp that fixed the Roman Gown;
The Fibula, whose shape, I ween,
Still in the Highland Broach is seen,
The silver Broach of massy frame,
Worn at the breast of some grave Dame
On road or path, or at the door
Of fern-thatched hut on heathy moor:
But delicate of yore its mould,
And the material finest gold;
As might be seem the fairest Fair,
Whether she graced a royal chair,
Or shed, within a vaulted hall,
No fancied lustre on the wall
Where shields of mighty heroes hung,
While Fingal heard what Ossian sung.

The heroic Age expired—it slept
Deep in its tomb:—the bramble crept
O'er Fingal's hearth; the grassy sod
Grew on the floors his sons had trod:
Malvina! where art thou? Their state
The noblest-born must abdicate;
The fairest, while with fire and sword
Come Spoilers—horde impelling horde,
Must walk the sorrowing mountains, drest
By ruder hands in homelier vest.
Yet still the female bosom lent,
And loved to borrow, ornament;
Still was its inner world a place
Reached by the dews of heavenly grace;
Still pity to this last retreat
Clove fondly; to his favourite seat
Love wound his way by soft approach,
Beneath a massier Highland Broach.

When alternations came of rage
Yet fiercer, in a darker age;
And feuds, where, clan encountering clan,
The weaker perished to a man;
For maid and mother, when despair
Might else have triumphed, baffling prayer,
One small possession lacked not power,
Provided in a calmer hour,
To meet such need as might befall—
Roof, raiment, bread, or burial:
For woman, even of tears bereft,
The hidden silver Broach was left.

As generations come and go,
Their arts, their customs, ebb and flow;
Fate, fortune, sweep strong powers away,
And feeble, of themselves, decay;
What poor abodes the heirloom hide,
In which the castle once took pride!
Tokens, once kept as boasted wealth,
If saved at all, are saved by stealth.
Lo! ships, from seas by nature barred,
Mount along ways by man prepared;
And in far-stretching vales, whose streams
Seek other seas, their canvass gleams.
Lo! busy towns spring up, on coasts
Thronged yesterday by airy ghosts;
Soon, like a lingering star forlorn
Among the novelties of morn,
While young delights on old encroach,
Will vanish the last Highland Broach.

But when, from out their viewless bed,
Like vapours, years have rolled and spread;
And this poor verse, and worthier lays,
Shall yield no light of love or praise;
Then, by the spade, or cleaving plough,
Or torrent from the mountain's brow,
Or whirlwind, reckless what his might
Entombs, or forces into light;
Blind Chance, a volunteer ally,
That oft befriends Antiquity,
And clears Oblivion from reproach,
May render back the Highland Broach.¹

¹ How much the Broach is sometimes prized by persons in humble stations
may be gathered from an occurrence mentioned to me by a female friend. She
had had an opportunity of benefiting a poor old woman in her own hut, who,
wishing to make a return, said to her daughter in Erse, in a tone of plaintive
earnestness, 'I would give anything I have, but I hope she does not wish
for my Broach!' and, uttering these words, she put her hand upon the
Broach which fastened her kerchief, and which, she imagined, had attracted
the eye of her benefactress.
XVI

THE BROWNIE

Upon a small island, not far from the head of Loch Lomond, are some remains of an ancient building, which was for several years the abode of a solitary Individual, one of the last survivors of the clan of Macfarlane, once powerful in that neighbourhood. Passing along the shore opposite this island in the year 1814, the Author learned these particulars, and that this person then living there had acquired the appellation of 'The Brownie.' See 'The Brownie's Cell,' [vol. ii. p. 30], to which the following is a sequel.

'HOW disappeared he?' Ask the newt and toad;
Ask of his fellow-men, and they will tell
How he was found, cold as an icicle,
Under an arch of that forlorn abode;
Where he, unpropped, and by the gathering flood
Of years hemmed round, had dwelt, prepared to try
Privation's worst extremities, and die
With no one near save the omnipresent God.
Verily so to live was an awful choice—
A choice that wears the aspect of a doom;
But in the mould of mercy all is cast
For Souls familiar with the eternal Voice;
And this forgotten Taper to the last
Drove from itself, we trust, all frightful gloom.

1831

XVII

TO THE PLANET VENUS, AN EVENING STAR

THOUGH joy attend Thee orient at the birth
Of dawn, it cheers the lofty spirit most
To watch thy course when Daylight, fled from earth,
In the grey sky hath left his lingering Ghost,
Perplexed as if between a splendour lost
And splendour slowly mustering. Since the Sun,
The absolute, the world-absorbing One,
Relinquished half his empire to the host
Emboldened by thy guidance, holy Star,
Holy as princely, who that looks on thee
Touching, as now, in thy humility
The mountain-borders of this seat of care,
Can question that thy countenance is bright,
Celestial Power, as much with love as light?

1831
IMMUREd in Bothwell's towers, at times the Brave
(So beautiful is Clyde) forgot to mourn
The liberty they lost at Bannockburn.
Once on those steeps I roamed at large, and have
In mind the landscape, as if still in sight;
The river glides, the woods before me wave;
Then why repine that now in vain I crave
Needless renewal of an old delight?
Better to thank a dear and long-past day
For joy its sunny hours were free to give
Than blame the present, that our wish hath crost.
Memory, like sleep, hath powers which dreams obey,
Dreams, vivid dreams, that are not fugitive;
How little that she cherishes is lost!

1831

XIX

PICTURE OF DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN, AT HAMILTON PALACE

A MID a fertile region green with wood
And fresh with rivers, well did it become
The ducal Owner, in his palace-home
To naturalise this tawny Lion brood;
Children of Art, that claim strange brotherhood
(Couched in their den) with those that roam at large
Over the burning wilderness, and charge
The wind with terror while they roar for food.
Satiate are these; and still to eye and ear;
Hence, while we gaze, a more enduring fear!
Yet is the Prophet calm, nor would the cave
Daunt him—if his Companions, now bedrowsed
Outstretched and listless, were by hunger roused:
Man placed him here, and God, he knows, can save.

1831

XX

THE AVON

(A feeder of the Annan)

A VON—a precious, an immortal name!
Yet is it one that other rivulets bear
Like this unheard-of, and their channels wear
Like this contented, though unknown to Fame:
For great and sacred is the modest claim
Of Streams to Nature’s love, where’er they flow;
And ne’er did Genius slight them, as they go,
Tree, flower, and green herb, feeding without blame.
But Praise can waste her voice on work of tears,
Anguish, and death: full oft where innocent blood
Has mixed its current with the limpid flood,
Her heaven-offending trophies Glory rears:
Never for like distinction may the good
Shrink from thy name, pure Rill, with unpleased ears.

XXI

SUGGESTED BY A VIEW FROM AN EMINENCE IN INGLEWOOD FOREST

T
HE forest huge of ancient Caledon
Is but a name, no more is Inglewood,
That swept from hill to hill, from flood to flood:
On her last thorn the nightly moon has shone;
Yet still, though unappropriate Wild be none,
Fair parks spread wide where Adam Bell might deign
With Clym o’ the Clough, were they alive again,
To kill for merry feast their venison.
Nor wants the holy Abbot’s gliding Shade
His church with monumental wreck bestrown;
The feudal Warrior-chief, a Ghost unlaid,
Hath still his castle, though a skeleton,
That he may watch by night, and lessons con
Of power that perishes, and rights that fade.

XXII

HART’S-HORN TREE, NEAR PENRITH

HERE stood an Oak, that long had borne affixed
To his huge trunk, or, with more subtle art,
Among its withering topmost branches mixed,
The palmy antlers of a hunted Hart,
Whom the Dog Hercules pursued—his part
Each desperately sustaining, till at last
Both sank and died, the life-veins of the chased
And chaser bursting here with one dire smart.
Mutual the victory, mutual the defeat!
High was the trophy hung with pitiless pride;
Say, rather, with that generous sympathy
That wants not, even in rudest breasts, a seat;
And, for this feeling's sake, let no one chide
Verse that would guard thy memory, Hart's-horn Tree!  

FANCY AND TRADITION

THE Lovers took within this ancient grove
Their last embrace; beside those crystal springs
The Hermit saw the Angel spread his wings
For instant flight; the Sage in yon alcove
Sate musing; on that hill the Bard would rove,
Not mute, where now the linnet only sings:
Thus everywhere to truth Tradition clings,
Or Fancy localises Powers we love.
Were only History licensed to take note
Of things gone by, her meagre monuments
Would ill suffice for persons and events:
There is an ampler page for man to quote,
A readier book of manifold contents,
Studied alike in palace and in cot.

COUNTLESS' PILLAR

On the roadside between Penrith and Appleby, there stands a pillar with the following inscription:—

'This Pillar was erected, anno 1656, By ye R. hono. Anne, Countess Dowager of Pembrock, etc., Daughter and sole heire of ye R. hono. George, Earl of Cumberland, etc., for a memorial of her last parting in this place with her good and pious mother, ye R. hono. Margaret, Countess Dowager of Cumberland, ye 2d day of April, 1616; in memory whereof she also left an annuity of £4 to be distributed to ye poor within this parish of Brougham every 2d day of April for ever, upon ye stone table here hard by. Laus Deo!'  

WHILE the Poor gather round, till the end of time
May this bright flower of Charity display
Its bloom, unfolding at the appointed day;
Flower than the loveliest of the vernal prime
Lovelier—transplanted from heaven's purest clime!
'Charity never faileth': on that creed,
More than on written testament or deed,
The pious Lady built with hope sublime.

1 See Note.
Alms on this stone to be dealt out, for ever!
'Laus Deo.' Many a Stranger passing by
Has with that Parting mixed a filial sigh,
Blest its humane Memorial's fond endeavour;
And, fastening on those lines an eye tear-glazed,
Has ended, though no Clerk, with 'God be praised!'

XXV

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES

(From the Roman Station at Old Penrith)

HOW profitless the relics that we cull,
Troubling the last holds of ambitious Rome,
Unless they chasten fancies that presume
Too high, or idle agitations lull!
Of the world's flatteries if the brain be full,
To have no seat for thought were better doom,
Like this old helmet, or the eyeless skull
Of him who gloried in its nodding plume.
Heaven out of view, our wishes what are they?
Our fond regrets tenacious in their grasp?
The Sage's theory? the Poet's lay?—
Mere Fibulae without a robe to clasp;
Obsolete lamps, whose light no time recalls;
Urns without ashes, tearless lacrymals!

XXVI

APOLOGY

FOR THE FOREGOING POEMS

No more: the end is sudden and abrupt,
Abrupt—as without preconceived design
Was the beginning; yet the several Lays
Have moved in order, to each other bound
By a continuous and acknowledged tie
Though unapparent—like those Shapes distinct
That yet survive ensculptured on the walls
Of palaces, or temples, 'mid the wreck
Of famed Persepolis; each following each,
As might beseem a stately embassy,
In set array; these bearing in their hands
Ensign of civil power, weapon of war,
Or gift to be presented at the throne
Of the Great King; and others, as they go
In priestly vest, with holy offerings charged,
Or leading victims drest for sacrifice.
Nor will the Power we serve, that sacred Power,
The Spirit of humanity, disdain
A ministration humble but sincere,
That from a threshold loved by every Muse
Its impulse took—that sorrow-stricken door,
Whence, as a current from its fountain-head,
Our thoughts have issued, and our feelings flowed,
Receiving, willingly or not, fresh strength
From kindred sources; while around us sighed
(Life's three first seasons having passed away)
Leaf-scattering winds; and hoar-frost sprinklings fell
(Foretaste of winter) on the moorland heights;
And every day brought with it tidings new
Of rash change, ominous for the public weal.
Hence, if dejection has too oft encroached
Upon that sweet and tender melancholy
Which may itself be cherished and caressed
More than enough, a fault so natural
(Even with the young, the hopeful, or the gay)
For prompt forgiveness will not sue in vain.

Between 1831 and 1835
THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

OR, THE FATE OF THE NORTONS

ADVERTISEMENT

During the Summer of 1807 I visited, for the first time, the beautiful country that surrounds Bolton Priory in Yorkshire; and the Poem of 'The White Doe,' founded upon a Tradition connected with that place, was composed at the close of the same year.

DEDICATION

In trellised shed with clustering roses gay,
And, Mary! oft beside our blazing fire,
When years of wedded life were as a day
Whose current answers to the heart's desire,
Did we together read in Spenser's Lay
How Una, sad of soul—in sad attire,
The gentle Una, of celestial birth,
To seek her Knight went wandering o'er the earth.

Ah, then, Belovèd! pleasing was the smart,
And the tear precious in compassion shed
For Her, who, pierced by sorrow's thrilling dart,
Did meekly bear the pang unmerited;
Meek as that emblem of her lowly heart
The milk-white Lamb which in a line she led,—
And faithful, loyal in her innocence,
Like the brave Lion slain in her defence.

Notes could we hear as of a faery shell
Attuned to words with sacred wisdom fraught;
Free Fancy prized each specious miracle,
And all its finer inspiration caught;
Till in the bosom of our rustic Cell
We by a lamentable change were taught
That 'bliss with mortal Man may not abide':
How nearly joy and sorrow are allied!

For us the stream of fiction ceased to flow,
For us the voice of melody was mute.
—But, as soft gales dissolve the dreary snow,
And give the timid herbage leave to shoot,
Heaven's breathing influence failed not to bestow
A timely promise of unlooked-for fruit,
Fair fruit of pleasure and serene content
From blossoms wild of fancies innocent.

1 See Note.
It soothed us—it beguiled us—then, to hear
Once more of troubles wrought by magic spell;
And griefs whose aery motion comes not near
The pangs that tempt the Spirit to rebel:
Then, with mild Una in her sober cheer,
High over hill and low adown the dell
Again we wandered, willing to partake
All that she suffered for her dear Lord's sake.

Then, too, this Song of mine once more could please,
Where anguish, strange as dreams of restless sleep,
Is tempered and allayed by sympathies
Aloft ascending, and descending deep,
Even to the inferior Kinds; whom forest-trees
Protect from beating sunbeams, and the sweep
Of the sharp winds;—fair Creatures!—to whom Heaven
A calm and sinless life, with love, hath given.

This tragic Story cheered us; for it speaks
Of female patience winning firm repose;
And, of the recompense that conscience seeks,
A bright, encouraging, example shows;
Needful when o'er wide realms the tempest breaks,
Needful amid life's ordinary woes;—
Hence not for them unfitted who would bless
A happy hour with holier happiness.

He serves the Muses erringly and ill,
Whose aim is pleasure light and fugitive:
O, that my mind were equal to fulfil
The comprehensive mandate which they give—
Vain aspiration of an earnest will!
Yet in this moral Strain a power may live,
Belovèd Wife! such solace to impart
As it hath yielded to thy tender heart.

Rydal Mount, Westmoreland,
April 20, 1815

'Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle—this way or that—
'Tis done; and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And has the nature of infinity.
Yet through that darkness (infinite though it seem
And irremovable) gracious openings lie,
By which the soul—with patient steps of thought
Now toiling, wafted now on wings of prayer—
May pass in hope, and, though from mortal bonds
Yet undelivered, rise with sure ascent
Even to the fountain-head of peace divine.'

'They that deny a God destroy Man's nobility: for certainly Man is of kin
to the Beast by his Body, and if he be not of kin to God by his Spirit, he is a
base ignoble Creature. It destroys likewise Magnanimity, and the raising of
humane Nature: for take an example of a Dog, and mark what a generosity
and courage he will put on, when he finds himself maintained by a Man, who
to him is instead of a God, or Melior Natura. Which courage is manifestly
such as that Creature without that confidence of a better Nature than his
own could never attain. So Man, when he resteth and assureth himself upon
Divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith which human
Nature in itself could not obtain.'

Lord Bacon.
FROM Bolton's old monastic tower
The bells ring loud with gladsome power;
The sun shines bright; the fields are gay
With people in their best array
Of stole and doublet, hood and scarf,
Along the banks of crystal Wharf,
Through the Vale retired and lowly,
Trooping to that summons holy.
And, up among the moorlands, see
What sprinklings of blithe company!
Of lasses and of shepherd grooms,
That down the steep hills force their way,
Like cattle through the budded brooms;
Path, or no path, what care they?
And thus in joyous mood they hie
To Bolton's mouldering Priory.

What would they there?—full fifty years
That sumptuous Pile, with all its peers,
Too harshly hath been doomed to taste
The bitterness of wrong and waste:
Its courts are ravaged; but the tower
Is standing with a voice of power,
That ancient voice which wont to call
To mass or some high festival;
And in the shattered fabric's heart
Remaineth one protected part;
A Chapel, like a wild-bird's nest,
Closely embowered and trimly drest;
And thither young and old repair,
This Sabbath-day, for praise and prayer.

Fast the churchyard fills;—anon
Look again, and they all are gone;
The cluster round the porch, and the folk
Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak!
And scarcely have they disappeared
Ere the prelusive hymn is heard:—
With one consent the people rejoice,
Filling the church with a lofty voice!
They sing a service which they feel:
For 'tis the sunrise now of zeal;
Of a pure faith the vernal prime—
In great Eliza's golden time.
A moment ends the fervent din,
And all is hushed, without and within;
For though the priest, more tranquilly,
Recites the holy liturgy,
The only voice which you can hear
Is the river murmuring near.
—When soft!—the dusky trees between,
And down the path through the open green,
Where is no living thing to be seen;
And through yon gateway, where is found,
Beneath the arch with ivy bound,
Free entrance to the churchyard ground—
Comes gliding in with lovely gleam,
Comes gliding in serene and slow,
Soft and silent as a dream,
A solitary Doe!
White she is as lily of June,
And beauteous as the silver moon
When out of sight the clouds are driven
And she is left alone in heaven;
Or like a ship some gentle day
In sunshine sailing far away,
A glittering ship, that hath the plain
Of ocean for her own domain.

Lie silent in your graves, ye dead!
Lie quiet in your churchyard bed!
Ye living, tend your holy cares;
Ye multitude, pursue your prayers;
And blame not me if my heart and sight
Are occupied with one delight!
'Tis a work for sabbath hours
If I with this bright Creature go:
Whether she be of forest bowers,
From the bowers of earth below;
Or a Spirit for one day given,
A pledge of grace from purest heaven.

What harmonious pensive changes
Wait upon her as she ranges
Round and through this Pile of state
Overthrown and desolate!
Now a step or two her way
Leads through space of open day,
Where the enamoured sunny light
Brightens her that was so bright;
Now doth a delicate shadow fall,
Falls upon her like a breath,
As she passes underneath:

Now some gloomy nook partakes
Of the glory that she makes,—
High-ribbed vault of stone, or cell,
With perfect cunning framed as well
Of stone, and ivy, and the spread
Of the elder's bushy head;
Some jealous and forbidding cell,
That doth the living stars repel,
And where no flower hath leave to dwell.

The presence of this wandering Doe
Fills many a damp obscure recess
With lustre of a saintly show;
And, reappearing, she no less
Sheds on the flowers that round her blow
A more than sunny liveliness.
But say, among these holy places,
Which thus assiduously she paces,
Comes she with a votary's task,
Rite to perform, or boon to ask?
Fair Pilgrim! harbours she a sense
Of sorrow, or of reverence?
Can she be grieved for quire or shrine,
Crushed as if by wrath divine?
For what survives of house where God
Was worshipped, or where Man abode;
For old magnificence undone;
Or for the gentler work begun
By Nature, softening and concealing,
And busy with a hand of healing?
Mourns she for lordly chamber's hearth
That to the sapling ash gives birth;
For dormitory's length laid bare
Where the wild rose blossoms fair;
Or altar, whence the cross was rent,
Now rich with mossy ornament?
—She sees a warrior carved in stone,
Among the thick weeds, stretched alone;
A warrior, with his shield of pride
Cleaving humbly to his side,
And hands in resignation prest,
Palm to palm, on his tranquil breast;
As little she regards the sight
As a common creature might:
If she be doomed to inward care,
Or service, it must lie elsewhere.
—But hers are eyes serenely bright,
And on she moves—with pace how light!
Nor spares to stoop her head, and taste
The dewy turf with flowers bestrown;
And thus she fares, until at last
Beside the ridge of a grassy grave
In quietness she lays her down;
Gentle as a weary wave
Sinks, when the summer breeze hath died,
Against an anchored vessel's side;
Even so, without distress, doth she
Lie down in peace, and lovingly.

The day is placid in its going,
To a lingering motion bound,
Like the crystal stream now flowing
With its softest summer sound:
So the balmy minutes pass,
While this radiant Creature lies
Couched upon the dewy grass,
PENSIVELY with downcast eyes.
—But now again the people raise
With awful cheer a voice of praise;
It is the last, the parting song;
And from the temple forth they throng,
And quickly spread themselves abroad,
While each pursues his several road.
But some—a variegated band
Of middle-aged, and old, and young,
And little children by the hand
Upon their leading mothers hung—
With mute obeisance gladly paid
Turn towards the spot, where, full in view,
The white Doe, to her service true,
Her sabbath couch has made.

It was a solitary mound;
Which two spears' length of level ground
Did from all other graves divide:
As if in some respect of pride;
Or melancholy's sickly mood,
Still shy of human neighbourhood;
Or guilt, that humbly would express
A penitential loneliness.

‘Look, there she is, my Child! draw near;
She fears not, wherefore should we fear?
She means no harm’;—but still the Boy,
To whom the words were softly said
Hung back, and smiled, and blushed for joy,
A shame-faced blush of glowing red!
Again the Mother whispered low,
‘Now you have seen the famous Doe;
From Rylstone she hath found her way
Over the hills this sabbath day;
Her work, whate’er it be, is done,
And she will depart when we are gone;
Thus doth she keep, from year to year,
Her sabbath morning, foul or fair.’

Bright was the Creature, as in dreams
The Boy had seen her, yea, more bright;
But is she truly what she seems?
He asks with insecure delight,
Asks of himself, and doubts,—and still
The doubt returns against his will:
Though he, and all the standers-by,
Could tell a tragic history
Of facts divulged, wherein appear
Substantial motive, reason clear,
Why thus the milk-white Doe is found
Couchant beside that lonely mound;
And why she duly loves to pace
The circuit of this hallowed place.
Nor to the Child’s enquiring mind
Is such perplexity confined:
For, spite of sober Truth that sees
A world of fixed remembrances
Which to this mystery belong,
If, undeceived, my skill can trace
The characters of every face,
There lack not strange delusion here,
Conjecture vague, and idle fear,
And superstitious fancies strong,
Which do the gentle Creature wrong.

That bearded, staff-supported Sire—
Who in his boyhood often fed
Full cheerily on convent-bread
And heard old tales by the convent-fire,
And to his grave will go with scars,
Relics of long and distant wars—
That Old Man, studious to expound
The spectacle, is mounting high
To days of dim antiquity;
When Lady Aäliza mourned
Her Son, and felt in her despair
The pang of unavailing prayer;
Her Son in Wharf's abysses drowned,
The noble Boy of Egremound.
From which affliction—when the grace
Of God had in her heart found place—
A pious structure, fair to see,
Rose up, this stately Priory!
The Lady's work;—but now laid low;
To the grief of her soul that doth come and go,
In the beautiful form of this innocent Doe:
Which, though seemingly doomed in its breast to sustain
A softened remembrance of sorrow and pain,
Is spotless, and holy, and gentle, and bright;
And glides o'er the earth like an angel of light.

Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door;
And through the chink in the fractured floor
Look down, and see a grisly sight;
A vault where the bodies are buried upright!
There, face by face, and hand by hand,
The Claphams and Mauleverers stand;
And, in his place, among son and sire,
Is John de Clapham, that fierce Esquire,
A valiant man, and a name of dread
In the ruthless wars of the White and Red;
Who dragged Earl Pembroke from Banbury church
And smote off his head on the stones of the porch!
Look down among them, if you dare;
Oft does the White Doe loiter there,
Prying into the darksome rent;
Nor can it be with good intent:
So thinks that Dame of haughty air,
Who hath a Page her book to hold,
And wears a frontlet edged with gold;
Harsh thoughts with her high mood agree—
Who counts among her ancestry
Earl Pembroke, slain so impiously!

That slender Youth, a scholar pale,
From Oxford come to his native vale,
He also hath his own conceit:
It is, thinks he, the gracious Fairy,
Who loved the Shepherd-lord to meet
In his wanderings solitary:
Wild notes she in his hearing sang,
A song of Nature’s hidden powers;
That whistled like the wind, and rang
Among the rocks and holly bowers.
’Twas said that She all shapes could wear;
And oftentimes before him stood,
Amid the trees of some thick wood,
In semblance of a lady fair;
And taught him signs, and showed him sights,
In Craven’s dens, on Cumbrian heights;
When under cloud of fear he lay,
A shepherd clad in homely grey;
Nor left him at his later day.
And hence, when he, with spear and shield,
Rode full of years to Flodden-field,
His eye could see the hidden spring,
And how the current was to flow;
The fatal end of Scöltland’s King,
And all that hopeless overthrow.
But not in wars did he delight,
This Clifford wished for worthier might;
Nor in broad pomp, or courtly state;
Him his own thoughts did elevate,—
Most happy in the shy recess
Of Barden’s lowly quietness.
And choice of studious friends had he
Of Bolton’s dear fraternity;
Who, standing on this old church tower,
In many a calm propitious hour,
Perused, with him, the starry sky;
Or, in their cells, with him did pry
For other lore,—by keen desire
Urged to close toil with chemic fire;
In quest belike of transmutations
Rich as the mine’s most bright creations.
But they and their good works are fled,
And all is now disquieted—
And peace is none, for living or dead!

Ah, pensive Scholar, think not so,
But look again at the radiant Doe!
What quiet watch she seems to keep,
Alone, beside that grassy heap!
Why mention other thoughts unmeet
For vision so composed and sweet?
While stand the people in a ring,
Gazing, doubting, questioning;
Yea, many overcome in spite
Of recollections clear and bright;
Which yet do unto some impart
An undisturbed repose of heart.
And all the assembly own a law
Of orderly respect and awe;
But see—they vanish one by one,
And last, the Doe herself is gone.

Harp! we have been full long beguiled
By vague thoughts, lured by fancies wild;
To which, with no reluctant strings,
Thou hast attuned thy murmurings;
And now before this Pile we stand
In solitude, and utter peace:
But, Harp! thy murmurs may not cease—
A Spirit, with his angelic wings,
In soft and breeze-like visitings,
Has touched thee—and a Spirit's hand:
A voice is with us—a command
To chant, in strains of heavenly glory,
A tale of tears, a mortal story!

CANTO SECOND

The Harp in lowliness obeyed;
And first we sang of the greenwood shade
And a solitary Maid;
Beginning, where the song must end,
With her, and with her sylvan Friend;
The Friend, who stood before her sight,
Her only unextinguished light;
Her last companion in a dearth
Of love, upon a hopeless earth.

For She it was—this Maid, who wrought
Meekly, with foreboding thought,
In vermeil colours and in gold
An unblest work; which, standing by,
Her Father did with joy behold,—
Exulting in its imagery;
A Banner, fashioned to fulfil
Too perfectly his headstrong will:
For on this Banner had her hand
Embroidered (such her Sire's command)
The sacred Cross; and figured there
The five dear wounds our Lord did bear;
Full soon to be uplifted high,
And float in rueful company!

It was the time when England's Queen
Twelve years had reigned, a Sovereign dread;
Nor yet the restless crown had been
Disturbed upon her virgin head;
But now the inly-working North
Was ripe to send its thousands forth,
A potent vassalage, to fight
In Percy's and in Neville's right,
Two Earls fast leagued in discontent,
Who gave their wishes open vent;
And boldly urged a general plea,
The rites of ancient piety
To be triumphantly restored,
By the stern justice of the sword!
And that same Banner, on whose breast
The blameless Lady had exprest
Memorials chosen to give life
And sunshine to a dangerous strife;
That Banner, waiting for the Call,
Stood quietly in Rylstone-hall.

It came; and Francis Norton said,
'O Father! rise not in this fray—
The hairs are white upon your head;
Dear Father, hear me when I say
It is for you too late a day!
Bethink you of your own good name:
A just and gracious Queen have we,
A pure religion, and the claim
Of peace on our humanity.—
'Tis meet that I endure your scorn;
I am your son, your eldest born;
But not for lordship or for land,
My Father, do I clasp your knees;
The Banner touch not, stay your hand,
This multitude of men disband,
And live at home in blameless ease;
For these my brethren's sake, for me;
And, most of all, for Emily!'
Tumultuous noises filled the hall;
And scarcely could the Father hear
That name—pronounced with a dying fall—
The name of his only Daughter dear,
As on the banner which stood near
He glanced a look of holy pride,
And his moist eyes were glorified;
Then did he seize the staff, and say:
‘Thou, Richard, bear’st thy father’s name,
Keep thou this ensign till the day
When I of thee require the same:
Thy place be on my better hand;—
And seven as true as thou, I see,
Will cleave to this good cause and me.’
He spake, and eight brave sons straightway
All followed him, a gallant band!

Thus, with his sons, when forth he came
The sight was hailed with loud acclaim
And din of arms and minstrelsy,
From all his warlike tenantry,
All horsed and harnessed with him to ride,—
A voice to which the hills replied!

But Francis, in the vacant hall,
Stood silent under dreary weight,—
A phantasm, in which roof and wall
Shook, tottered, swam before his sight;
A phantasm like a dream of night!
Thus overwhelmed, and desolate,
He found his way to a postern-gate;
And, when he waked, his languid eye
Was on the calm and silent sky;
With air about him breathing sweet,
And earth’s green grass beneath his feet;
Nor did he fail ere long to hear
A sound of military cheer,
Faint—but it reached that sheltered spot;
He heard, and it disturbed him not.

There stood he, leaning on a lance
Which he had grasped unknowingly,
Had blindly grasped in that strong trance,
That dimness of heart-agony;
There stood he, cleansed from the despair
And sorrow of his fruitless prayer.
The past he calmly hath reviewed:
But where will be the fortitude
Of this brave man, when he shall see
That Form beneath the spreading tree,
And know that it is Emily?

He saw her where in open view
She sate beneath the spreading yew—
Her head upon her lap, concealing
In solitude her bitter feeling:
‘Might ever son command a sire,
The act were justified to-day.’
This to himself—and to the Maid,
Whom now he had approached, he said—
‘Gone are they,—they have their desire;
And I with thee one hour will stay,
To give thee comfort if I may.’

She heard, but looked not up, nor spake;
And sorrow moved him to partake
Her silence; then his thoughts turned round,
And fervent words a passage found.

‘Gone are they, bravely, though misled;
With a dear Father at their head!
The Sons obey a natural lord;
The Father had given solemn word
To noble Percy; and a force
Still stronger bends him to his course.
This said, our tears to-day may fall
As at an innocent funeral.
In deep and awful channel runs
This sympathy of Sire and Sons;
Untried our Brothers have been loved
With heart by simple nature moved;
And now their faithfulness is proved:
For faithful we must call them, bearing
That soul of conscientious daring.
—There were they all in circle—there
Stood Richard, Ambrose, Christopher,
John with a sword that will not fail,
And Marmaduke in fearless mail,
And those bright Twins were side by side;
And there, by fresh hopes beautified,
Stood He, whose arm yet lacks the power
Of man, our youngest, fairest flower!
I, by the right of eldest born,
And in a second father's place,
Presumed to grapple with their scorn,
And meet their pity face to face;
Yea, trusting in God's holy aid,
I to my Father knelt and prayed;
And one, the pensive Marmaduke,
Methought, was yielding inwardly,
And would have laid his purpose by,
But for a glance of his Father's eye,
Which I myself could scarcely brook.

'Then be we, each and all, forgiven!
Thou, chiefly thou, my Sister dear,
Whose pangs are registered in heaven—
The stifled sigh, the hidden tear,
And smiles, that dared to take their place,
Meek filial smiles, upon thy face,
As that unhallowed Banner grew
Beneath a loving old Man's view.
Thy part is done—thy painful part;
Be thou then satisfied in heart!
A further, though far easier, task
Than thine hath been, my duties ask;
With theirs my efforts cannot blend,
I cannot for such cause contend;
Their aims I utterly forswear;
But I in body will be there.
Unarmed and naked will I go,
Be at their side, come weal or woe:
On kind occasions I may wait,
See, hear, obstruct, or mitigate.
Bare breast I take and an empty hand.'—1
Therewith he threw away the lance,
Which he had grasped in that strong trance;
Spurned it, like something that would stand
Between him and the pure intent
Of love on which his soul was bent.

'For thee, for thee, is left the sense
Of trial past without offence
To God or man; such innocence,
Such consolation, and the excess
Of an unmerited distress;
In that thy very strength must lie.
—O Sister, I could prophesy!

1 See the old Ballad,—'The Rising of the North.'
The time is come that rings the knell
Of all we loved, and loved so well:
Hope nothing, if I thus may speak
To thee, a woman, and thence weak:
Hope nothing, I repeat; for we
Are doomed to perish utterly:
'Tis meet that thou with me divide
The thought while I am by thy side,
Acknowledging a grace in this,
A comfort in the dark abyss.
But look not for me when I am gone,
And be no farther wrought upon:
Farewell all wishes, all debate,
All prayers for this cause, or for that!
Weep, if that aid thee; but depend
Upon no help of outward friend;
Espouse thy doom at once, and cleave
To fortitude without reprieve.
For we must fall, both we and ours—
This Mansion and these pleasant bowers,
Walks, pools, and arbours, homestead, hall—
Our fate is theirs, will reach them all;
The young horse must forsake his manger,
And learn to glory in a Stranger;
The hawk forget his perch; the hound
Be parted from his ancient ground;
The blast will sweep us all away—
One desolation, one decay!
And even this Creature! ’ which words saying,
He pointed to a lovely Doe,
A few steps distant, feeding, straying;
Fair Creature, and more white than snow!
' Even she will to her peaceful woods
Return, and to her murmuring floods,
And be in heart and soul the same
She was before she hither came;
Ere she had learned to love us all,
Herself beloved in Rylstone-hall.
—But thou, my Sister, doomed to be
The last leaf on a blasted tree;
If not in vain we breathed the breath
Together of a purer faith;
If hand in hand we have been led,
And thou, (O happy thought this day !)
Not seldom foremost in the way;
If on one thought our minds have fed,
And we have in one meaning read;
If, when at home our private weal
Hath suffered from the shock of zeal,
Together we have learned to prize
Forbearance and self-sacrifice;
If we like combatants have fared,
And for this issue been prepared;
If thou art beautiful, and youth
And thought endue thee with all truth—
Be strong;—be worthy of the grace
Of God, and fill thy destined place:
A Soul, by force of sorrows high,
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed humanity!

He ended,—or she heard no more;
He led her from the yew-tree shade,
And at the mansion’s silent door,
He kissed the consecrated Maid;
And down the valley then pursued,
Alone, the armèd Multitude.

CANTO THIRD

Now joy for you who from the towers
Of Brancepeth look in doubt and fear,
Telling melancholy hours!
Proclaim it, let your Masters hear
That Norton with his band is near!
The watchmen from their station high
Pronounced the word,—and the Earls descry,
Well-pleased, the armèd Company
Marching down the banks of Were.

Said fearless Norton to the pair
Gone forth to greet him on the plain—
‘This meeting, noble Lords! looks fair,
I bring with me a goodly train;
Their hearts are with you: hill and dale
Have helped us: Ure we crossed, and Swale,
And horse and harness followed—see
The best part of their Yeomanry!
—Stand forth, my Sons!—these eight are mine,
Whom to this service I commend;
Which way soe’er our fate incline,
These will be faithful to the end;
They are my all’—voice failed him here—
‘My all save one, a Daughter dear!'
Whom I have left, Love's mildest birth,
The meekest Child on this blessed earth.
I had—but these are by my side,
These Eight, and this is a day of pride!

The time is ripe. With festive din
Lo! how the people are flocking in,—
Like hungry fowl to the feeder's hand
When snow lies heavy upon the land.'

He spake bare truth; for far and near
From every side came noisy swarms
Of Peasants in their homely gear;
And, mixed with these, to Brancepeth came
Grave Gentry of estate and name,
And Captains known for worth in arms;
And prayed the Earls in self-defence
To rise, and prove their innocence.—
'Rise, noble Earls, put forth your might
For holy Church, and the People's right!'

The Norton fixed, at this demand,
His eye upon Northumberland,
And said; 'The Minds of Men will own
No loyal rest while England's Crown
Remains without an Heir, the bait
Of strife and factions desperate;
Who, paying deadly hate in kind
Through all things else, in this can find
A mutual hope, a common mind;
And plot, and pant to overwhelm
All ancient honour in the realm.
—Brave Earls! to whose heroic veins
Our noblest blood is given in trust,
To you a suffering State complains,
And ye must raise her from the dust.
With wishes of still bolder scope
On you we look, with dearest hope;
Even for our Altars—for the prize
In Heaven, of life that never dies;
For the old and holy Church we mourn,
And must in joy to her return.
Behold!'—and from his Son whose stand
Was on his right, from that guardian hand
He took the Banner, and unfurled
The precious folds—'behold,' said he,
'The ransom of a sinful world;
Let this your preservation be;
The wounds of hands and feet and side,  
And the sacred Cross on which Jesus died.  
—This bring I from an ancient hearth,  
These Records wrought in pledge of love  
By hands of no ignoble birth,  
A Maid o'er whom the blessed Dove  
Vouchsafed in gentleness to brood  
While she the holy work pursued.'  
‘Uplift the Standard!’ was the cry  
From all the listeners that stood round,  
‘Plant it,—by this we live or die.’  
The Norton ceased not for that sound,  
But said; ‘The prayer which ye have heard,  
Much injured Earls! by these preferred,  
Is offered to the Saints, the sigh  
Of tens of thousands, secretly.’  
‘Uplift it!’ cried once more the Band,  
And then a thoughtful pause ensued:  
‘Uplift it!’ said Northumberland—  
Whereat, from all the multitude  
Who saw the Banner reared on high  
In all its dread emblazonry,  
A voice of uttermost joy brake out:  
The transport was rolled down the river of Were,  
And Durham, the time-honoured Durham, did hear,  
And the towers of Saint Cuthbert were stirred by the shout!

Now was the North in arms:—they shine  
In warlike trim from Tweed to Tyne,  
At Percy's voice: and Neville sees  
His Followers gathering in from Tees,  
From Were, and all the little rills  
Concealed among the forked hills—  
Seven hundred Knights, Retainers all  
Of Neville, at their Master's call  
Had sate together in Raby Hall!  
Such strength that Earldom held of yore;  
Nor wanted at this time rich store  
Of well-appointed chivalry.  
—Not loth the sleepy lance to wield,  
And greet the old paternal shield,  
They heard the summons;—and, furthermore,  
Horsemen and Foot of each degree,  
Unbound by pledge of fealty,
Appeared, with free and open hate
Of novelties in Church and State;
Knight, burgher, yeoman, and esquire,
And Romish priest, in priest's attire.
And thus, in arms, a zealous Band
Proceeding under joint command,
To Durham first their course they bear;
And in Saint Cuthbert's ancient seat
Sang mass,—and tore the book of prayer,—
And trod the bible beneath their feet.

Thence marching southward smooth and free
'They mustered their host at Wetherby,
Full sixteen thousand fair to see',¹
The Choicest Warriors of the North!
But none for beauty and for worth
Like those eight Sons—who, in a ring,
(Ripe men, or blooming in life's spring)
Each with a lance, erect and tall,
A falchion, and a buckler small,
Stood by their Sire, on Clifford-moor,
To guard the Standard which he bore.
On foot they girt their Father round;
And so will keep the appointed ground
Where'er their march: no steed will he
Henceforth bestride;—triumphantly
He stands upon the grassy sod,
Trusting himself to the earth, and God.
Rare sight to embolden and inspire!
Proud was the field of Sons and Sire;
Of him the most; and, sooth to say,
No shape of man in all the array
So graced the sunshine of that day.
The monumental pomp of age
Was with this goodly Personage;
A stature undepressed in size,
Unbent, which rather seemed to rise,
In open victory o'er the weight
Of seventy years, to loftier height;
Magnific limbs of withered state;
A face to fear and venerate;
Eyes dark and strong; and on his head
Bright locks of silver hair, thick spread,
Which a brown morion half-concealed,
Light as a hunter's of the field;

¹ From the old Ballad.
And thus, with girdle round his waist,  
Whereon the Banner-staff might rest  
At need, he stood, advancing high  
The glittering, floating Pageantry.

Who sees him?—thousands see, and One  
With unparticipated gaze;  
Who, 'mong those thousands, friend hath none,  
And treads in solitary ways.  
He, following wheresoe'er he might,  
Hath watched the Banner from afar,  
As shepherds watch a lonely star,  
Or mariners the distant light  
That guides them through a stormy night.  
And now, upon a chosen plot  
Of rising ground, yon heathy spot!  
He takes alone his far-off stand,  
With breast unmailed, unweaponed hand.  
Bold is his aspect; but his eye  
is pregnant with anxiety,  
While, like a tutelary Power,  
He there stands fixed from hour to hour:  
Yet sometimes in more humble guise  
Upon the turf-clad height he lies  
Stretched, herdsman-like, as if to bask  
In sunshine were his only task,  
Or by his mantle's help to find  
A shelter from the nipping wind:  
And thus, with short oblivion blest,  
His weary spirits gather rest.  
Again he lifts his eyes; and lo!  
The pageant glancing to and fro;  
And hope is wakened by the sight,  
He thence may learn, ere fall of night,  
Which way the tide is doomed to flow.

To London were the Chieftains bent;  
But what avails the bold intent?  
A Royal army is gone forth  
To quell the Rising of the North;  
They march with Dudley at their head,  
And, in seven days' space, will to York be led!—  
Can such a mighty host be raised  
Thus suddenly, and brought so near?  
The Earls upon each other gazed,  
And Neville’s cheek grew pale with fear;
For, with a high and valiant name,
He bore a heart of timid frame;
And bold if both had been, yet they
'Against so many may not stay.'  
Back therefore will they hie to seize
A strong Hold on the banks of Tees;
There wait a favourable hour,
Until Lord Dacre with his power
From Naworth come; and Howard's aid
Be with them openly displayed.

While through the Host, from man to man,
A rumour of this purpose ran,
The Standard trusting to the care
Of him who heretofore did bear
That charge, impatient Norton sought
The Chieftains to unfold his thought,
And thus abruptly spake:—'We yield
(And can it be?) an unfought field!—
How oft has strength, the strength of heaven,
To few triumphantly been given!
Still do our very children boast
Of mitred Thurston—what a Host
He conquered!—Saw we not the Plain
(And flying shall behold again)
Where faith was proved?—while to battle moved
The Standard, on the Sacred Wain
That bore it, compassed round by a bold
Fraternity of Barons old;
And with those grey-haired champions stood,
Under the saintly ensigns three,
The infant Heir of Mowbray's blood—
All confident of victory!
Shall Percy blush, then, for his name?
Must Westmoreland be asked with shame
Whose were the numbers, where the loss,
In that other day of Neville's Cross?
When the Prior of Durham with holy hand
Raised, as the Vision gave command,
Saint Cuthbert's Relic—far and near
Kenned on the point of a lofty spear;
While the Monks prayed in Maiden's Bower
To God descending in his power.
Less would not at our need be due
To us, who war against the Untrue;—

1 From the old Ballad.
The delegates of Heaven we rise,
Convoked the impious to chastise:
We, we, the sanctities of old
Would re-establish and uphold:
Be warned—His zeal the Chiefs confounded,
But word was given, and the trumpet sounded:
Back through the melancholy Host
Went Norton, and resumed his post.
Alas! thought he, and have I borne
This Banner raised with joyful pride,
This hope of all posterity.
By those dread symbols sanctified;
Thus to become at once the scorn
Of babbling winds as they go by,
A spot of shame to the sun's bright eye,
To the light clouds a mockery!
—'Even these poor eight of mine would
stem—'
Half to himself, and half to them
He spake—'would stem, or quell, a force
Ten times their number, man and horse;
This by their own unaided might,
Without their father in their sight,
Without the Cause for which they fight;
A Cause, which on a needful day
Would breed us thousands brave as they.'
—So speaking, he his reverend head
Raised toward that Imagery once more:
But the familiar prospect shed
Despondency unfelt before:
A shock of intimations vain,
Dismay, and superstitious pain,
Fell on him, with the sudden thought
Of her by whom the work was wrought:—
Oh! wherefore was her countenance bright
With love divine and gentle light?
She would not, could not, disobey,
But her Faith leaned another way.
Ill tears she wept; I saw them fall,
I overheard her as she spake
Sad words to that mute Animal,
The White Doe, in the hawthorn brake;
She steeped, but not for Jesu's sake,
This Cross in tears: by her, and One
Unworthier far we are undone—
Her recreant Brother—he prevailed
Over that tender Spirit—assailed
Too oft, alas! by her whose head
In the cold grave hath long been laid:
She first in reason's dawn beguiled
Her docile, unsuspecting Child:
Far back—far back my mind must go
To reach the well-spring of this woe!

While thus he brooded, music sweet
Of border tunes was played to cheer
The footsteps of a quick retreat;
But Norton lingered in the rear,
Stung with sharp thoughts; and, ere the last
From his distracted brain was cast,
Before his Father, Francis stood,
And spake in firm and earnest mood.

'Though here I bend a suppliant knee
In reverence, and unarmèd, I bear
In your indignant thoughts my share;
Am grieved this backward march to see
So careless and disorderly.
I scorn your Chiefs—men who would lead,
And yet want courage at their need:
Then look at them with open eyes!
Deserve they further sacrifice?—
If—when they shrink, nor dare oppose
In open field their gathering foes,
(And fast, from this decisive day,
Yon multitude must melt away;)
If now I ask a grace not claimed
While ground was left for hope; unblamed
Be an endeavour that can do
No injury to them or you.
My Father! I would help to find
A place of shelter, till the rage
Of cruel men do like the wind
Exhaust itself and sink to rest;
Be Brother now to Brother joined!
Admit me in the equipage
Of your misfortunes, that at least,
Whatever fate remain behind,
I may bear witness in my breast
To your nobility of mind!'

'Thou Enemy, my bane and blight!
Oh! bold to fight the Coward's fight
Against all good — but why declare,  
At length, the issue of a prayer  
Which love had prompted, yielding scope  
Too free to one bright moment's hope?  
Suffice it that the Son, who strove  
With fruitless effort to allay  
That passion, prudently gave way;  
Nor did he turn aside to prove  
His Brothers' wisdom or their love—  
But calmly from the spot withdrew;  
His best endeavours to renew,  
Should e'er a kindlier time ensue.

CANTO FOURTH

'Tis night: in silence looking down,  
The Moon from cloudless ether sees  
A Camp, and a beleaguered Town,  
And Castle like a stately crown  
On the steep rocks of winding Tees;—  
And southward far, with moor between,  
Hill-top, and flood, and forest green,  
The bright Moon sees that valley small  
Where Rylstone's old sequestered Hall  
A venerable image yields  
Of quiet to the neighbouring fields;  
While from one pillared chimney breathes  
The smoke, and mounts in silver wreaths.  
—The courts are hushed;—for timely sleep  
The greyhounds to their kennel creep;  
The peacock in the broad ash-tree  
Aloft is roosted for the night,  
He who in proud prosperity  
Of colours manifold and bright  
Walked round, affronting the day-light;  
And higher still, above the bower  
Where he is perched, from yon lone Tower  
The hall-clock in the clear moon-shine  
With glittering clock points at nine.

Ah! who could think that sadness here  
Hath any sway? or pain, or fear?  
A soft and lulling sound is heard  
Of streams inaudible by day;  
The garden pool's dark surface, stirred  
By the night insects in their play,
Breaks into dimples small and bright;
A thousand, thousand rings of light
That shape themselves and disappear
Almost as soon as seen:—and lo!
Not distant far, the milk-white Doe—
The same who quietly was feeding
On the green herb, and nothing heeding,
When Francis, uttering to the Maid
His last words in the yew-tree shade,
Involved whate’er by love was brought
Out of his heart, or crossed his thought,
Or chance presented to his eye,
In one sad sweep of destiny—
The same fair Creature, who hath found
Her way into forbidden ground;
Where now—within this spacious plot
For pleasure made, a goodly spot,
With lawns and beds of flowers, and shades
Of trellis-work in long arcades,
And cirque and crescent framed by wall
Of close-clipt foliage green and tall,
Converging walks, and fountains gay,
And terraces in trim array—
Beneath yon cypress spiring high,
With pine and cedar spreading wide
Their darksome boughs on either side,
In open moonlight doth she lie;
Happy as others of her kind,
That, far from human neighbourhood,
Range unrestricted as the wind,
Through park, or chase, or savage wood.

But see the consecrated Maid
Emerging from a cedar shade
To open moonshine, where the Doe
Beneath the cypress-spire is laid;
Like a patch of April snow
Upon a bed of herbage green—
Lingering in a woody glade,
Or behind a rocky screen—
Lonely relic! which, if seen
By the shepherd, is passed by
With an inattentive eye.
Nor more regard doth She bestow
Upon the uncomplaining Doe
Now couched at ease, though oft this day
Not unperplexed nor free from pain,
When she had tried, and tried in vain,
Approaching in her gentle way,
To win some look of love, or gain
Encouragement to sport or play;
Attempts which still the heart-sick Maid
Rejected, or with slight repaid.

Yet Emily is soothed;—the breeze
Came fraught with kindly sympathies.
As she approached yon rustic Shed
Hung with late-flowering woodbine, spread
Along the walls and overhead,
The fragrance of the breathing flowers
Revived a memory of those hours
When here, in this remote alcove,
(While from the pendent woodbine came
Like odours, sweet as if the same)
A fondly-anxious Mother strove
To teach her salutary fears
And mysteries above her years.
Yes, she is soothed; an Image faint,
And yet not faint—a presence bright
Returns to her—that blessèd Saint
Who with mild looks and language mild
Instructed here her darling Child,
While yet a prattler on the knee,
To worship in simplicity
The invisible God, and take for guide
The faith reformed and purified.

'Tis flown—the Vision, and the sense
Of that beguiling influence;
'But oh! thou Angel from above,
Mute Spirit of maternal love,
That stood'st before my eyes, more clear
Than ghosts are fabled to appear
Sent upon embassies of fear;
As thou thy presence hast to me
Vouchsafed, in radiant ministry
Descend on Francis; nor forbear
To greet him with a voice, and say;—
"If hope be a rejected stay,
Do thou, my christian Son, beware
Of that most lamentable snare,
The self-reliance of despair!'
Then from within the embowered retreat
Where she had found a grateful seat
Perturbed she issues. She will go!
Herself will follow to the war,
And clasp her Father's knees;—ah, no!
She meets the insuperable bar,
The injunction by her Brother laid;
His parting charge—but ill obeyed—
That interdicted all debate,
All prayer for this cause or for that;
All efforts that would turn aside
The headstrong current of their fate:
Her duty is to stand and wait;
In resignation to abide
The shock, and finally secure
O'er pain and grief a triumph pure.
—She feels it, and her pangs are checked.
But now, as silently she paced
The turf, and thought by thought was chased,
Came One who, with sedate respect,
Approached, and, greeting her, thus spake;
'An old man's privilege I take:
Dark is the time—a woeful day!
Dear daughter of affliction, say
How can I serve you? point the way.'

'Rights have you, and may well be bold:
You with my Father have grown old
In friendship—strive—for his sake go—
Turn from us all the coming woe:
This would I beg; but on my mind
A passive stillness is enjoined.
On you, if room for mortal aid
Be left, is no restriction laid;
You not forbidden to recline
With hope upon the Will divine.'

'Hope,' said the old Man, 'must abide
With all of us whate'er betide.
In Craven's Wilds is many a den,
To shelter persecuted men:
Far under ground is many a cave,
Where they might lie as in the grave,
Until this storm hath ceased to rave:
Or let them cross the River Tweed,
And be at once from peril freed!'
‘Ah tempt me not!’ she faintly sighed;
‘I will not counsel nor exhort,
With my condition satisfied;
But you, at least, may make report
Of what befalls;—be this your task—
This may be done;—’tis all I ask!’

She spake—and from the Lady’s sight
The Sire, unconscious of his age,
Departed promptly as a Page
Bound on some errand of delight.
—The noble Francis—wise as brave,
Thought he, may want not skill to save.
With hopes in tenderness concealed,
Unarmed he followed to the field;
Him will I seek: the insurgent Powers
Are now besieging Barnard’s Towers,—
‘Grant that the Moon which shines this night
May guide them in a prudent flight!’

But quick the turns of chance and change,
And knowledge has a narrow range;
Whence idle fears, and needless pain,
And wishes blind, and efforts vain.—
The Moon may shine, but cannot be
Their guide in flight—already she
Hath witnessed their captivity.
She saw the desperate assault
Upon that hostile castle made;—
But dark and dismal is the vault
Where Norton and his sons are laid!
Disastrous issue!—he had said
‘This night yon faithless Towers must yield,
Or we for ever quit the field.
—Neville is utterly dismayed,
For promise fails of Howard’s aid;
And Dacre to our call replies
That he is unprepared to rise.
My heart is sick;—this weary pause
Must needs be fatal to our cause.
The breach is open—on the wall,
This night,—the Banner shall be planted!’
—’Twas done: his Sons were with him—all;
They belt him round with hearts undaunted;
And others follow;—Sire and Son
Leap down into the court;—‘’Tis won’—
They shout aloud—but Heaven decreed
That with their joyful shout should close
The triumph of a desperate deed
Which struck with terror friends and foes!
The friend shrinks back—the foe recoils
From Norton and his filial band;
But they, now caught within the toils,
Against a thousand cannot stand;—
The foe from numbers courage drew,
And overpowered that gallant few.
‘A rescue for the Standard!’ cried
The Father from within the walls;
But, see, the sacred Standard falls!—
Confusion through the Camp spread wide:
Some fled; and some their fears detained:
But ere the Moon had sunk to rest
In her pale chambers of the west,
Of that rash levy nought remained.

CANTO FIFTH

High on a point of rugged ground
Among the wastes of Rylstone Fell,
Above the loftiest ridge or mound
Where foresters or shepherds dwell,
An edifice of warlike frame
Stands single—Norton Tower its name—
It fronts all quarters, and looks round
O’er path and road, and plain and dell,
Dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream,
Upon a prospect without bound.

The summit of this bold ascent—
Though bleak and bare, and seldom free
As Pendle-hill or Pennygent
From wind, or frost, or vapours wet—
Had often heard the sound of glee
When there the youthful Nordons met,
To practise games and archery:
How proud and happy they! the crowd
Of Lookers-on how pleased and proud!
And from the scorching noon-tide sun,
From showers, or when the prize was won,
They to the Tower withdrew, and there
Would mirth run round, with generous fare;
And the stern old Lord of Rylstone-hall
Was happiest, proudest, of them all!
But now, his Child, with anguish pale,  
Upon the height walks to and fro;  
'Tis well that she hath heard the tale,  
Received the bitterness of woe:  
For she had hoped, had hoped and feared,  
Such rights did feeble nature claim;  
And oft her steps had hither steered,  
Though not unconscious of self-blame;  
For she her brother's charge revered,  
His farewell words; and by the same,  
Yea, by her brother's very name,  
Had, in her solitude, been cheered.

Beside the lonely watch-tower stood  
That grey-haired Man of gentle blood,  
Who with her Father had grown old  
In friendship; rival hunters they,  
And fellow warriors in their day;  
To Rylstone he the tidings brought;  
Then on this height the Maid had sought,  
And, gently as he could, had told  
The end of that dire Tragedy,  
Which it had been his lot to see.

To him the Lady turned; 'You said  
That Francis lives, he is not dead?'  

'Your noble brother hath been spared;  
To take his life they have not dared;  
On him and on his high endeavour  
The light of praise shall shine for ever!  
Nor did he (such Heaven's will) in vain  
His solitary course maintain;  
Not vainly struggled in the might  
Of duty, seeing with clear sight;  
He was their comfort to the last,  
Their joy till every pang was past.

'I witnessed when to York they came—  
What, Lady, if their feet were tied;  
They might deserve a good Man's blame;  
But marks of infamy and shame—  
These were their triumph, these their pride;  
Nor wanted 'mid the pressing crowd  
Deep feeling, that found utterance loud,
"Lo, Francis comes," there were who cried,
"A Prisoner once, but now set free!
'Tis well, for he the worst defied
Through force of natural piety;
He rose not in this quarrel, he,
For concord's sake and England's good,
Suit to his Brothers often made
With tears, and of his Father prayed—
And when he had in vain withstood
Their purpose—then did he divide,
He parted from them; but at their side
Now walks in unanimity.
Then peace to cruelty and scorn,
While to the prison they are borne,
Peace, peace to all indignity!"

'And so in Prison were they laid—
Oh hear me, hear me, gentle Maid,
For I am come with power to bless,
By scattering gleams, through your distress,
Of a redeeming happiness.
Me did a reverent pity move
And privilege of ancient love;
And, in your service, making bold,
Entrance I gained to that strong-hold.

'Your Father gave me cordial greeting;
But to his purposes, that burned
Within him, instantly returned:
He was commanding and entreat
And said—"We need not stop, my Son!
Thoughts press, and time is hurrying on"—
And so to Francis he renewed
His words, more calmly thus pursued.

"Might this our enterprise have sped,
Change wide and deep the Land had seen,
A renovation from the dead,
A spring-tide of immortal green:
The darksome altars would have blazed
Like stars when clouds are rolled away;
Salvation to all eyes that gazed,
Once more the Rood had been upraised
To spread its arms, and stand for aye.
Then, then—had I survived to see
New life in Bolton Priory;
The voice restored, the eye of Truth
Re-opened that inspired my youth;
To see her in her pomp arrayed—
This Banner (for such vow I made)
Should on the consecrated breast
Of that same Temple have found rest:
I would myself have hung it high,
Fit offering of glad victory!

"A shadow of such thought remains
To cheer this sad and pensive time;
A solemn fancy yet sustains
One feeble Being—bids me climb
Even to the last—one effort more
To attest my Faith, if not restore.

"Hear then," said he, "while I impart,
My Son, the last wish of my heart.
The Banner strive thou to regain;
And, if the endeavour prove not vain,
Bear it—to whom if not to thee
Shall I this lonely thought consign?—
Bear it to Bolton Priory,
And lay it on Saint Mary's shrine;
To wither in the sun and breeze
'Mid those decaying sanctities.
There let at least the gift be laid,
The testimony there displayed;
Bold proof that with no selfish aim,
But for lost Faith and Christ's dear name,
I helmeted a brow though white,
And took a place in all men's sight;
Yea, offered up this noble Brood,
This fair unrivalled Brotherhood,
And turned away from thee, my Son!
And left—but be the rest unsaid,
The name untouched, the tear unshed;—
My wish is known, and I have done:
Now promise, grant this one request,
This dying prayer, and be thou blest!"

'Then Francis answered—"Trust thy Son,
For, with God's will, it shall be done!"—

'The pledge obtained, the solemn word
Thus scarcely given, a noise was heard,
And Officers appeared in state
To lead the prisoners to their fate.
They rose, oh! wherefore should I fear
To tell, or, Lady, you to hear?
They rose—embraces none were given—
They stood like trees when earth and heaven
Are calm; they knew each other's worth,
And reverently the Band went forth.
They met, when they had reached the door,
One with profane and harsh intent
Placed there—that he might go before
And, with that rueful Banner borne
Aloft in sign of taunting scorn,
Conduct them to their punishment:
So cruel Sussex, unrestrained
By human feeling, had ordained.
The unhappy Banner Francis saw,
And, with a look of calm command
Inspiring universal awe,
He took it from the soldier's hand;
And all the people that stood round
Confirmed the deed in peace profound.
—High transport did the Father shed
Upon his Son—and they were led,
Led on, and yielded up their breath;
Together died, a happy death!—
But Francis, soon as he had braved
That insult, and the Banner saved,
Athwart the unresisting tide
Of the spectators occupied
In admiration or dismay,
Bore instantly his Charge away.'

These things, which thus had in the sight
And hearing passed of Him who stood
With Emily, on the Watch-tower height,
In Rylstone's woeful neighbourhood,
He told; and oftentimes with voice
Of power to comfort or rejoice;
For deepest sorrows that aspire
Go high, no transport ever higher.
'Yes—God is rich in mercy,' said
The old Man to the silent Maid,
'Yet, Lady! shines, through this black night,
One star of aspect heavenly bright;
Your Brother lives—he lives—is come
Perhaps already to his home;
Then let us leave this dreary place.'
She yielded, and with gentle pace,
Though without one uplifted look,  
To Rylstone-hall her way she took.

CANTO SIXTH

Why comes not Francis?—From the doleful City  
He fled,—and, in his flight, could hear  
The death-sounds of the Minster-bell:  
That sullen stroke pronounced farewell  
To Marmaduke, cut off from pity!  
To Ambrose that! and then a knell  
For him, the sweet half-opened Flower!  
For all—all dying in one hour!  
—Why comes not Francis? Thoughts of love  
Should bear him to his Sister dear  
With the fleet motion of a dove;  
Yea, like a heavenly messenger  
Of speediest wing, should he appear.  
Why comes he not?—for westward fast  
Along the plain of York he past;  
Reckless of what impels or leads,  
Unchecked he hurries on;—nor heeds  
The sorrow, through the Villages,  
Spread by triumphant cruelties  
Of vengeful military force,  
And punishment without remorse.  
He marked not, heard not, as he fled;  
All but the suffering heart was dead  
For him abandoned to blank awe,  
To vacancy, and horror strong:  
And the first object which he saw,  
With conscious sight, as he swept along—  
It was the Banner in his hand!  
He felt—and made a sudden stand.

He looked about like one betrayed:  
What hath he done? what promise made?  
Oh weak, weak moment! to what end  
Can such a vain oblation tend,  
And he the Bearer?—Can he go  
Carrying this instrument of woe,  
And find, find anywhere, a right  
To excuse him in his Country's sight?  
No; will not all men deem the change  
A downward course, perverse and strange?  
Here is it;—but how? when? must she,  
The unoffending Emily,  
Again this piteous object see?
Such conflict long did he maintain,
Nor liberty nor rest could gain:
His own life into danger brought
By this sad burden—even that thought,
Exciting self-suspicion strong,
Swayed the brave man to his wrong.
And how—unless it were the sense
Of all-disposing Providence,
Its will unquestionably shown—
How has the Banner clung so fast
To a palsied, and unconscious hand;
Clung to the hand to which it passed
Without impediment? And why,
But that Heaven's purpose might be known,
Doth now no hindrance meet his eye,
No intervention, to withstand
Fulfilment of a Father's prayer
Breathed to a Son forgiven, and blest
When all resentments were at rest,
And life in death laid the heart bare?—
Then, like a spectre sweeping by,
Rushed through his mind the prophecy
Of utter desolation made
To Emily in the yew-tree shade:
He sighed, submitting will and power
To the stern embrace of that grasping hour.
'No choice is left, the deed is mine—
Dead are they, dead!—and I will go,
And, for their sakes, come weal or woe,
Will lay the Relic on the shrine.'

So forward with a steady will
He went, and traversed plain and hill;
And up the vale of Wharf his way
Pursued;—and, at the dawn of day,
Attained a summit whence his eyes
Could see the Tower of Bolton rise.
There Francis for a moment's space
Made halt—but hark! a noise behind
Of horsemen at an eager pace!
He heard, and with misgiving mind.
—'Tis Sir George Bowes who leads the Band:
They come, by cruel Sussex sent;
Who, when the Norton's from the hand
Of death had drunk their punishment,
Bethought him, angry and ashamed,
How Francis, with the Banner claimed
As his own charge, had disappeared,
By all the standers-by revered.
His whole bold carriage (which had quelled
Thus far the Opposer, and repelled
All censure,—enterprise so bright
That even bad men had vainly striven
Against that overcoming light)
Was then reviewed, and prompt word given,
That to what place soever fled
He should be seized, alive or dead.

The troop of horse have gained the height
Where Francis stood in open sight.
They hem him round—'Behold the proof,'
They cried, 'the Ensign in his hand!
He did not arm, he walked aloof!
For why?—to save his Father's land;—
Worst Traitor of them all is he,
A Traitor dark and cowardly!'
But not before the warm life-blood
Had tinged more deeply, as it flowed,
The wounds the broidered Banner showed,
Thy fatal work, O Maiden, innocent as good!

Proudly the Horsemen bore away
The Standard; and where Francis lay
There was he left alone, unwept,
And for two days unnoticed slept.
For at that time bewildering fear
Possessed the country, far and near;
But, on the third day, passing by
One of the Norton Tenantry
Espied the uncovered Corse; the Man
Shrank as he recognised the face,
And to the nearest homesteads ran
And called the people to the place.
—How desolate is Rylstone-hall!
This was the instant thought of all;
And if the lonely Lady there
Should be; to her they cannot bear
This weight of anguish and despair.
So, when upon sad thoughts had prest
Thoughts sadder still, they deemed it best
That, if the Priest should yield assent
And no one hinder their intent,
Then, they, for Christian pity's sake,
In holy ground a grave would make;
And straightway buried he should be
In the Churchyard of the Priory.

Apart, some little space, was made
The grave where Francis must be laid.
In no confusion or neglect
This did they,—but in pure respect
That he was born of gentle blood;
And that there was no neighbourhood
Of kindred for him in that ground:
So to the Churchyard they are bound,
Bearing the body on a bier;
And psalms they sing—a holy sound
That hill and vale with sadness hear.

But Emily hath raised her head,
And is again disquieted;
She must behold!—so many gone,
Where is the solitary One?
And forth from Rylstone-hall stepped she,—
To seek her Brother forth she went,
And trembingly her course she bent
Toward Bolton’s ruined Priory.
She comes, and in the vale hath heard
The funeral dirge;—she sees the knot
Of people, sees them in one spot—
And darting like a wounded bird
She reached the grave, and with her breast
Upon the ground received the rest,—
The consummation, the whole ruth
And sorrow of this final truth!

CANTO SEVENTH

‘Powers there are
That touch each other to the quick—in modes
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
No soul to dream of.’

Thou Spirit, whose angelic hand
Was to the harp a strong command,
Called the submissive strings to wake
In glory for this Maiden’s sake,
Say, Spirit! whither hath she fled
To hide her poor afflicted head?
What mighty forest in its gloom
Enfolds her?—is a rifted tomb
Within the wilderness her seat?
Some island which the wild waves beat—
Is that the Sufferer’s last retreat?
Or some aspiring rock, that shrouds
Its perilous front in mists and clouds?
High-climbing rock, low sunless dale,
Sea, desert, what do these avail?
Oh take her anguish and her fears
Into a deep recess of years!

‘Tis done;—despoil and desolation
O’er Rylstone’s fair domain have blown;
Pools, terraces, and walks are sown
With weeds; the bowers are overthrown,
Or have given way to slow mutation,
While, in their ancient habitation
The Norton name hath been unknown.
The lordly Mansion of its pride
Is stripped; the ravage hath spread wide
Through park and field, a perishing
That mocks the gladness of the Spring!
And, with this silent gloom agreeing,
Appears a joyless human Being,
Of aspect such as if the waste
Were under her dominion placed.
Upon a primrose bank, her throne
Of quietness, she sits alone;
Among the ruins of a wood,
Erewhile a covert bright and green,
And where full many a brave tree stood,
That used to spread its boughs, and ring
With the sweet bird’s carolling.
Behold her, like a virgin Queen,
Neglecting in imperial state
These outward images of fate,
And carrying inward a serene
And perfect sway, through many a thought
Of chance and change, that hath been brought
To the subjection of a holy,
Though stern and rigorous, melancholy!
The like authority, with grace
Of awfulness, is in her face,—
There hath she fixed it; yet it seems
To o’ershadow by no native right
That face, which cannot lose the gleams,
Lose utterly the tender gleams,
Of gentleness and meek delight,
And loving-kindness ever bright:
Such is her sovereign mien:—her dress
(A vest with woollen cincture tied,
A hood of mountain-wool undyed)
Is homely,—fashioned to express
A wandering Pilgrim’s humbleness.

And she hath wandered, long and far,
Beneath the light of sun and star;
Hath roamed in trouble and in grief,
Driven forward like a withered leaf,
Yea, like a ship at random blown
To distant places and unknown.
But now she dares to seek a haven
Among her native wilds of Craven;
Hath seen again her Father’s roof,
And put her fortitude to proof;
The mighty sorrow hath been borne,
And she is thoroughly forlorn:
Her soul doth in itself stand fast,
Sustained by memory of the past
And strength of Reason; held above
The infirmities of mortal love;
Undaunted, lofty, calm, and stable,
And awfully impenetrable.

And so—beneath a mouldered tree,
A self-surviving leafless oak
By unregarded age from stroke
Of ravage saved—sate Emily.
There did she rest, with head reclined,
Herself most like a stately flower,
(Such have I seen) whom chance of birth
Hath separated from its kind,
To live and die in a shady bower,
Single on the gladsome earth.

When, with a noise like distant thunder,
A troop of deer came sweeping by;
And, suddenly, behold a wonder!
For One, among those rushing deer,
A single One, in mid career
Hath stopped, and fixed her large full eye
Upon the Lady Emily;
A Doe most beautiful, clear-white,
A radiant creature, silver-bright!

Thus checked, a little while it stayed;
A little thoughtful pause it made;
And then advanced with stealth-like pace,
Drew softly near her, and more near—
Looked round—but saw no cause for fear;
So to her feet the Creature came,
And laid its head upon her knee,
And looked into the Lady's face,
A look of pure benignity,
And fond unclouded memory.
It is, thought Emily, the same,
The very Doe of other years!—
The pleading look the Lady viewed,
And, by her gushing thoughts subdued,
She melted into tears—
A flood of tears that flowed apace
Upon the happy Creature's face.

Oh, moment ever blest! O Pair
Beloved of Heaven, Heaven's chosen care,
This was for you a precious greeting;
And may it prove a fruitful meeting!
THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

Joined are they, and the sylvan Doe
Can she depart? can she forego
The Lady, once her playful peer,
And now her sainted Mistress dear?
And will not Emily receive
This lovely chronicler of things
Long past, delights and sorrowings?
Lone Sufferer! will not she believe
The promise in that speaking face;
And welcome, as a gift of grace,
The saddest thought the Creature brings?

That day, the first of a re-union
Which was to teem with high communion,
That day of balmy April weather,
They tarried in the wood together.
And when, ere fall of evening dew,
She from her sylvan haunt withdrew,
The White Doe tracked with faithful pace
The Lady to her dwelling-place;
That nook where, on paternal ground,
A habitation she had found,
The Master of whose humble board
Once owned her Father for his Lord;
A hut, by tufted trees defended,
Where Rylstone brook with Wharf is blended.

When Emily by morning light
Went forth, the Doe stood there in sight.
She shrunk:—with one frail shock of pain
Received and followed by a prayer,
She saw the Creature once again;
Shun will she not, she feels, will bear;—
But, wheresoever she looked round,
All now was trouble-haunted ground;
And therefore now she deems it good
Once more this restless neighbourhood
To leave.—Unwooed, yet unforsworn,
The White Doe followed up the vale,
Up to another cottage, hidden
In the deep fork of Amerdale;
And there may Emily restore
Herself, in spots unseen before.
—Why tell of mossy rock, or tree,
By lurking Dernbrook's pathless side,
Haunts of a strengthening amity
That calmed her, cheered, and fortified?
For she hath ventured now to read
Of time, and place, and thought, and deed—
Endless history that lies
In her silent Follower's eyes;
Who with a power like human reason
Discerns the favourable season,
Skilled to approach or to retire,—
From looks conceiving her desire;
From look, deportment, voice, or mien,
That vary to the heart within.
If she too passionately wreathed
Her arms, or over-deeply breathed,
Walked quick or slowly, every mood
In its degree was understood;
Then well may their accord be true,
And kindliest intercourse ensue.
—Oh! surely 'twas a gentle rousing
When she by sudden glimpse espied
The White Doe on the mountain browsing,
Or in the meadow wandered wide!
How pleased, when down the Straggler sank
Beside her, on some sunny bank!
How soothed, when in thick bower enclosed,
They, like a nested pair, reposed!
Fair Vision! when it crossed the Maid
Within some rocky cavern laid,
The dark cave's portal gliding by,
White as whitest cloud on high
Floating through the azure sky.
—What now is left for pain or fear?
That Presence, dearer and more dear,
While they, side by side, were straying,
And the shepherd's pipe was playing,
Did now a very gladness yield
At morning to the dewy field,
And with a deeper peace endued
The hour of moonlight solitude.

With her Companion, in such frame
Of mind, to Rylstone back she came;
And, ranging through the wasted groves,
Received the memory of old loves,
Undisturbed and undistrest,
Into a soul which now was blest
With a soft spring-day of holy,
Mild, and grateful, melancholy:
Not sunless gloom or unenlightened,
But by tender fancies brightened. 1760

When the bells of Rylstone played
Their sabbath music—'God us ayde!'
That was the sound they seemed to speak;
Inscriptive legend which I ween
May on those holy bells be seen,
That legend and her Grandsire's name;
And oftentimes the Lady meek
Had in her childhood read the same;
Words which she slighted at that day;
But now, when such sad change was wrought, 1770
And of that lonely name she thought,
The bells of Rylstone seemed to say,
While she sate listening in the shade,
With vocal music, 'God us ayde';
And all the hills were glad to bear
Their part in this effectual prayer.

Nor lacked she Reason's firmest power;
But with the White Doe at her side:
Up would she climb to Norton Tower,
And thence look round her far and wide, 1780
Her fate there measuring;—all is stilled—
The weak One hath subdued her heart;
Behold the prophecy fulfilled,
Fulfilled, and she sustains her part!
But here her Brother's words have failed;
Here hath a milder doom prevailed;
That she, of him and all bereft,
Hath yet this faithful Partner left;
This one Associate that disproves
His words, remains for her, and loves. 1790
If tears are shed, they do not fall
For loss of him—for one, or all;
Yet, sometimes, sometimes doth she weep
Moved gently in her soul's soft sleep;
A few tears down her cheek descend
For this her last and living Friend.

Bless, tender Hearts, their mutual lot,
And bless for both this savage spot;
Which Emily doth sacred hold
For reasons dear and manifold— 1800
Here hath she, here before her sight,
Close to the summit of this height,
The grassy rock-encircled Pound
In which the Creature first was found.
So beautiful the timid Thrall
(A spotless Youngling white as foam)
Her youngest Brother brought it home;
The youngest, then a lusty boy,
Bore it, or led, to Rylstone-hall
With heart brimful of pride and joy!

But most to Bolton's sacred Pile,
On favouring nights, she loved to go;
There ranged through cloister, court, and aisle,
Attended by the soft-paced Doe;
Nor feared she in the still moonshine
To look upon Saint Mary's shrine;
Nor on the lonely turf that showed
Where Francis slept in his last abode.
For that she came; there oft she sate
Forlorn, but not disconsolate:
And, when she from the abyss returned
Of thought, she neither shrunk nor mourned;
Was happy that she lived to greet
Her mute Companion as it lay
In love and pity at her feet;
How happy in its turn to meet
The recognition! the mild glance
Beamed from that gracious countenance;
Communication, like the ray
Of a new morning, to the nature
And prospects of the inferior Creature!

A mortal Song we sing, by dower
Encouraged of celestial power;
Power which the viewless Spirit shed
By whom we were first visited;
Whose voice we heard, whose hand and wings
Swept like a breeze the conscious strings,
When, left in solitude, erewhile
We stood before this ruined Pile,
And, quitting unsubstantial dreams,
Sang in this Presence kindred themes;
Distress and desolation spread
Through human hearts, and pleasure dead,—
Dead—but to live again on earth,
A second and yet nobler birth;
Dire overthrow, and yet how high
The re-ascent in sanctity!
From fair to fairer; day by day
A more divine and loftier way!
Even such this blessèd Pilgrim trod,
By sorrow lifted towards her God;
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed mortality.
Her own thoughts loved she; and could bend
A dear look to her lowly Friend;
There stopped; her thirst was satisfied
With what this innocent spring supplied:
Her sanction inwardly she bore,
And stood apart from human cares:
But to the world returned no more,
Although with no unwilling mind
Help did she give at need, and joined
The Wharfdale peasants in their prayers.
At length, thus faintly, faintly tied
To earth, she was set free, and died.
Thy soul, exalted Emily,
Maid of the blasted family,
Rose to the God from whom it came!
—In Rylstone Church her mortal frame
Was buried by her Mother's side.

Most glorious sunset! and a ray
Survives—the twilight of this day—
In that fair Creature whom the fields
Support, and whom the forest shields;
Who, having filled a holy place,
Partakes, in her degree, Heaven's grace;
And bears a memory and a mind
Raised far above the law of kind;
Haunting the spots with lonely cheer
Which her dear Mistress once held dear:
Loves most what Emily loved most—
The enclosure of this churchyard ground;
Here wanders like a gliding ghost,
And every sabbath here is found;
Comes with the people when the bells
Are heard among the moorland dells,
Finds entrance through yon arch, where way
Lies open on the sabbath day;
Here walks amid the mournful waste
Of prostrate altars, shrines defaced,
And floors encumbered with rich show
Of fret-work imagery laid low;
Paces softly, or makes halt,  
By fractured cell, or tomb, or vault;  
By plate of monumental brass  
Dim-gleaming among weeds and grass,  
And sculptured Forms of Warriors brave:  
But chiefly by that single grave,  
That one sequestered hillock green,  
The pensive visitant is seen.  
There doth the gentle Creature lie  
With those adversities unmoved;  
Calm spectacle, by earth and sky  
In their benignity approved!  
And aye, methinks, this hoary Pile,  
Subdued by outrage and decay,  
Looks down upon her with a smile,  
A gracious smile, that seems to say—  
‘Thou, thou art not a Child of Time,  
But Daughter of the Eternal Prime!’
ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

IN SERIES

PART I

FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO BRITAIN TO
THE CONSUMMATION OF THE PAPAL DOMINION

'A verse may catch a wandering Soul, that flies
Profounder Tracts, and by a blest surprise
Convert delight into a Sacrifice.'

I

INTRODUCTION

I, WHO accompanied with faithful pace
Cerulean Duddon from its cloud-fed spring,
And loved with spirit ruled by his to sing
Of mountain-quiet and boon nature's grace;
I, who essayed the nobler Stream to trace
Of Liberty, and smote the plausive string
Till the checked torrent, proudly triumphing,
Won for herself a lasting resting-place;
Now seek upon the heights of Time the source
Of a Holy River, on whose banks are found
Sweet pastoral flowers, and laurels that have crowned
Full oft the unworthy brow of lawless force;
And, for delight of him who tracks its course,
Immortal amaranth and palms abound.

II

CONJECTURES

IF there be prophets on whose spirits rest
Past things, revealed like future, they can tell
What Powers, presiding o'er the sacred well
Of Christian Faith, this savage Island blessed

1 Mostly written in 1821, published 1822 (Ed.)
With its first bounty. Wandering through the west, Did holy Paul a while in Britain dwell, And call the Fountain forth by miracle, And with dread signs the nascent Stream invest? Or He, whose bonds dropped off, whose prison doors Flew open, by an Angel's voice unbarred? Or some of humbler name, to these wild shores Storm-driven; who, having seen the cup of woe Pass from their Master, sojourned here to guard The precious Current they had taught to flow?

III

TREPIDATION OF THE DRUIDS

SCREAMS round the Arch-druid's brow the sea-mew—white As Menai's foam; and toward the mystic ring Where Augurs stand, the Future questioning, Slowly the cormorant aims her heavy flight, Portending ruin to each baleful rite That, in the lapse of ages, hath crept o'er Diluvian truths, and patriarchal lore. Haughty the Bard: can these meek doctrines blight His transports? wither his heroic strains? But all shall be fulfilled;—the Julian spear A way first opened; and, with Roman chains, The tidings come of Jesus crucified; They come—they spread—the weak, the suffering, hear; Receive the faith, and in the hope abide.

IV

DRUIDICAL EXCOMMUNICATION

MERCY and Love have met thee on thy road, Thou wretched Outcast, from the gift of fire And food cut off by sacerdotal ire, From every sympathy that Man bestowed! Yet shall it claim our reverence, that to God, Ancient of days! that to the eternal Sire, These jealous Ministers of law aspire, As to the one sole fount whence wisdom flowed,

1 See Note.
2 This water-fowl was, among the Druids, an emblem of those traditions connected with the Deluge that made an important part of their mysteries. The Cormorant was a bird of bad omen.
Justice, and order. Tremblingly escaped,
As if with prescience of the coming storm,
That intimation when the stars were shaped;
And still, 'mid yon thick woods, the primal truth
Glimmers through many a superstitious form
That fills the Soul with unavailing ruth.

V

UNCERTAINTY

DARKNESS surrounds us; seeking, we are lost
On Snowdon's wilds, amid Brigantian coves,
Or where the solitary shepherd roves
Along the plain of Sarum, by the ghost
Of Time and shadows of Tradition, crost;
And where the boatman of the Western Isles
Slackens his course—to mark those holy piles
Which yet survive on bleak Iona's coast.
Nor these, nor monuments of eldest name,
Nor Taliesin's unforgotten lays,
Nor characters of Greek or Roman fame,
To an unquestionable Source have led;
Enough—if eyes, that sought the fountain-head
In vain, upon the growing Rill may gaze.

VI

PERSECUTION

LAMENT! for Diocletian's fiery sword
Works busy as the lightning; but instinct
With malice ne'er to deadliest weapon linked,
Which God's ethereal storehouses afford:
Against the Followers of the incarnate Lord
It rages;—some are smitten in the field—
Some pierced to the heart through the ineffectual shield
Of sacred home;—with pomp are others gored
And dreadful respite. Thus was Alban tried,
England's first Martyr, whom no threats could shake;
Self-offered victim, for his friend he died,
And for the faith; nor shall his name forsake
That Hill, whose flowery platform seems to rise
By Nature decked for holiest sacrifice.¹

¹ See Note.
VII

RECOVERY

As, when a storm hath ceased, the birds regain
Their cheerfulness, and busily retrim
Their nests, or chant a gratulating hymn
To the blue ether and bespangled plain;
Even so, in many a re-constructed fane,
Have the survivors of this Storm renewed
Their holy rites with vocal gratitude:
And solemn ceremonials they ordain
To celebrate their great deliverance;
Most feelingly instructed 'mid their fear—
That persecution, blind with rage extreme,
May not the less, through Heaven's mild countenance,
Even in her own despite, both feed and cheer;
For all things are less dreadful than they seem.

VIII

TEMPTATIONS FROM ROMAN REFINEMENTS

Watch, and be firm! for soul-subduing vice,
Heart-killing luxury, on your steps await.
Fair houses, baths, and banquets delicate,
And temples flashing, bright as polar ice,
Their radiance through the woods—may yet suffice
To sap your hardy virtue, and abate
Your love of Him upon whose forehead sate
The crown of thorns; whose life-blood flowed, the price
Of your redemption. Shun the insidious arts
That Rome provides, less dreading from her frown
Than from her wily praise, her peaceful gown,
Language, and letters;—these, though fondly viewed
As humanising graces, are but parts
And instruments of deadliest servitude!

IX

DISSENSIONS

That heresies should strike (if truth be scanned
Presumptuously) their roots both wide and deep,
Is natural as dreams to feverish sleep.
Lo! Discord at the altar dares to stand
ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

Uplifting toward high Heaven her fiery brand,
A cherished Priestess of the new-baptized!
But chastisement shall follow peace despised.
The Pictish cloud darkens the enervate land
By Rome abandoned; vain are suppliant cries,
And prayers that would undo her forced farewell;
For she returns not.—Awed by her own knell,
She casts the Britons upon strange Allies,
Soon to become more dreaded enemies
Than heartless misery called them to repel.

X

STRUETGLUEOF THE BRITONS AGAINST THE BARBARIANS

Rise!—they have risen: of brave Aneurin ask
How they have scourged old foes, perfidious friends:
The Spirit of Caractacus descends
Upon the Patriots, animates their task;—
Amazement runs before the towering casque
Of Arthur, bearing through the stormy field
The virgin sculptured on his Christian shield:—
Stretched in the sunny light of victory bask
The Host that followed Urien as he strode
O'er heaps of slain;—from Cambrian wood and moss
Druids descend, auxiliars of the Cross;
Bards, nursed on blue Plinlimmon's still abode,
Rush on the fight, to harps preferring swords,
And everlasting deeds to burning words!

XI

SAXON CONQUEST

Nor wants the cause the panic-striking aid
Of hallelujahs tost from hill to hill—
For instant victory. But Heaven's high will
Permits a second and a darker shade
Of Pagan night. Afflicted and dismayed,
The Relics of the sword flee to the mountains:
O wretched Land! whose tears have flowed like fountains;
Whose arts and honours in the dust are laid
By men yet scarcely conscious of a care
For other monuments than those of Earth;

1 See Note.
Who, as the fields and woods have given them birth,
Will build their savage fortunes only there;
Content, if foss, and barrow, and the girth
Of long-drawn rampart, witness what they were.

XII

MONASTERY OF OLD BANGOR

The oppression of the tumult—wrath and scorn—
The tribulation—and the glistening blades—
Such is the impetuous spirit that pervades
The song of Taliesin;—Ours shall mourn
The unarmed Host who by their prayers would turn
The sword from Bangor's walls, and guard the store
Of Aboriginal and Roman lore,
And Christian monuments, that now must burn
To senseless ashes. Mark! how all things swerve
From their known course, or vanish like a dream;
Another language spreads from coast to coast;
Only perchance some melancholy Stream
And some indignant Hills old names preserve,
When laws, and creeds, and people all are lost!

XIII

CASUAL INCITEMENT

A BRIGHT-HAIRED company of youthful slaves,
Beautiful strangers, stand within the pale
Of a sad market, ranged for public sale,
Where Tiber's stream the immortal City laves:
Angli by name; and not an Angel waves
His wing who could seem lovelier to man's eye
Than they appear to holy Gregory;
Who, having learnt that name, salvation craves
For Them, and for their Land. The earnest Sire,
His questions urging, feels, in slender ties
Of chiming sound, commanding sympathies;
De-irians—he would save them from God's Ire;
Subjects of Saxon Ælla—they shall sing
Glad Halle-lujahs to the eternal King!
XIV

GLAD TIDINGS

For ever hallowed be this morning fair,
Blest be the unconscious shore on which ye tread,
And blest the silver Cross, which ye, instead
Of martial banner, in procession bear;
The Cross preceding Him who floats in air,
The pictured Saviour!—By Augustin led,
They come—and onward travel without dread,
Chanting in barbarous ears a tuneful prayer—
Sung for themselves, and those whom they would free!
Rich conquest waits them:—the tempestuous sea
Of Ignorance, that ran so rough and high
And heeded not the voice of clashing swords,
These good men humble by a few bare words,
And calm with fear of God's divinity.

XV

PAULINUS

But, to remote Northumbria's royal Hall,
Where thoughtful Edwin, tutored in the school
Of sorrow, still maintains a heathen rule,
Who comes with functions apostolical?
Mark him, of shoulders curved, and stature tall,
Black hair, and vivid eye, and meagre cheek,
His prominent feature like an eagle's beak;
A Man whose aspect doth at once appal
And strike with reverence. The Monarch leans
Toward the pure truths this Delegate propounds,
Repeatedly his own deep mind he sounds
With careful hesitation,—then convenes
A synod of his Councillors:—give ear,
And what a pensive Sage doth utter, hear!

XVI

PERSUASION

MAN'S life is like a Sparrow, mighty King!
That—while at banquet with your Chiefs you sit
Housed near a blazing fire—is seen to flit
Safe from the wintry tempest. Fluttering,

1 See Note.
Here did it enter; there, on hasty wing,
Flies out, and passes on from cold to cold;
But whence it came we know not, nor behold
Whither it goes. Even such, that transient Thing,
The human Soul; not utterly unknown
While in the Body lodged, her warm abode;
But from what world She came, what woe or weal
On her departure waits, no tongue hath shown;
This mystery if the Stranger can reveal,
His be a welcome cordially bestowed! 

XVII
CONVERSION

PROMPT transformation works the novel Lore;
The Council closed, the Priest in full career
Rides forth, an arméd man, and hurls a spear
To desecrate the Fane which heretofore
He served in folly. Woden falls, and Thor
Is overturned; the mace, in battle heaved
(So might they dream) till victory was achieved,
Drops, and the God himself is seen no more.
Temple and Altar sink, to hide their shame
Amid oblivious weeds. 'O come to me,
Yc heavy laden!' such the inviting voice
Heard near fresh streams; and thousands, who rejoice
In the new Rite—the pledge of sanctity,
Shall, by regenerate life, the promise claim.

XVIII
APOLOGY

NOR scorn the aid which Fancy oft doth lend
The Soul's eternal interests to promote:
Death, darkness, danger, are our natural lot;
And evil Spirits may our walk attend
For aught the wisest know or comprehend;
Then be good Spirits free to breathe a note
Of elevation; let their odours float
Around these Converts; and their glories blend,
The midnight stars outshining, or the blaze
Of the noon-day. Nor doubt that golden cords

1 See Note.
Of good works, mingling with the visions, raise
The Soul to purer worlds: and who the line
Shall draw, the limits of the power define,
That even imperfect faith to man affords?

XIX

PRIMITIVE SAXON CLERGY

How beautiful your presence, how benign,
   Servants of God! who not a thought will share
With the vain world; who, outwardly as bare
As winter trees, yield no fallacious sign
That the firm soul is clothed with fruit divine!
Such Priest, when service worthy of his care
Has called him forth to breathe the common air,
Might seem a saintly Image from its shrine
Descended:—happy are the eyes that meet
The Apparition; evil thoughts are stayed
At his approach, and low-bowed necks entreat
A benediction from his voice or hand;
Whence grace, through which the heart can understand,
And vows, that bind the will, in silence made.

XX

OTHER INFLUENCES

Ah, when the Body, round which in love we clung,
   Is chilled by death, does mutual service fail?
Is tender pity then of no avail?
Are intercessions of the fervent tongue
A waste of hope?—From this sad source have sprung
Rites that console the Spirit, under grief
Which ill can brook more rational relief:
Hence, prayers are shaped amiss, and dirges sung
For Souls whose doom is fixed! The way is smooth
For Power that travels with the human heart:
Confession ministers the pang to soothe
In him who at the ghost of guilt doth start.
Ye holy Men, so earnest in your care,
Of your own mighty instruments beware!

1 See Note.
XXI

SECLUSION

LANCE, shield, and sword relinquished—at his side
A bead-roll, in his hand a clasped book,
Or staff more harmless than a shepherd's crook,
The war-worn Chieftain quits the world—to hide
His thin autumnal locks where Monks abide
In cloistered privacy. But not to dwell
In soft repose he comes. Within his cell,
Round the decaying trunk of human pride,
At morn, and eve, and midnight's silent hour,
Do penitential cogitations cling;
Like ivy, round some ancient elm, they twine
In grisly folds and strictures serpentine;
Yet, while they strangle, a fair growth they bring,
For recompense—their own perennial bower.

XXII

CONTINUED

METHINKS that to some vacant hermitage
My feet would rather turn—to some dry nook
Scooped out of living rock, and near a brook
Hurled down a mountain-cove from stage to stage,
Yet tempering, for my sight, its bustling rage
In the soft heaven of a translucent pool;
Thence creeping under sylvan arches cool,
Fit haunt of shapes whose glorious equipage
Would elevate my dreams. A beechen bowl,
A maple dish, my furniture should be;
Crisp, yellow leaves my bed; the hooting owl
My night-watch: nor should e'er the crested fowl
From thorp or vill his matins sound for me,
Tired of the world and all its industry.

XXIII

REPROOF

BUT what if One, through grove or flowery mead,
Indulging thus at will the creeping feet
Of a voluptuous indolence, should meet
Thy hovering Shade, O venerable Bede!
The saint, the scholar, from a circle freed
Of toil stupendous, in a hallowed seat
Of learning, where thou heard'st the billows beat
On a wild coast, rough monitors to feed
Perpetual industry. Sublime Recluse!
The recreant soul, that dares to shun the debt
Imposed on human kind, must first forget
Thy diligence, thy unrelaxing use
Of a long life; and, in the hour of death,
The last dear service of thy passing breath!

XXIV

SAXON MONASTERIES, AND LIGHTS AND SHADES OF THE RELIGION

By such examples moved to unbought pains,
The people work like congregated bees;
Eager to build the quiet Fortresses
Where Piety, as they believe, obtains
From Heaven a general blessing; timely rains
Or needful sunshine; prosperous enterprise,
Justice and peace:—bold faith! yet also rise
The sacred Structures for less doubtful gains.
The Sensual think with reverence of the palms
Which the chaste Votaries seek, beyond the grave;
If penance be redeemable, thence alms
Flow to the poor, and freedom to the slave;
And if full oft the Sanctuary save
Lives black with guilt, ferocity it calms.

XXV

MISSIONS AND TRAVELS

Not sedentary all: there are who roam
To scatter seeds of life on barbarous shores;
Or quit with zealous step their knee-worn floors
To seek the general mart of Christendom;
Whence they, like richly-laden merchants, come
To their beloved cells:—or shall we say
That, like the Red-cross Knight, they urge their way,
To lead in memorable triumph home
Truth, their immortal Una? Babylon,
Learned and wise, hath perished utterly,
Nor leaves her Speech one word to aid the sigh
That would lament her;—Memphis, Tyre, are gone
With all their Arts,—but classic lore glides on
By these Religious saved for all posterity.

1 He expired dictating the last words of a translation of St. John's Gospel.
XXVI
ALFRED

Behold a pupil of the monkish gown,
The pious Alfred, King to Justice dear!
Lord of the harp and liberating spear;
Mirror of Princes! Indigent Renown
Might range the starry ether for a crown
Equal to his deserts, who, like the year,
Pours forth his bounty, like the day doth cheer,
And awes like night with mercy-tempered frown.
Ease from this noble miser of his time
No moment steals; pain narrows not his cares.1
Though small his kingdom as a spark or gem,
Of Alfred boasts remote Jerusalem,
And Christian India, through her wide-spread clime,
In sacred converse gifts with Alfred shares.

XXVII
HIS DESCENDANTS

When thy great soul was freed from mortal chains,
Darling of England! many a bitter shower
Fell on thy tomb; but emulative power
Flowed in thy line through undegenerate veins.
The Race of Alfred covet glorious pains
When dangers threaten, dangers ever new!
Black tempests bursting, blacker still in view!
But manly sovereignty its hold retains;
The root sincere, the branches bold to strive
With the fierce tempest, while, within the round
Of their protection, gentle virtues thrive;
As oft, 'mid some green plot of open ground,
Wide as the oak extends its dewy gloom,
The fostered hyacinths spread their purple bloom.

XXVIII
INFLUENCE ABUSED

URGED by Ambition, who with subtlest skill
Changes her means, the Enthusiast as a dupe
Shall soar, and as a hypocrite can stoop,
And turn the instruments of good to ill,
Moulding the credulous people to his will.

1 See Note.
Such Dunstan:—from its Benedictine coop
Issues the master Mind, at whose fell swoop
The chaste affections tremble to fulfil
Their purposes. Behold, pre-signified,
The Might of spiritual sway! his thoughts, his dreams,
Do in the supernatural world abide:
So vaunt a throng of Followers, filled with pride
In what they see of virtues pushed to extremes,
And sorceries of talent misapplied.

XXIX
DANISH CONQUESTS

Woe to the Crown that doth the Cowl obey! Dissension, checking arms that would restrain
The incessant Rovers of the northern main,
Helps to restore and spread a Pagan sway:
But Gospel-truth is potent to allay
Fierceness and rage; and soon the cruel Dane
Feels, through the influence of her gentle reign,
His native superstitions melt away.
Thus, often, when thick gloom the east o’ershrouds,
The full-orbed Moon, slow-climbing, doth appear
Silently to consume the heavy clouds;
How no one can resolve; but every eye
Around her sees, while air is hushed, a clear
And widening circuit of ethereal sky.

XXX
CANUTE

A PLEASANT music floats along the Mere,
From Monks in Ely chanting service high,
While-as Canute the King is rowing by:
‘My Oarsmen,’ quoth the mighty King, ‘draw near,
That we the sweet song of the Monks may hear!’
He listens (all past conquests and all schemes
Of future vanishing like empty dreams)
Heart-touched, and haply not without a tear.
The Royal Minstrel, ere the choir is still,
While his free Barge skims the smooth flood along,
Gives to that rapture an accordant Rhyme.
O suffering Earth! be thankful; sternest clime
And rudest age are subject to the thrill
Of heaven-descended Piety and Song.

1 See Note.
2 Which is still extant.
XXXI

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

THE woman-hearted Confessor prepares
The evanescence of the Saxou line.
Hark! 'tis the tolling Curfew!—the stars shine;
But of the lights that cherish household cares
And festive gladness, burns not one that dares
To twinkle after that dull stroke of thine,
Emblem and instrument, from Thames to Tyne,
Of force that daunts, and cunning that ensnares!
Yet as the terrors of the lordly bell,
That quench, from hut to palace, lamps and fires,
Touch not the tapers of the sacred quires;
Even so a thraldom, studious to expel
Old laws, and ancient customs to derange,
To Creed or Ritual brings no fatal change.

XXXII

COLDLY we spake. The Saxons, overpowered
By wrong triumphant through its own excess,
From fields laid waste, from house and home devoured
By flames, look up to heaven and crave redress
From God's eternal justice. Pitiless
Though men be, there are angels that can feel
For wounds that death alone has power to heal,
For penitent guilt, and innocent distress.
And has a Champion risen in arms to try
His Country's virtue, fought, and breathes no more;
Him in their hearts the people canonize;
And far above the mine's most precious ore
The least small pittance of bare mould they prize
Scooped from the sacred earth where his dear relics lie.

XXXIII

THE COUNCIL OF CLERMONT

'AND shall,' the Pontiff asks, 'profaneness flow
From Nazareth—source of Christian piety,
From Bethlehem, from the Mounts of Agony
And glorified Ascension? Warriors, go,
With prayers and blessings we your path will sow;
Like Moses hold our hands erect, till ye
Have chased far off by righteous victory
These sons of Amalek, or laid them low!'—
'God willeth it,' the whole assembly cry;
Shout which the enraptured multitude astounds!  
The Council-roof and Clermont's towers reply;—  
'God willeth it,' from hill to hill rebounds,  
And, in awe-stricken Countries far and nigh,  
Through 'Nature's hollow arch' that voice resounds.  

XXXIV  
CRUSADES  

The turbaned Race are poured in thickening swarms  
Along the west; though driven from Aquitaine,  
The Crescent glitters on the towers of Spain;  
And soft Italia feels renewed alarms;  
The scimitar, that yields not to the charms  
Of ease, the narrow Bosphorus will disdain;  
Nor long (that crossed) would Grecian hills detain  
Their tents, and check the current of their arms.  
Then blame not those who, by the mightiest lever  
Known to the moral world, Imagination,  
Upheave, so seems it, from her natural station  
All Christendom:—they sweep along (was never  
So huge a host!)—to tear from the Unbeliever  
The precious Tomb, their haven of salvation.  

XXXV  
RICHARD I  

Redoubtèd King, of courage leonine,  
I mark thee, Richard! urgent to equip  
Thy warlike person with the staff and scrip;  
I watch thee sailing o'er the midland brine;  
In conquered Cyprus see thy Bride decline  
Her blushing cheek, love-vows upon her lip,  
And see love-emblems streaming from thy ship,  
As thence she holds her way to Palestine.  
My Song, a fearless homager, would attend  
Thy thundering battle-axe as it cleaves the press  
Of war, but duty summons her away  
To tell—how, finding in the rash distress  
Of those Enthusiasts a subservient friend,  
To giddier heights hath clomb the Papal sway.  

1 The decision of this council was believed to be instantly known in remote parts of Europe.
XXXVI

AN INTERDICT

REALMS quake by turns: proud Arbitress of grace,
The Church, by mandate shadowing forth the power
She arrogates o'er heaven's eternal door,
Closes the gates of every sacred place.
Straight from the sun and tainted air's embrace
All sacred things are covered: cheerful morn
Grows sad as night—no seemly garb is worn,
Nor is a face allowed to meet a face
With natural smiles of greeting. Bells are dumb;
Ditches are graves—funereal rites denied;
And in the churchyard he must take his bride
Who dares be wedded! Fancies thickly come
Into the pensive heart ill fortified,
And comfortless despair's the soul benumb.

XXXVII

PAPAL ABUSES

As with the Stream our voyage we pursue,
The gross materials of this world present
A marvellous study of wild accident;
Uncouth proximities of old and new;
And bold transfigurations, more untrue
(As might be deemed) to disciplined intent
Than aught the sky's fantastic element,
When most fantastic, offers to the view.
Saw we not Henry scourged at Becket's Shrine?
Lo! John self-stripped of his insignia:—crown,
Sceptre and mantle, sword and ring, laid down
At a proud Legate's feet! The spears that line
Baronial halls the opprobrious insult feel;
And angry Ocean roars a vain appeal.

XXXVIII

SCENE IN VENICE

BLACK Demons hovering o'er his mitred head,
To Caesar's Successor the Pontiff spake;
'Ere I absolve thee, stoop! that on thy neck
Levelled with earth this foot of mine may tread.'
Then he, who to the altar had been led,
He, whose strong arm the Orient could not check,
He, who had held the Soldan at his beck,
Stooped, of all glory disinherited,
And even the common dignity of man!—
Amazement strikes the crowd: while many turn
Their eyes away in sorrow, others burn
With scorn, invoking a vindictive ban
From outraged Nature; but the sense of most
In abject sympathy with power is lost.

XXXIX

PAPAL DOMINION

UNLESS to Peter's Chair the viewless wind
Must come and ask permission when to blow,
What further empire would it have? for now
A ghostly Domination, unconfined
As that by dreaming Bards to Love assigned,
Sits there in sober truth—to raise the low,
Perplex the wise, the strong to overthrow;
Through earth and heaven to bind and to unbind!—
Resist—the thunder quails thee!—crouch—rebuff
Shall be thy recompense! from land to land
The ancient thrones of Christendom are stuff
For occupation of a magic wand,
And 'tis the Pope that wields it:—whether rough
Or smooth his front, our world is in his hand!

PART II

TO THE CLOSE OF THE TROUBLES IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES I

HOW soon—alas! did Man, created pure,
By Angels guarded, deviate from the line
Prescribed to duty:—woeful forfeiture
He made by willful breach of law divine.
With like perverseness did the Church abjure
Obedience to her Lord, and haste to twine,
'Mid Heaven-born flowers that shall for aye endure,
Weeds on whose front the world had fixed her sign.
O Man,—if with thy trials thus it fares,
If good can smooth the way to evil choice,
From all rash censure be the mind kept free;
He only judges right who weighs, compares,
And, in the sternest sentence which his voice
Pronounces, ne'er abandons Charity.

Published 1845

II

From false assumption rose, and fondly hailed
By superstition, spread the Papal power;
Yet do not deem the Autocracy prevailed
Thus only, even in error's darkest hour.
She daunts, forth-thundering from her spiritual tower,
Brute rapine, or with gentle lure she tames.
Justice and Peace through Her uphold their claims;
And Chastity finds many a sheltering bower.
Realm there is none that if controlled or sway'd
By her commands partakes not, in degree,
Of good, o'er manners arts and arms, diffused:
Yes, to thy domination, Roman See,
Tho' miserably, oft monstrously, abused
By blind ambition, be this tribute paid.

Published 1845

III

CISTERTIAN MONASTERY

'Here Man more purely lives, less oft doth fall,
More promptly rises, walks with stricter heed,
More safely rests, dies happier, is freed
Earlier from cleansing fires, and gains withal
A brighter crown.'—On yon Cisterian wall
That confident assurance may be read;
And, to like shelter, from the world have fled
Increasing multitudes. The potent call
Doubtless shall cheat full oft the heart's desires;
Yet, while the rugged Age on pliant knee
Vows to rapt Fancy humble fealty,
A gentler life spreads round the holy spires;
Where'er they rise, the sylvan waste retires,
And aery harvests crown the fertile lea.

1 See Note.
IV

DEPLORABLE his lot who tills the ground,
His whole life long tills it, with heartless toil
Of villain-service, passing with the soil
To each new Master, like a steer or hound,
Or like a rooted tree, or stone earth-bound;
But mark how gladly, through their own domains,
The Monks relax or break these iron chains;
While Mercy, uttering, through their voice, a sound
Echoed in Heaven, cries out, 'Ye Chiefs, abate
These legalized oppressions! Man—whose name
And nature God disdained not; Man—whose soul
Christ died for—cannot forfeit his high claim
To live and move exempt from all controul
Which fellow-feeling doth not mitigate!'

Published 1835

V

MONKS AND SCHOOLMEN

RECORD we too, with just and faithful pen,
That many hooded Cenobites there are,
Who in their private cells have yet a care
Of public quiet; unambitious Men,
Counsellors for the world, of piercing ken;
Whose fervent exhortations from afar
Move Princes to their duty, peace or war;
And oft-times in the most forbidding den
Of solitude, with love of silence strong,
How patiently the yoke of thought they bear!
How subtly glide its finest threads along!
Spirits that crowd the intellectual sphere
With mazy boundaries, as the astronomer
With orb and cycle girds the starry throng.

VI

OTHER BENEFITS

AND, not in vain embodied to the sight,
Religion finds even in the stern retreat
Of feudal sway her own appropriate seat;
From the collegiate pomp on Windsor's height
Down to the humbler altar, which the Knight
And his Retainers of the embattled hall
Seek in domestic oratory small,
For prayer in stillness, or the chanted rite;
Then chiefly dear, when foes are planted round,
Who teach the intrepid guardians of the place—
Hourly exposed to death, with famine worn,
And suffering under many a perilous wound—
How sad would be their durance, if forlorn
Of offices dispensing heavenly grace!

VII
CONTINUED

AND what melodious sounds at times prevail!
And, ever and anon, how bright a gleam
Pours on the surface of the turbid Stream!
What heartfelt fragrance mingles with the gale
That swells the bosom of our passing sail!
For where, but on this River's margin, blow
Those flowers of chivalry, to bind the brow
Of hardihood with wreaths that shall not fail?—
Fair Court of Edward! wonder of the world!
I see a matchless blazonry unfurled
Of wisdom, magnanimity, and love;
And meekness tempering honourable pride;
The lamb is couching by the lion's side,
And near the flame-eyed eagle sits the dove.

VIII
CRUSADERS

FURL we the sails, and pass with tardy oars
Through these bright regions, casting many a glance
Upon the dream-like issues—the romance
Of many-coloured life that Fortune pours
Round the Crusaders, till on distant shores
Their labours end; or they return to lie,
The vow performed, in cross-legged effigy,
Devoutly stretched upon their chancel floors.
Am I deceived? Or is their requiem chanted
By voices never mute when Heaven unties
Her inmost, softest, tenderest harmonies;
Requiem which Earth takes up with voice undaunted,
When she would tell how Brave, and Good, and Wise,
For their high guerdon not in vain have pant'd!
IX

A S faith thus sanctified the warrior's crest
While from the Papal Unity there came,
What feebler means had failed to give, one aim
Diffused thro' all the regions of the West;
So does her Unity its power attest
By works of Art, that shed, on the outward frame
Of worship, glory and grace, which who shall blame
That ever looked to heaven for final rest?
Hail countless Temples! that so well befit
Your ministry; that, as ye rise and take
Form, spirit, and character from holy writ,
Give to devotion, wheresoe'er awake,
Pinions of high and higher sweep, and make
The unconverted soul with awe submit.

1842

X

WHERE long and deeply hath been fixed the root
In the blest soil of gospel truth, the Tree,
(Blighted or scathed tho' many branches be,
Put forth to wither many a hopeful shoot)
Can never cease to bear celestial fruit.
Witness the Church that oft-times, with effect
Dear to the saints, strives earnestly to eject
Her bane, her vital energies recruit.
Lamenting, do not hopelessly repine
When such good work is doomed to be undone,
The conquests lost that were so hardly won:—
All promises vouchsafed by Heaven will shine
In light confirmed while years their course shall run,
Confirmed alike in progress and decline.

1842

XI

TRANSUBSTANTIATION

ENOUGH! for see, with dim association
The tapers burn; the odorous incense feeds
A greedy flame; the pompous mass proceeds;
The Priest bestows the appointed consecration;
And, while the Host is raised, its elevation
An awe and supernatural horror breeds;
And all the people bow their heads, like reeds
To a soft breeze, in lowly adoration.
This Valdo brooks not. On the banks of Rhone
He taught, till persecution chased him thence,
To adore the Invisible, and Him alone.
Nor are his Followers loth to seek defence,
'Mid woods and wilds, on Nature's craggy throne,
From rites that trample upon soul and sense.

XII

THE VAUDOIS

But whence came they who for the Saviour Lord
Have long borne witness as the Scriptures teach?—
Ages ere Valdo raised his voice to preach
In Gallic ears the unadulterate Word,
Their fugitive Progenitors explored
Subalpine vales, in quest of safe retreats
Where that pure Church survives, though summer heats
Open a passage to the Romish sword,
Far as it dares to follow. Herbs self-sown,
And fruitage gathered from the chesnut-wood,
Nourish the sufferers then; and mists, that brood
O'er chasms with new-fallen obstacles bestrown,
Protect them; and the eternal snow that daunts
Aliens, is God's good winter for their haunts.

Published 1835

XIII

Praised be the Rivers, from their mountain springs
Shouting to Freedom, 'Plant thy banners here!'
To harassed Piety, 'Dismiss thy fear,
And in our caverns smooth thy ruffled wings!'
Nor be unthanked their final lingerings—
Silent, but not to high-souled Passion's ear—
'Mid reedy fens wide-spread and marshes drear,
Their own creation. Such glad welcomings,
As Po was heard to give where Venice rose,
Hailed from aloft those Heirs of truth divine
Who near his fountains sought obscure repose,
Yet came prepared as glorious lights to shine,
Should that be needed for their sacred Charge;
Blest Prisoners They, whose spirits were at large!

Published 1835
XIV

WALDENSES

Those had given earliest notice, as the lark
Springs from the ground the morn to gratulate;
Or rather rose the day to antedate,
By striking out a solitary spark,
When all the world with midnight gloom was dark.—
Then followed the Waldensian bands, whom Hate
In vain endeavours to exterminate,
Whom Obloquy pursues with hideous bark: 1
But they desist not;—and the sacred fire,
Rekindled thus, from dens and savage woods
Moves, handed on with never-ceasing care,
Through courts, through camps, o'er limitary floods;
Nor lacks this sea-girt Isle a timely share
Of the new Flame, not suffered to expire.

XV

ARCHBISHOP CHICHELEY TO HENRY V

'What beast in wilderness or cultured field
The lively beauty of the leopard shows?
What flower in meadow-ground or garden grows
That to the towering lily doth not yield?
Let both meet only on thy royal shield!
Go forth, great King! claim what thy birth bestows;
Conquer the Gallic lily which thy foes
Dare to usurp;—thou hast a sword to wield,
And Heaven will crown the right.'—The mitred Sire
Thus spake—and lo! a Fleet, for Gaul addrest,
Ploughs her bold course across the wondering seas;
For, sooth to say, ambition, in the breast
Of youthful heroes, is no sullen fire,
But one that leaps to meet the fanning breeze.

XVI

WARS OF YORK AND LANCASTER

Thus is the storm abated by the craft
Of a shrewd Counsellor, eager to protect
The Church, whose power hath recently been checked,
Whose monstrous riches threatened. So the shaft

1 See Note.
Of victory mounts high, and blood is quaffed
In fields that rival Cressy and Poictiers—
Prize to be washed away by bitter tears!
For deep as hell itself, the avenging draught
Of civil slaughter. Yet, while temporal power
Is by these shocks exhausted, spiritual truth
Maintains the else endangered gift of life;
Proceeds from infancy to lusty youth;
And, under cover of this woeful strife,
Gathers unblighted strength from hour to hour.

XVII
WICLIFE

ONCE more the Church is seized with sudden fear,
And at her call is Wicliffe disinhumed:
Yea, his dry bones to ashes are consumed
And flung into the brook that travels near;
Forthwith that ancient Voice which Streams can hear
Thus speaks (that Voice which walks upon the wind,
Though seldom heard by busy human kind)—
'As thou these ashes, little Brook! wilt bear
Into the Avon, Avon to the tide
Of Severn, Severn to the narrow seas,
Into main Ocean they, this deed accurs
An emblem yields to friends and enemies
How the bold Teacher's Doctrine, sanctified
By truth, shall spread, throughout the world dispersed.'

XVIII
CORRUPTIONS OF THE HIGHER CLERGY

W OE to you, Prelates! rioting in ease
And cumbrous wealth—the shame of your estate;
You, on whose progress dazzling trains await
Of pompous horses; whom vain titles please;
Who will be served by others on their knees,
Yet will yourselves to God no service pay;
Pastors who neither take nor point the way
To Heaven; for, either lost in vanities
Ye have no skill to teach, or if ye know
And speak the word—'Alas! of fearful things
'Tis the most fearful when the people's eye
Abuse hath cleared from vain imaginings;
And taught the general voice to prophesy
Of Justice armed, and Pride to be laid low.
XIX

ABUSE OF MONASTIC POWER

And what is Penance with her knotted thong;
Mortification with the shirt of hair,
Wan cheek, and knees indurated with prayer,
Vigils, and fastings rigorous as long;
If cloistered Avarice scruple not to wrong
The pious, humble, useful Secular,
And rob the people of his daily care,
Scorning that world whose blindness makes her strong?
Inversion strange! that, unto One who lives
For self, and struggles with himself alone,
The amplest share of heavenly favour gives;
That to a Monk allots, both in the esteem
Of God and man, place higher than to him
Who on the good of others builds his own!

XX

MONASTIC VOLUPTUOUSNESS

Yet more,—round many a Convent's blazing fire
Unhallowed threads of revelry are spun;
There Venus sits disguised like a Nun,—
While Bacchus, clothed in semblance of a Friar,
Pours out his choicest beverage high and higher
Sparkling, until it cannot choose but run
Over the bowl, whose silver lip hath won
An instant kiss of masterful desire—
To stay the precious waste. Through every brain
The domination of the sprightly juice
Spreads high conceits to madding Fancy dear,
Till the arched roof, with resolute abuse
Of its grave echoes, swells a choral strain,
Whose votive burthen is—'Our Kingdom's here!'

XXI

DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES

Threats come which no submission may assuage,
No sacrifice avert, no power dispute;
The tapers shall be quenched, the belfries mute,
And, 'mid their choirs unroofed by selfish rage,
The warbling wren shall find a leafy cage;  
The gadding bramble hang her purple fruit;  
And the green lizard and the gilded newt  
Lead unmolested lives, and die of age.  
The owl of evening and the woodland fox  
For their abode the shrines of Waltham choose;  
Proud Glastonbury can no more refuse  
To stoop her head before these desperate shocks—  
She whose high pomp displaced, as story tells,  
Arimathean Joseph's wattled cells.

XXII

THE SAME SUBJECT

The lovely Nun (submissive, but more meek  
Through saintly habit than from effort due  
To unrelenting mandates that pursue  
With equal wrath the steps of strong and weak)  
Goes forth—unveiling timidly a cheek  
Suffused with blushes of celestial hue,  
While through the Convent's gate to open view  
Softly she glides, another home to seek.  
Not Iris, issuing from her cloudy shrine,  
An Apparition more divinely bright!  
Not more attractive to the dazzled sight  
Those watery glories, on the stormy brine  
Poured forth, while summer suns at distance shine,  
And the green vales lie hushed in sober light!

XXIII

CONTINUED

Yet many a Novice of the cloistral shade,  
And many chained by vows, with eager glee  
The warrant hail, exulting to be free;  
Like ships before whose keels, full long embayed  
In polar ice, propitious winds have made  
Unlooked-for outlet to an open sea,  
Their liquid world, for bold discovery,  
In all her quarters temptingly displayed!  
Hope guides the young; but when the old must pass  
The threshold, whither shall they turn to find  
The hospitality—the alms (alas!  
Alms may be needed) which that House bestowed?  
Can they, in faith and worship, train the mind  
To keep this new and questionable road?
XXIV
SAINTS

YE, too, must fly before a chasing hand,
    Angels and Saints, in every hamlet mourned!
Ah! if the old idolatry be spurned,
Let not your radiant Shapes desert the Land:
Her adoration was not your demand,
The fond heart proffered it—the servile heart;
And therefore are ye summoned to depart,
Michael, and thou, St. George, whose flaming brand
The Dragon quelled; and valiant Margaret
Whose rival sword a like Opponent slew:
And rapt Cecilia, seraph-haunted Queen
Of harmony; and weeping Magdalene,
Who in the penitential desert met
Gales sweet as those that over Eden blew!

XXV
THE VIRGIN

MOTHER! whose virgin bosom was uncrost
   With the least shade of thought to sin allied;
Woman! above all women glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast;
Purer than foam on central ocean tost;
Brighter than eastern skies at daybreak strewn
With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon
Before her wane begins on heaven's blue coast;
Thy Image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,
Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend,
As to a visible Power, in which did blend
All that was mixed and reconciled in Thee
Of mother's love with maiden purity,
Of high with low, celestial with terrene!

XXVI
APOLOGY

NOT utterly unworthy to endure
   Was the supremacy of crafty Rome;
Age after age to the arch of Christendom
Aerial keystone haughtily secure;
Supremacy from Heaven transmitted pure,
As many hold; and, therefore, to the tomb
Pass, some through fire—and by the scaffold some—
Like saintly Fisher, and unbending More.
'Lightly for both the bosom's lord did sit
Upon his throne'; unsoftened, undismayed
By aught that mingled with the tragic scene
Of pity or fear; and More's gay genius played
With the inoffensive sword of native wit,
Than the bare axe more luminous and keen.

XXVII

IMAGINATIVE REGrets

DEEP is the lamentation! Not alone
From Sages justly honoured by mankind;
But from the ghostly tenants of the wind,
Demons and Spirits, many a dolorous groan
Issues for that dominion overthrown:
Proud Tiber grieves, and far-off Ganges, blind
As his own worshippers: and Nile, reclined
Upon his monstrous urn, the farewell moan
Renews. Through every forest, cave, and den,
Where frauds were hatched of old, hath sorrow past—
Hangs o'er the Arabian Prophet's native Waste,
Where once his airy helpers schemed and planned
'Mid spectral lakes bemocking thirsty men,
And stalking pillars built of fiery sand.

XXVIII

REFLECTIONS

GRANT that by this unsparing hurricane
Green leaves with yellow mixed are torn away,
And goodly fruitage with the mother-spray;
'Twere madness—wished we, therefore, to detain,
With hands stretched forth in mollified disdain,
The 'trumpery' that ascends in bare display—
Bulls, pardons, relics, cowls black, white, and grey—
Upwhirled, and flying o'er the ethereal plain
Fast bound for Limbo Lake. And yet not choice
But habit rules the unreflecting herd,
And airy bonds are hardest to disown;
Hence, with the spiritual sovereignty transferred
Unto itself, the Crown assumes a voice
Of reckless mastery, hitherto unknown.
XXIX

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

BUT, to outweigh all harm, the sacred Book,
In dusty sequestration wrapt too long,
Assumes the accents of our native tongue;
And he who guides the plough, or wields the crook,
With understanding spirit now may look
Upon her records, listen to her song,
And sift her laws—much wondering that the wrong,
Which Faith has suffered, Heaven could calmly brook.
Transcendent Boon! noblest that earthly King
Ever bestowed to equalize and bless
Under the weight of mortal wretchedness!
But passions spread like plagues, and thousands wild
With bigotry shall tread the Offering
Beneath their feet, detested and defiled.

XXX

THE POINT AT ISSUE

FOR what contend the wise?—for nothing less
Than that the Soul, freed from the bonds of Sense,
And to her God restored by evidence
Of things not seen, drawn forth from their recess,
Root there, and not in forms, her holiness;—
For Faith, which to the Patriarchs did dispense
Sure guidance, ere a ceremonial fence
Was needful round men thirsting to transgress;—
For Faith, more perfect still, with which the Lord
Of all, himself a Spirit, in the youth
Of Christian aspiration, deigned to fill
The temples of their hearts who, with his word
Informed, were resolute to do his will,
And worship him in spirit and in truth.

Published 1827

XXXI

EDWARD VI

'SWEET is the holiness of Youth'—so felt
Time-honoured Chaucer speaking through that Lay
By which the Prioress beguiled the way,
And many a Pilgrim's rugged heart did melt.
Hadst thou, loved Bard! whose spirit often dwelt
In the clear land of vision, but foreseen
King, child, and seraph, blended in the mien
Of pious Edward kneeling as he knelt
In meek and simple infancy, what joy
For universal Christendom had thrilled
Thy heart! what hopes inspired thy genius, skilled
(O great Precursor, genuine morning Star)
The lucid shafts of reason to employ,
Piercing the Papal darkness from afar!

XXXII
EDWARD SIGNING THE WARRANT FOR THE
EXECUTION OF JOAN OF KENT

THE tears of man in various measure gush
From various sources; gently overflow
From blissful transport some—from clefts of woe
Some with ungovernable impulse rush;
And some, coëval with the earliest blush
Of infant passion, scarcely dare to show
Their pearly lustre—coming but to go;
And some break forth when others' sorrows crush
The sympathising heart. Nor these, nor yet
The noblest drops to admiration known,
To gratitude, to injuries forgiven—
Claim Heaven's regard like waters that have wet
The innocent eyes of youthful Monarchs driven
To pen the mandates nature doth disown.

XXXIII
REVIVAL OF POPERY

THE saintly Youth has ceased to rule, discrowned
By unrelenting Death. O People keen
For change, to whom the new looks always green!
Rejoicing did they cast upon the ground
Their Gods of wood and stone; and, at the sound
Of counter-proclamation, now are seen
(Proud triumph is it for a sullen Queen!)
Lifting them up, the worship to confound
Of the Most High. Again do they invoke
The Creature, to the Creature glory give;
Again with frankincense the altars smoke
Like those the Heathen served; and mass is sung;
And prayer, man's rational prerogative,
Runs through blind channels of an unknown tongue.

Published 1827
XXXIV

LATIMER AND RIDLEY

HOW fast the Marian death-list is unrolled!
See Latimer and Ridley in the might
Of Faith stand coupled for a common flight!
One (like those prophets whom God sent of old)
Transfigured, from this kindling hath foretold
A torch of inextinguishable light;
The Other gains a confidence as bold;
And thus they foil their enemy's despite.
The penal instruments, the shows of crime,
Are glorified while this once-mitred pair
Of saintly Friends the 'murtherer's chain partake,
Corded, and burning at the social stake':
Earth never witnessed object more sublime
In constancy, in fellowship more fair!

XXXV

CRANMER

OUTSTRETCHING flameward his upbraided hand
(O God of mercy, may no earthly Seat
Of judgment such presumptuous doom repeat!)
Amid the shuddering throng doth Cranmer stand;
Firm as the stake to which with iron band
His frame is tied; firm from the naked feet
To the bare head. The victory is complete;
The shrouded Body to the Soul's command
Answers with more than Indian fortitude,
Through all her nerves with finer sense endued,
Till breath departs in blissful aspiration:
Then, 'mid the ghastly ruins of the fire,
Behold the unalterable heart entire,
Emblem of faith untouched, miraculous attestation!

XXXVI

GENERAL VIEW OF THE TROUBLES OF THE REFORMATION

AID, glorious Martyrs, from your fields of light,
Our mortal ken! Inspire a perfect trust
(While we look round) that Heaven's decrees are just:
Which few can hold committed to a fight

1 See Note.
2 For the belief in this fact, see the contemporary Historians.
That shows, ev'n on its better side, the might
Of proud Self-will, Rapacity, and Lust,
'Mid clouds enveloped of polemic dust,
Which showers of blood seem rather to incite
Than to allay. Anathemas are hurled
From both sides; veteran thunders (the brute test
Of truth) are met by fulminations new—
Tartarean flags are caught at, and unfurled—
Friends strike at friends—the flying shall pursue—
And Victory sickens, ignorant where to rest!

XXXVII
ENGLISH REFORMERS IN EXILE

SCATTERING, like birds escaped the fowler's net,
Some seek with timely flight a foreign strand;
Most happy, re-assembled in a land
By dauntless Luther freed, could they forget
Their Country's woes. But scarcely have they met,
Partners in faith, and brothers in distress,
Free to pour forth their common thankfulness,
Ere hope declines:—their union is beset
With speculative notions rashly sown,
Whence thickly-sprouting growth of poisonous weeds;
Their forms are broken staves; their passions, steeds
That master them. How enviably blest
Is he who can, by help of grace, enthrone
The peace of God within his single breast!

XXXVIII
ELIZABETH

HAIL, Virgin Queen! o'er many an envious bar
Triumphant, snatched from many a treacherous wile!
All hail, sage Lady, whom a grateful Isle
Hath blest, respiring from that dismal war
Stilled by thy voice! But quickly from afar
Defiance breathes with more malignant aim;
And alien storms with home-bred ferments claim
Portentous fellowship. Her silver car,
By sleepless prudence ruled, glides slowly on;
Unhurt by violence, from menaced taint
Emerging pure, and seemingly more bright:
Ah! wherefore yields it to a foul constraint
Black as the clouds its beams dispersed, while shone,
By men and angels blest, the glorious light?
EMINENT REFORMERS

METHINKS that I could trip o'er heaviest soil,
Light as a buoyant bark from wave to wave,
Were mine the trusty staff that JEWEL gave
To youthful Hooker, in familiar style
The gift exalting, and with playful smile:
For thus equipped, and bearing on his head
The Donor's farewell blessing, can he dread
Tempest, or length of way, or weight of toil?
More sweet than odours caught by him who sails
Near spicy shores of Araby the blest,
A thousand times more exquisitely sweet,
The freight of holy feeling which we meet,
In thoughtful moments, wafted by the gales
From fields where good men walk, or bowers wherein
they rest.

THE SAME

HOLY and heavenly Spirits as they are,
Spotless in life, and eloquent as wise,
With what entire affection do they prize
Their Church reformed! labouring with earnest care
To baffle all that may her strength impair;
That Church, the unperverted Gospel's seat;
In their afflictions a divine retreat;
Source of their liveliest hope, and tenderest prayer!—
The truth exploring with an equal mind,
In doctrine and communion they have sought
Firmly between the two extremes to steer;
But theirs the wise man's ordinary lot,
To trace right courses for the stubborn blind,
And prophesy to ears that will not hear.

DISTRACTIONS

MEN, who have ceased to reverence, soon defy
Their forefathers; lo! sects are formed, and split
With morbid restlessness;—the ecstatic fit
Spreads wide; though special mysteries multiply,

\(^1\) See Note.
The Saints must govern is their common cry;
And so they labour, deeming Holy Writ
Disgraced by aught that seems content to sit
Beneath the roof of settled Modesty.
The Romanist exults; fresh hope he draws
From the confusion, craftily incites
The overweening, personates the mad—
To heap disgust upon the worthier Cause:
Totters the Throne; the new-born Church is sad,
For every wave against her peace unites.

XLII

GUNPOWDER PLOT

Fear hath a hundred eyes that all agree
To plague her beating heart; and there is one
(Nor idlest that!) which holds communion
With things that were not, yet were meant to be.
Aghast within its gloomy cavity
That eye (which sees as if fulfilled and done
Crimes that might stop the motion of the sun)
Beholds the horrible catastrophe
Of an assembled Senate unredeemed
From subterraneous Treason's darkling power:
Merciless act of sorrow infinite!
Worse than the product of that dismal night,
When gushing, copious as a thunder-shower,
The blood of Huguenots through Paris streamed.

XLIII

ILLUSTRATION
THE JUNG-FRAU AND THE FALL OF THE RHINE
NEAR SCHAFFHAUSEN

The Virgin-Mountain,\(^1\) wearing like a Queen
A brilliant crown of everlasting snow,
Sheds ruin from her sides; and men below
Wonder that aught of aspect so serene
Can link with desolation. Smooth and green,
And seeming, at a little distance, slow,
The waters of the Rhine; but on they go
Fretting and whitening, keener and more keen;

\(^1\) The Jung-frau.
Till madness seizes on the whole wide Flood,
Turned to a fearful Thing whose nostrils breathe—
Blasts of tempestuous smoke—wherewith he tries
To hide himself, but only magnifies;
And doth in more conspicuous torment writhe,
Deafening the region in his ireful mood.

XLIV

TROUBLES OF CHARLES THE FIRST

EVEN such the contrast that, where'er we move,
To the mind's eye Religion doth present;
Now with her own deep quietness content;
Then, like the mountain, thundering from above
Against the ancient pine-trees of the grove
And the Land's humblest comforts. Now her mood
Recalls the transformation of the flood,
Whose rage the gentle skies in vain reprove,
Earth cannot check. O terrible excess
Of headstrong will! Can this be Piety?
No—some fierce Maniac hath usurped her name;
And scourges England struggling to be free:
Her peace destroyed! her hopes a wilderness!
Her blessings cursed—her glory turned to shame!

XLV

LAUD

PREJUDGED by foes determined not to spare,
An old weak Man for vengeance thrown aside,
Laud, 'in the painful art of dying' tried,
(Like a poor bird entangled in a snare
Whose heart still flutters, though his wings forbear
To stir in useless struggle) hath relied
On hope that conscious innocence supplied,
And in his prison breathes celestial air.
Why tarries then thy chariot? Wherefore stay,
O Death! the ensanguined yet triumphant wheels,
Which thou prepar'st, full often, to convey
(What time a State with madding faction reels)
The Saint or Patriot to the world that heals
All wounds, all perturbations doth allay?

1 See Note.
XLVI
AFFLICTIONS OF ENGLAND

HARP! couldst thou venture, on thy boldest string,
The faintest note to echo which the blast
Caught from the hand of Moses as it passed
O'er Sinai's top, or from the Shepherd-king,
Early awake, by Siloa's brook, to sing
Of dread Jehovah; then should wood and waste
Hear also of that name, and mercy cast
Off to the mountains, like a covering
Of which the Lord was weary. Weep, oh! weep,
Weep with the good, beholding King and Priest
Despised by that stern God to whom they raise
Their suppliant hands; but holy is the feast
He keepeth; like the firmament his ways:
His statutes like the chambers of the deep.

PART III
FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE PRESENT TIMES

I

SAW the figure of a lovely Maid
Seated alone beneath a darksome tree,
Whose fondly-overhanging canopy
Set off her brightness with a pleasing shade.
No Spirit was she; that my heart betrayed,
For she was one I loved exceedingly;
But while I gazed in tender reverie
(Or was it sleep that with my Fancy played?)
The bright corporeal presence—form and face—
Remaining still distinct grew thin and rare,
Like sunny mist;—at length the golden hair,
Shape, limbs, and heavenly features, keeping pace
Each with the other in a lingering race
Of dissolution, melted into air.

II
Patriotic Sympathies

LAST night, without a voice, that Vision spake
Fear to my Soul, and sadness which might seem
Wholly dissevered from our present theme;
Yet, my belovèd Country! I partake
Of kindred agitations for thy sake;
Thou, too, dost visit oft my midnight dream;
Thy glory meets me with the earliest beam
Of light, which tells that Morning is awake.
If aught impair thy beauty or destroy,
Or but forbode destruction, I deplore
With filial love the sad vicissitude;
If thou hast fallen, and righteous Heaven restore
The prostrate, then my spring-time is renewed,
And sorrow bartered for exceeding joy.

III

CHARLES THE SECOND

Who comes—with rapture greeted, and caress'd
With frantic love—his kingdom to regain?
Him Virtue's Nurse, Adversity, in vain
Received, and fostered in her iron breast:
For all she taught of hardiest and of best,
Or would have taught, by discipline of pain
And long privation, now dissolves amain,
Or is remembered only to give zest
To wantonness.—Away, Circean revels!
But for what gain? if England soon must sink
Into a gulf which all distinction levels—
That bigotry may swallow the good name,
And, with that draught, the life-blood: misery, shame,
By Poets loathed; from which Historians shrink!

IV

LATITUDINARIANISM

Yet Truth is keenly sought for, and the wind
Charged with rich words poured out in thought's defence;
Whether the Church inspire that eloquence,
Or a Platonic Piety confined
To the sole temple of the inward mind;
And One there is who builds immortal lays,
Though doomed to tread in solitary ways,
Darkness before and danger's voice behind;
Yet not alone, nor helpless to repel
Sad thoughts; for from above the starry sphere
Come secrets, whispered nightly to his ear;
And the pure spirit of celestial light
Shines through his soul—'that he may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.'
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

V

WALTON'S BOOK OF LIVES

THERE are no colours in the fairest sky
So fair as these. The feather, whence the pen
Was shaped that traced the lives of these good men,
Dropped from an Angel's wing. With moistened eye
We read of faith and purest charity
In Statesman, Priest, and humble Citizen:
Oh could we copy their mild virtues, then
What joy to live, what blessedness to die!
Methinks their very names blessedness to die!
Apart—like glow-worms shine still and bright;
Or lonely tapers when from far they fling
A guiding ray; or seen—like stars on high,
Satellites burning in a lucid ring
Around meek Walton's heavenly memory.

VI

CLERICAL INTEGRITY

OR shall the eternal roll of praise reject
Those Unconforming; whom one rigorous day
Drives from their Cures, a voluntary prey
To poverty, and grief, and disrespect,
And some to want—as if by tempests wrecked
On a wild coast; how destitute! did They
Feel not that Conscience never can betray,
That peace of mind is Virtue's sure effect.
Their altars they forego, their homes they quit,
Fields which they love, and paths they daily trod,
And cast the future upon Providence;
As men the dictate of whose inward sense
Outweighs the world; whom self-deceiving wit
Lures not from what they deem the cause of God.

VII

PERSECUTION OF THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS

WHEN Alpine Vales threw forth a suppliant cry,
The majesty of England interposed
And the sword stopped; the bleeding wounds were
closed;
And Faith preserved her ancient purity.
How little boots that precedent of good,
Scorned or forgotten, Thou canst testify,
For England's shame, O Sister Realm! from wood,
Mountain, and moor, and crowded street, where lie
The headless martyrs of the Covenant,
Slain by Compatriot-protestants that draw
From councils senseless as intolerant
Their warrant. Bodies fall by wild sword-law;
But who would force the Soul, tilts with a straw
Against a Champion cased in adamant.

VIII
ACQUITTAL OF THE BISHOPS

A VOICE, from long-expecting thousands sent,
Shatters the air, and troubles tower and spire;
For Justice hath absolved the innocent,
And Tyranny is balked of her desire:
Up, down, the busy Thames—rapid as fire
Coursing a train of gunpowder—it went,
And transport finds in every street a vent,
Till the whole City rings like one vast quire.
The Fathers urge the People to be still,
With outstretched hands and earnest speech—in vain!
Yea, many, haply wont to entertain
Small reverence for the mitre's offices,
And to Religion's self no friendly will,
A Prelate's blessing ask on bended knees.

IX
WILLIAM THE THIRD

CALM as an under-current, strong to draw
Millions of waves into itself, and run,
From sea to sea, impervious to the sun
And ploughing storm, the spirit of Nassau
Swerves not, (how blest if by religious awe
Swayed, and thereby enabled to contend
With the wide world's commotions!) from its end
Swerves not—diverted by a casual law.
Had mortal action e'er a nobler scope?
The Hero comes to liberate, not defy;
And while he marches on with stedfast hope,
Conqueror beloved! expected anxiously!
The vacillating Bondman of the Pope
Shrinks from the verdict of his steadfast eye.
X

OBLIGATIONS OF CIVIL TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

UNGRATEFUL Country, if thou e'er forget
The sons who for thy civil rights have bled!
How, like a Roman, Sidney bowed his head,
And Russell's milder blood the scaffold wet;
But these had fallen for profitless regret
Had not thy holy Church her champions bred,
And claims from other worlds inspired
The star of Liberty to rise. Nor yet
(Grave this within thy heart!) if spiritual things
Be lost, through apathy, or scorn, or fear,
Shalt thou thy humbler franchises support,
However hardly won or justly dear:
What came from heaven to heaven by nature clings,
And, if dissevered thence, its course is short.

XI

SACHEVEREL

A SUDDEN conflict rises from the swell
Of a proud slavery met by tenets strained
In Liberty's behalf. Fears, true or feigned,
Spread through all ranks; and lo! the Sentinel
Who loudest rang his pulpit 'larum bell,
Stands at the Bar, absolved by female eyes
Mingling their glances with grave flatteries
Lavished on Him—that England may rebel
Against her ancient virtue. HIGH and Low,
Watchwords of Party, on all tongues are rife;
As if a Church, though sprung from heaven, must owe
To opposites and fierce extremes her life,—
Not to the golden mean, and quiet flow
Of truths that soften hatred, temper strife.

Published 1827

XII

DOWN a swift Stream, thus far, a bold design
Have we pursued, with livelier stir of heart
Than his who sees, borne forward by the Rhine,
The living landscapes greet him, and depart;
Sees spires fast sinking—up again to start!
And strives the towers to number, that recline
O'er the dark steeps, or on the horizon line
Striding with shattered crests his eye athwart.
So have we hurried on with troubled pleasure:
Henceforth, as on the bosom of a stream
That slackens, and spreads wide a watery gleam,
We, nothing loth a lingering course to measure,
May gather up our thoughts, and mark at leisure
How widely spread the interests of our theme.
Published 1827

XIII

ASPECTS OF CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA

I.—THE PILGRIM FATHERS

WELL worthy to be magnified are they
Who, with sad hearts, of friends and country took
A last farewell, their loved abodes forsook,
And hallowed ground in which their fathers lay;
Then to the new-found World explored their way,
That so a Church, unforced, uncalled to brook
Ritual restraints, within some sheltering nook
Her Lord might worship and his word obey
In freedom. Men they were who could not bend;
Blest Pilgrims, surely, as they took for guide
A will by sovereign Conscience sanctified;
Blest while their Spirits from the woods ascend
Along a Galaxy that knows no end,
But in His glory who for Sinners died.
1842

XIV

II. CONTINUED

FROM Rite and Ordinance abused they fled
To Wilds where both were utterly unknown;
But not to them had Providence foreshown
What benefits are missed, what evils bred,
In worship neither raised nor limited
Save by Self-will. Lo! from that distant shore,
For Rite and Ordinance, Piety is led
Back to the Land those Pilgrims left of yore,
Led by her own free choice. So Truth and Love
By Conscience governed do their steps retrace.—
Fathers! your Virtues, such the power of grace,
Their spirit, in your Children, thus approve.
Transcendent over time, unbound by place,
Concord and Charity in circles move.
1842
PATRIOTS informed with Apostolic light
Were they who, when their Country had been freed,
Bowing with reverence to the ancient creed,
Fixed on the frame of England's Church their sight,
And strove in filial love to reunite
What force had severed. Thence they fetched the seed
Of Christian unity, and won a meed
Of praise from Heaven. To Thee, O saintly White,
Patriarch of a wide-spreading family,
Remotest lands and unborn times shall turn,
Whether they would restore or build—to Thee,
As one who rightly taught how zeal should burn,
As one who drew from out Faith's holiest urn
The purest stream of patient Energy.

BISHOPS and Priests, blessèd are ye, if deep
(As yours above all offices is high)
Deep in your hearts the sense of duty lie;
Charged as ye are by Christ to feed and keep
From wolves your portion of his chosen sheep:
Labouring as ever in your Master's sight,
Making your hardest task your best delight,
What perfect glory ye in Heaven shall reap!—
But, in the solemn Office which ye sought
And undertook premonished, if unsound
Your practice prove, faithless though but in thought,
Bishops and Priests, think what a gulf profound
Awaits you then, if they were rightly taught
Who framed the Ordinance by your lives disowned!

PLACES OF WORSHIP

As star that shines dependent upon star
Is to the sky while we look up in love;
As to the deep fair ships which, though they move,
Seem fixed to eyes that watch them from afar;
As to the sandy desert fountains are,
With palm-groves shaded at wide intervals,
Whose fruit around the sun-burnt Native falls
Of roving tired or desultory war—
Such to this British Isle her christian Fanes,  
Each linked to each for kindred services;  
Her Spires, her Steeple-towers with glittering vanes  
Far-kenned, her Chapels lurking among trees,  
Where a few villagers on bended knees  
Find solace which a busy world disdains.

XVIII

PASTORAL CHARACTER

A GENIAL hearth, a hospitable board,  
And a refined rusticity, belong  
To the neat mansion, where, his flock among,  
The learned Pastor dwells, their watchful Lord.  
Though meek and patient as a sheathed sword;  
Though pride's least lurking thought appear a wrong  
To human kind; though peace be on his tongue,  
Gentleness in his heart—can earth afford  
Such genuine state, pre-eminence so free,  
As when, arrayed in Christ's authority,  
He from the pulpit lifts his awful hand;  
Conjures, implores, and labours all he can  
For re-subjecting to divine command  
The stubborn spirit of rebellious man?

XIX

THE LITURGY

YES, if the intensities of hope and fear  
Attract us still, and passionate exercise  
Of lofty thoughts, the way before us lies  
Distinct with signs, through which in set career,  
As through a zodiac, moves the ritual year  
Of England's Church; stupendous mysteries!  
Which whoso travels in her bosom eyes,  
As he approaches them, with solemn cheer.  
Upon that circle traced from sacred story  
We only dare to cast a transient glance,  
Trusting in hope that Others may advance  
With mind intent upon the King of Glory,  
From his mild advent till his countenance  
Shall dissipate the seas and mountains hoary.
XX

BAPTISM

Dear be the Church, that, watching o'er the needs
Of Infancy, provides a timely shower
Whose virtue changes to a Christian Flower
A Growth from sinful Nature's bed of weeds!—
Fitliest beneath the sacred roof proceeds
The ministration; while parental Love
Looks on, and Grace descendeth from above
As the high service pledges now, now pleads.
There, should vain thoughts outspread their wings and fly
To meet the coming hours of festal mirth,
The tombs—which hear and answer that brief cry,
The Infant's notice of his second birth—
Recall the wandering Soul to sympathy
With what man hopes from Heaven, yet fears from Earth.

Published 1827

XXI

SPONSORS

Father! to God himself we cannot give
A holier name! then lightly do not bear
Both names conjoined, but of thy spiritual care
Be duly mindful: still more sensitive
Do Thou, in truth a second Mother, strive
Against disheartening custom, that by Thee Watched, and with love and pious industry
Tended at need, the adopted Plant may thrive
For everlasting bloom. Benign and pure
This Ordinance, whether loss it would supply,
Prevent omission, help deficiency,
Or seek to make assurance doubly sure.
Shame if the consecrated Vow be found
An idle form, the Word an empty sound!

Published 1832

XXII

CATECHISING

From Little down to Least, in due degree,
Around the Pastor, each in new-wrought vest,
Each with a vernal posy at his breast,
We stood, a trembling, earnest Company!
With low soft murmur, like a distant bee,
Some spake, by thought-perplexing fears betrayed;
And some a bold unerring answer made:
How fluttered then thy anxious heart for me,
Belovèd Mother! Thou whose happy hand
Had bound the flowers I wore, with faithful tie:
Sweet flowers! at whose inaudible command
Her countenance, phantom-like, doth re-appear:
O lost too early for the frequent tear,
And ill requited by this heartfelt sigh!

XXIII
CONFIRMATION

THE Young-ones gathered in from hill and dale,
With holiday delight on every brow:
'Tis past away; far other thoughts prevail;
For they are taking the baptismal Vow
Upon their conscious selves; their own lips speak
The solemn promise. Strongest sinews fail,
And many a blooming, many a lovely, cheek
Under the holy fear of God turns pale;
While on each head his lawn-robed servant lays
An apostolic hand, and with prayer seals
The Covenant. The Omnipotent will raise
Their feeble Souls; and bear with his regrets,
Who, looking round the fair assemblage, feels
That ere the Sun goes down their childhood sets.
Published 1827

XXIV
CONFIRMATION CONTINUED

I SAW a Mother's eye intensely bent
Upon a Maiden trembling as she knelt;
In and for whom the pious Mother felt
Things that we judge of by a light too faint:
Tell, if ye may, some star-crowned Muse, or Saint!
Tell what rushed in, from what she was relieved—
Then, when her Child the hallowing touch received,
And such vibration through the Mother went
That tears burst forth amain. Did gleams appear?
Opened a vision of that blissful place
Where dwells a Sister-child? And was power given
Part of her lost One's glory back to trace
Even to this Rite? For thus She knelt, and, ere
The summer-leaf had faded, passed to Heaven.
Published 1827
XXV

SACRAMENT

By chain yet stronger must the Soul be tied:
One duty more, last stage of this ascent,
Brings to thy food, mysterious Sacrament!
The Offspring, haply at the Parent’s side;
But not till They, with all that do abide
In Heaven, have lifted up their hearts to laud
And magnify the glorious name of God,
Fountain of Grace, whose Son for sinners died.
Ye, who have duly weighed the summons, pause
No longer; ye, whom to the saving rite
The Altar calls; come early under laws
That can secure for you a path of light
Through gloomiest shade; put on (nor dread its weight)
Armour divine, and conquer in your cause!

Published 1827

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

The Vested Priest before the Altar stands;
Approach, come gladly, ye prepared, in sight
Of God and chosen friends, your troth to plight
With the symbolic ring, and willing hands
Solemnly joined. Now sanctify the bands
O Father!—to the Espoused thy blessing give,
That mutually assisted they may live
Obedient, as here taught, to thy commands.
So prays the Church, to consecrate a Vow
‘The which would endless matrimony make’;
Union that shadows forth and doth partake
A mystery potent human love to endow
With heavenly, each more prized for the other’s sake;
Weep not, meek Bride! uplift thy timid brow.

XXVII

THANKSGIVING AFTER CHILDBIRTH

Woman! the Power who left his throne on high,
And deigned to wear the robe of flesh we wear,
The Power that thro’ the straits of Infancy
Did pass dependent on maternal care,
His own humanity with Thee will share,
Pleased with the thanks that in his People's eye
Thou offerest up for safe Delivery
From Childbirth's perilous throes. And should the
Heir
Of thy fond hopes hereafter walk inclined
To courses fit to make a mother rue
That ever he was born, a glance of mind
Cast upon this observance may renew
A better will; and, in the imagined view
Of thee thus kneeling, safety he may find.
Published 1845

XXVIII

VISITATION OF THE SICK

The Sabbath bells renew the inviting peal;
Glad music! yet there be that, worn with pain
And sickness, listen where they long have lain,
In sadness listen. With maternal zeal
Inspired, the Church sends ministers to kneel
Beside the afflicted; to sustain with prayer,
And soothe the heart confession hath laid bare—
That pardon, from God's throne, may set its seal
On a true Penitent. When breath departs
From one disburthened so, so comforted,
His Spirit Angels greet; and ours be hope
That, if the Sufferer rise from his sick-bed,
Hence he will gain a firmer mind, to cope
With a bad world, and foil the Tempter's arts.
Published 1845

XXIX

THE COMMINATION SERVICE

Shun not this Rite, neglected, yea abhorred,
By some of unreflecting mind, as calling
Man to curse man, (thought monstrous and appalling).
Go thou and hear the threatenings of the Lord;
Listening within his Temple see his sword
Unsheathed in wrath to strike the offender's head,
Thy own, if sorrow for thy sin be dead,
Guilt unrepented, pardon unimplored.
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Two aspects bears Truth needful for salvation;
Who knows not that?—yet would this delicate age
Look only on the Gospel's brighter page:
Let light and dark duly our thoughts employ;
So shall the fearful words of Commination
Yield timely fruit of peace and love and joy.

Published 1845

XXX

FORMS OF PRAYER AT SEA

O kneeling Worshippers no earthly floor
Gives holier invitation than the deck
Of a storm-shattered Vessel saved from Wreck
(When all that Man could do availed no more)
By him who raised the Tempest and restrains:
Happy the crew who this have felt, and pour
Forth for his mercy, as the Church ordains,
Solemn thanksgiving. Nor will they implore
In vain who, for a rightful cause, give breath
To words the Church prescribes aiding the lip
For the heart's sake, ere ship with hostile ship
Encounters, armed for work of pain and death.
Suppliant! the God to whom your cause ye trust
Will listen, and ye know that He is just.

XXXI

FUNERAL SERVICE

From the Baptismal hour, thro' weal and woe,
The Church extends her care to thought and deed;
Nor quits the Body when the Soul is freed,
The mortal weight cast off to be laid low.
Blest Rite for him who hears in faith, 'I know
That my Redeemer liveth,'—hears each word
That follows—striking on some kindred chord
Deep in the thankful heart;—yet tears will flow.
Man is as grass that springeth up at morn,
Grows green, and is cut down and withereth
Ere nightfall—truth that well may claim a sigh,
Its natural echo; but hope comes reborn
At Jesu's bidding. We rejoice, 'O Death,
Where is thy Sting?—O Grave, where is thy Victory?'

1842
XXXII

RURAL CEREMONY

Closing the sacred Book which long has fed
Our meditations, give we to a day
Of annual joy one tributary lay;
This day, when, forth by rustic music led,
The village Children, while the sky is red
With evening lights, advance in long array
Through the still churchyard, each with garland gay,
That, carried sceptre-like, o’er tops the head
Of the proud Bearer. To the wide church-door,
Charged with these offerings which their fathers bore
For decoration in the Papal time,
The innocent Procession softly moves:
The spirit of Laud is pleased in heaven’s pure clime,
And Hooker’s voice the spectacle approves!

XXXIII

REGRETS

Would that our scrupulous Sires had dared to leave
Less scanty measure of those graceful rites
And usages, whose due return invites
A stir of mind too natural to deceive;
Giving to Memory help when she would weave
A crown for Hope!—I dread the boasted lights
That all too often are but fiery blights,
Killing the bud o’er which in vain we grieve.
Go, seek, when Christmas snows discomfort bring,
The counter Spirit found in some gay church
Green with fresh holly, every pew a perch
In which the linnet or the thrush might sing,
Merry and loud and safe from prying search,
Strains offered only to the genial Spring.

XXXIV

MUTABILITY

From low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
A musical but melancholy chime,

1 See Note.
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

XXXV
OLD ABBEYS

MONASTIC Domes! following my downward way,
Untouched by due regret I marked your fall!
Now, ruin, beauty, ancient stillness, all
Dispose to judgments temperate as we lay
On our past selves in life’s declining day:
For as, by discipline of Time made wise,
We learn to tolerate the infirmities
And faults of others—gently as he may,
So with our own the mild Instructor deals,
Teaching us to forget them or forgive.
Perversely curious, then, for hidden ill
Why should we break Time’s charitable seals?
Once ye were holy, ye are holy still;
Your spirit freely let me drink, and live!

XXXVI
EMIGRANT FRENCH CLERGY

EVEN while I speak, the sacred roofs of France
Are shattered into dust; and self-exiled
From altars threatened, levelled, or defiled,
Wander the Ministers of God, as chance
Opens a way for life, or consonance
Of faith invites. More welcome to no land
The fugitives than to the British strand,
Where priest and layman with the vigilance
Of true compassion greet them. Creed and test
Vanish before the unreserved embrace
Of catholic humanity:—distrest
They came,—and, while the moral tempest roars
Throughout the Country they have left, our shores
Give to their Faith a fearless resting-place.

Published 1827
XXXVII

CONGRATULATION

Thus all things lead to Charity, secured
By them who blessed the soft and happy gale
That landward urged the great Deliverer's sail,
Till in the sunny bay his fleet was moored!
Propitious hour! had we, like them, endured
Sore stress of apprehension, with a mind
Sickened by injuries, dreading worse designed,
From month to month trembling and unassured,
How had we then rejoiced! But we have felt,
As a loved substance, their futurity:
Good, which they dared not hope for, we have seen;
A State whose generous will through earth is dealt;
A State—which, balancing herself between
Licence and slavish order, dares be free.

XXXVIII

NEW CHURCHES

But liberty, and triumphs on the Main,
And laurelled armies, not to be withstood—
What serve they? if, on transitory good
Intent, and sedulous of abject gain,
The State (ah, surely not preserved in vain!)
Forbear to shape due channels which the Flood
Of sacred truth may enter—till it brood
O'er the wide realm, as o'er the Egyptian plain
The all-sustaining Nile. No more—the time
Is conscious of her want; through England's bounds,
In rival haste, the wished-for Temples rise!
I hear their sabbath bells' harmonious chime
Float on the breeze—the heavenliest of all sounds
That vale or hill prolongs or multiplies!

XXXIX

CHURCH TO BE ERECTED

Be this the chosen site; the virgin sod,
Moistened from age to age by dewy eve,
Shall disappear, and grateful earth receive
The corner-stone from hands that build to God.

1 See Note.
Yon reverend hawthorns, hardened to the rod
Of winter storms, yet budding cheerfully;
Those forest oaks of Druid memory,
Shall long survive, to shelter the Abode
Of genuine Faith. Where, haply, ’mid this band
Of daisies, shepherds sate of yore and wove
May-garlands, there let the holy altar stand
For kneeling adoration;—while—above,
Broods, visibly portrayed, the mystic Dove,
That shall protect from blasphemy the Land.

XL

INE ear has rung, my spirit sunk subdued,
Sharing the strong emotion of the crowd,
When each pale brow to dread hosannas bowed
While clouds of incense mounting veiled the rood,
That glimmered like a pine-tree dimly viewed
Through Alpine vapours. Such appalling rite
Our Church prepares not, trusting to the might
Of simple truth with grace divine imbued;
Yet will we not conceal the precious Cross,
Like men ashamed: the Sun with his first smile
Shall greet that symbol crowning the low Pile:
And the fresh air of incense-breathing morn
Shall wooingly embrace it; and green moss
Creep round its arms through centuries unborn.

XLI

NEW CHURCHYARD

THE encircling ground, in native turf arrayed,
Is now by solemn consecration given
To social interests, and to favouring Heaven;
And where the rugged colts their gambols played,
And wild deer bounded through the forest glade,
Unchecked as when by merry Outlaw driven,
Shall hymns of praise resound at morn and even;
And soon, full soon, the lonely Sexton’s spade
Shall wound the tender sod. Encirclement small,
But infinite its grasp of weal and woe!
Hopes, fears, in never-ending ebb and flow;—
The spousal trembling, and the ‘dust to dust,’
The prayers, the contrite struggle, and the trust
That to the Almighty Father looks through all.
XLII

CATHEDRALS, ETC.

Open your gates, ye everlasting Piles!
Types of the spiritual Church which God hath reared;
Not loth we quit the newly-hallowed sward
And humble altar, 'mid your sumptuous aisles
To kneel, or thrid your intricate defiles,
Or down the nave to pace in motion slow;
Watching, with upward eye, the tall tower grow
And mount, at every step, with living wiles
Instinct—to rouse the heart and lead the will
By a bright ladder to the world above.
Open your gates, ye Monuments of love
Divine! thou Lincoln, on thy sovereign hill!
Thou, stately York! and Ye, whose splendours cheer
Isis and Cam, to patient Science dear!

XLIII

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed Scholars only—this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

XLIV

THE SAME

What awful perspective! while from our sight
With gradual stealth the lateral windows hide
Their Portraiture, their stone-work glimmers, dyed
In the soft chequerings of a sleepy light.
Martyr, or King, or sainted Eremite,
Whoe'er ye be, that thus, yourselves unseen,
Imbue your prison-bars with solemn sheen,
Shine on, until ye fade with coming Night!—
But, from the arms of silence—list! O list!
The music bursteth into second life;
The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed
By sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife;
Heart-thrilling strains, that cast, before the eye
Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy!

XLV
CONTINUED

THEY dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here;
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam;
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath
Of awe-struck wisdom droops: or let my path
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome
Hath typified by reach of daring art
Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread
As now, when She hath also seen her breast
Filled with mementos, satiate with its part
Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

XLVI

EJACULATION

GLORY to God! and to the Power who came
In filial duty, clothed with love divine,
That made his human tabernacle shine
Like Ocean burning with purpureal flame;
Or like the Alpine Mount, that takes its name
From roseate hues, far kenned at morn and even,
In hours of peace, or when the storm is driven
Along the nether region's rugged frame!
Earth prompts—Heaven urges; let us seek the light,
Studious of that pure intercourse begun
When first our infant brows their lustre won;
So, like the Mountain, may we grow more bright
From unimpeded commerce with the Sun,
At the approach of all-involving night.
CONCLUSION

WHY sleeps the future, as a snake enrolled,
Coil within coil, at noon-tide? For the Word
Yields, if with unpresumptuous faith explored,
Power at whose touch the sluggard shall unfold
His drowsy rings. Look forth!—that Stream behold,
That Stream upon whose bosom we have passed
Floating at ease while nations have effaced
Nations, and Death has gathered to his fold
Long lines of mighty Kings—look forth, my Soul!
(Nor in this vision be thou slow to trust)
The living Waters, less and less by guilt
Stained and polluted, brighten as they roll,
Till they have reached the eternal City—built
For the perfected Spirits of the just!
EVENING VOLUNTARIES

I

CALM is the fragrant air, and loth to lose
Day's grateful warmth, tho' moist with falling dews.
Look for the stars, you 'll say that there are none;
Look up a second time, and, one by one,
You mark them twinkling out with silvery light,
And wonder how they could elude the sight!
The birds, of late so noisy in their bowers,
Warbled a while with faint and fainter powers,
But now are silent as the dim-seen flowers:
Nor does the village Church-clock's iron tone
The time's and season's influence disown;
Nine beats distinctly to each other bound
In drowsy sequence—how unlike the sound
That, in rough winter, oft inflicts a fear
On fireside listeners, doubting what they hear!
The shepherd, bent on rising with the sun,
Had closed his door before the day was done,
And now with thankful heart to bed doth creep,
And joins his little children in their sleep.
The bat, lured forth where trees the lane o'ershade,
Flits and reflits along the close arcade;
The busy dor-hawk chases the white moth
With burring note, which Industry and Sloth
Might both be pleased with, for it suits them both.
A stream is heard—I see it not, but know
By its soft music whence the waters flow:
Wheels and the tread of hoofs are heard no more;
One boat there was, but it will touch the shore
With the next dipping of its slackened oar;
Faint sound, that, for the gayest of the gay,
Might give to serious thought a moment's sway,
As a last token of man's toilsome day!

1832
ON A HIGH PART OF THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND

Easter Sunday, April 7

THE AUTHOR'S SIXTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY

THE Sun, that seemed so mildly to retire,
Flung back from distant climes a streaming fire,
Whose blaze is now subdued to tender gleams,
Prelude of night's approach with soothing dreams.
Look round;—of all the clouds not one is moving;
'Tis the still hour of thinking, feeling, loving.
Silent, and steadfast as the vaulted sky,
The boundless plain of waters seems to lie:
Comes that low sound from breezes rustling o'er
The grass-crowned headland that conceals the shore?
No; 'tis the earth-voice of the mighty sea,
Whispering how meek and gentle he can be!

Thou Power supreme! who, arming to rebuke
Offenders, dost put off the gracious look,
And clothe thyself with terrors like the flood
Of Ocean roused into his fiercest mood,
Whatever discipline thy Will ordain
For the brief course that must for me remain;
Teach me with quick-eared spirit to rejoice
In admonitions of thy softest voice!
Whate'er the path these mortal feet may trace,
Breathe through my soul the blessing of thy grace,
Glad, through a perfect love, a faith sincere
Drawn from the wisdom that begins with fear,
Glad to expand; and, for a season, free
From finite cares, to rest absorbed in Thee!

III

(BY THE SEA-SIDE)

The sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest,
And the wild storm hath somewhere found a nest;
Air slumbers—wave with wave no longer strives,
Only a heaving of the deep survives,
A tell-tale motion! soon will it be laid,
And by the tide alone the water swayed,
Stealthy withdrawals, interminglings mild
Of light with shade in beauty reconciled—
Such is the prospect far as sight can range,  
The soothing recompense, the welcome change.  
Where now the ships that drove before the blast,  
Threatened by angry breakers as they passed;  
And by a train of flying clouds bemoocked;  
Or, in the hollow surge, at anchor rocked  
As on a bed of death? Some lodge in peace,  
Saved by His care who bade the tempest cease;  
And some, too heedless of past danger, court  
Fresh gales to waft them to the far-off port;  
But near, or hanging sea and sky between,  
Not one of all those winged powers is seen,  
Seen in her course, nor 'mid this quiet heard;  
Yet oh! how gladly would the air be stirred  
By some acknowledgment of thanks and praise,  
Soft in its temper as those vesper lays  
Sung to the Virgin while accordant oars  
Urge the slow bark along Calabrian shores;  
A sea-born service through the mountains felt  
Till into one loved vision all things melt:  
Or like those hymns that soothe with graver sound  
The gulfy coast of Norway iron-bound;  
And, from the wide and open Baltic, rise  
With punctual care, Lutheran harmonies.  
Hush, not a voice is here! but why repine,  
Now when the star of eve comes forth to shine  
On British waters with that look benign?  
Ye mariners, that plough your onward way,  
Or in the haven rest, or sheltering bay,  
May silent thanks at least to God be given  
With a full heart; 'our thoughts are heard in heaven!'  

IV

Not in the lucid intervals of life  
That come but as a curse to party-strife;  
Not in some hour when Pleasure with a sigh  
Of languor puts his rosy garland by;  
Not in the breathing-times of that poor slave  
Who daily piles up wealth in Mammon's cave—  
Is Nature felt, or can be; nor do words,  
Which practised talent readily affords,  
Prove that her hand has touched responsive chords;  
Nor has her gentle beauty power to move  
With genuine rapture and with fervent love  
The soul of Genius, if he dare to take  
Life's rule from passion craved for passion's sake;
Untaught that meekness is the cherished bent
Of all the truly great and all the innocent.

But who is innocent? By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature! we are thine,
Through good and evil thine, in just degree
Of rational and manly sympathy.
To all that Earth from pensive hearts is stealing,
And Heaven is now to gladdened eyes revealing,
Add every charm the Universe can show
Through every change its aspects undergo—
Care may be respited, but not repealed;
No perfect cure grows on that bounded field.
Vain is the pleasure, a false calm the peace,
If He, through whom alone our conflicts cease,
Our virtuous hopes without relapse advance,
Come not to speed the Soul's deliverance;
To the distempered Intellect refuse
His gracious help, or give what we abuse.

1834

V

(BY THE SIDE OF RYDAL MERE)

The linnet's warble, sinking towards a close,
Hints to the thrush 'tis time for their repose;
The shrill-voiced thrush is heedless, and again
The monitor revives his own sweet strain;
But both will soon be mastered, and the copse
Be left as silent as the mountain-tops,
Ere some commanding star dismiss to rest
The throng of rooks, that now, from twig or nest,
(After a steady flight on home-bound wings,
And a last game of mazy hoverings
Around their ancient grove) with cawing noise
Disturb the liquid music's equipoise.

O Nightingale! Who ever heard thy song
Might here be moved, till Fancy grows so strong
That listening sense is pardonably cheated
Where wood or stream by thee was never greeted.
Surely, from fairest spots of favoured lands,
Were not some gifts withheld by jealous hands,
This hour of deepening darkness here would be
As a fresh morning for new harmony;
And lays as prompt would hail the dawn of Night:
A dawn she has both beautiful and bright,
When the East kindles with the full moon's light;
Not like the rising sun’s impatient glow
Dazzling the mountains, but an overflow
Of solemn splendour, in mutation slow.

Wanderer by spring with gradual progress led,
For sway profoundly felt as widely spread;
To king, to peasant, to rough sailor, dear,
And to the soldier’s trumpet-wearyed ear;
How welcome wouldst thou be to this green Vale
Fairer than Tempe! Yet, sweet Nightingale!
From the warm breeze that bears thee on, alight
At will, and stay thy migratory flight;
Build, at thy choice, or sing, by pool or fount,
Who shall complain, or call thee to account?
The wisest, happiest, of our kind are they
That ever walk content with Nature’s way,
God’s goodness—measuring bounty as it may;
For whom the gravest thought of what they miss,
Chastening the fulness of a present bliss,
Is with that wholesome office satisfied,
While unrepining sadness is allied
In thankful bosoms to a modest pride.

1834

VI

SOFT as a cloud is yon blue Ridge—the Mere
Seems firm as solid crystal, breathless, clear,
And motionless; and, to the gazer’s eye,
Deeper than ocean, in the immensity
Of its vague mountains and unreal sky!
But, from the process in that still retreat,
Turn to minuter changes at our feet;
Observe how dewy Twilight has withdrawn
The crowd of daisies from the shaven lawn,
And has restored to view its tender green,
That, while the sun rode high, was lost beneath their
dazzling sheen.
—An emblem this of what the sober Hour
Can do for minds disposed to feel its power!
Thus oft, when we in vain have wish’d away
The petty pleasures of the garish day,
Meek eve shuts up the whole usurping host
(Unbashful dwarfs each glittering at his post)
And leaves the disencumbered spirit free
To reassume a staid simplicity.

‘Tis well—but what are helps of time and place,
When wisdom stands in need of nature’s grace;
Why do good thoughts, invoked or not, descend,
Like Angels from their bowers, our virtues to befriend;
If yet To-morrow, unbelieed, may say,
'I come to open out, for fresh display,
The elastic vanities of yesterday'?  

1834

VII

The leaves that rustled on this oak-crowned hill,
And sky that danced among those leaves, are still;
Rest smooths the way for sleep; in field and bower
Soft shades and dews have shed their blended power
On drooping eyelid and the closing flower;
Sound is there none at which the faintest heart
Might leap, the weakest nerve of superstition start;
Save when the Owlet's unexpected scream
Pierces the ethereal vault; and ('mid the gleam
Of unsubstantial imagery, the dream,
From the hushed vale's realities, transferred
To the still lake) the imaginative Bird
Seems, 'mid inverted mountains, not unheard.

Grave Creature!—whether, while the moon shines bright
On thy wings opened wide for smoothest flight,
Thou art discovered in a roofless tower,
Rising from what may once have been a lady's bower;
Or spied where thou sitt'st moping in thy mew
At the dim centre of a churchyard yew;
Or, from a rifted crag or ivy tod
Deep in a forest, thy secure abode,
Thou giv'st, for pastime's sake, by shriek or shout,
A puzzling notice of thy whereabouts—
May the night never come, nor day be seen,
When I shall scorn thy voice or mock thy mien!

In classic ages men perceived a soul
Of sapience in thy aspect, headless Owl!
Thee Athens reverenced in the studious grove;
And near the golden sceptre grasped by Jove,
His Eagle's favourite perch, while round him sate
The Gods revolving the decrees of Fate,
Thou, too, wert present at Minerva's side:—
Hark to that second larum!—far and wide
The elements have heard, and rock and cave replied.

1834
VIII

This *Impromptu* appeared, many years ago, among the Author's poems, from which, in subsequent editions, it was excluded. It is reprinted at the request of the Friend in whose presence the lines were thrown off.

The sun has long been set,
   The stars are out by twos and threes,
The little birds are piping yet
   Among the bushes and trees;
There's a cuckoo, and one or two thrushes,
And a far-off wind that rushes,
And a sound of water that gushes,
And the cuckoo's sovereign cry
Fills all the hollow of the sky.
   Who would go 'parading'
In London, 'and masquerading,'
On such a night of June
With that beautiful soft half-moon,
And all these innocent blisses?
On such a night as this is!

IX

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRA-ORDINARY SPLENDOUR AND BEAUTY

Had this effulgence disappeared
   With flying haste, I might have sent,
Among the speechless clouds, a look
Of blank astonishment;
But 'tis endued with power to stay,
And sanctify one closing day,
That frail Mortality may see—
What is?—ah no, but what can be!
Time was when field and watery cove
With modulated echoes rang,
While choirs of fervent Angels sang
Their vespers in the grove;
Or, crowning, star-like, each some sovereign height,
Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
Strains suitable to both.—Such holy rite,
Methinks, if audibly repeated now
From hill or valley, could not move
Sublimer transport, purer love,
Than doth this silent spectacle—the gleam—
The shadow—and the peace supreme!
II

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades
The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far-distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency
Of beamy radiance, that imbues
Whate’er it strikes with gem-like hues!
In vision exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain side;
And glistening antlers are descried;
And gilded flocks appear.
Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve!
But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
Informs my spirit, ne’er can I believe
That this magnificence is wholly thine!
—From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won;
An intermingling of Heaven’s pomp is spread
On ground which British shepherds tread!

III

And if there be whom broken ties
Afflict, or injuries assail,
Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
Present a glorious scale,
Climbing suffused with sunny air,
To stop—no record hath told where!
And tempting Fancy to ascend,
And with immortal Spirits blend!
—Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
On those bright steps that heavenward raise
Their practicable way.
Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad,
And see to what fair countries ye are bound!
And if some traveller, weary of his road,
Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy ground,
Ye Genii! to his covert speed;
And wake him with such gentle heed
As may attune his soul to meet the dower
Bestowed on this transcendent hour!
IV

Such hues from their celestial Urn
Were wont to stream before mine eye,
Where'er it wandered in the morn
Of blissful infancy.
This glimpse of glory, why renewed?
Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
For, if a vestige of those gleams
Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.
Dread Power! whom peace and calmness serve
No less than Nature's threatening voice,
If aught unworthy be my choice,
From Thee if I would swerve;
Oh, let Thy grace remind me of the light
Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
Which, at this moment, on my waking sight
Appears to shine, by miracle restored;
My soul, though yet confined to earth,
Rejoices in a second birth!
—'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades;
And night approaches with her shades.

1818

Note—The multiplication of mountain-ridges, described at the commencement of the third Stanza of this Ode, as a kind of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapours, or sunny haze;—in the present instance by the latter cause. Allusions to the Ode entitled 'Intimations of Immortality' pervade the last Stanza of the foregoing Poem.

X

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SHORE

WHAT mischief cleaves to unsubdued regret,
How fancy sickens by vague hopes beset;
How baffled projects on the spirit prey,
And fruitless wishes eat the heart away,
The Sailor knows; he best, whose lot is cast
On the relentless sea that holds him fast
On chance dependent, and the fickle star
Of power, through long and melancholy war.
O sad it is, in sight of foreign shores,
Daily to think on old familiar doors,
Hearth's loved in childhood, and ancestral floors;
Or, tossed about along a waste of foam,
To ruminate on that delightful home
Which with the dear Betrothèd was to come;
Or came and was and is, yet meets the eye
Never but in the world of memory;
Or in a dream recalled, whose smoothest range
Is crossed by knowledge, or by dread, of change,
And if not so, whose perfect joy makes sleep
A thing too bright for breathing man to keep.

Hail to the virtues which that perilous life
Extracts from Nature's elemental strife;
And welcome glory won in battles fought
As bravely as the foe was keenly sought.
But to each gallant Captain and his crew
A less imperious sympathy is due,
Such as my verse now yields, while moonbeams play
On the mute sea in this unruffled bay;
Such as will promptly flow from every breast,
Where good men, disappointed in the quest
Of wealth and power and honours, long for rest;
Or, having known the splendours of success,
Sigh for the obscurities of happiness.

XI

The Crescent-moon, the Star of Love,
Glories of evening, as ye there are seen
With but a span of sky between—
Speak one of you, my doubts remove,
Which is the attendant Page and which the Queen?

XII

TO THE MOON

Composed by the seaside,—on the coast of Cumberland

Wanderer! that stoop'st so low, and com'st so near
To human life's unsettled atmosphere;
Who lov'st with Night and Silence to partake,
So might it seem, the cares of them that wake;
And, through the cottage-lattice softly peeping,
Dost shield from harm the humblest of the sleeping;
What pleasure once encompassed those sweet names
Which yet in thy behalf the Poet claims,
An idolizing dreamer as of yore!—
I slight them all; and, on this sea-beat shore
Sole-sitting, only can to thoughts attend
That bid me hail thee as the Sailor's Friend;
So call thee for heaven's grace through thee made known
By confidence supplied and mercy shown,
When not a twinkling star or beacon's light
Abates the perils of a stormy night;
And for less obvious benefits, that find
Their way, with thy pure help, to heart and mind;
Both for the adventurer starting in life's prime;
And veteran ranging round from clime to clime,
Long-baffled hope's slow fever in his veins,
And wounds and weakness oft his labour's sole remains.

The aspiring Mountains and the winding Streams,
Empress of Night! are gladdened by thy beams;
A look of thine the wilderness pervades,
And penetrates the forest's inmost shades;
Thou, chequering peaceably the minster's gloom,
Guid'st the pale Mourner to the lost one's tomb;
Canst reach the Prisoner—to his grated cell
Welcome, though silent and intangible!—
And lives there one, of all that come and go
On the great waters toiling to and fro,
One, who has watched thee at some quiet hour
Enthroned aloft in undisputed power,
Or crossed by vapoury streaks and clouds that move
Catching the lustre they in part reprove—
Nor sometimes felt a fitness in thy sway
To call up thoughts that shun the glare of day,
And make the serious happier than the gay?

Yes, lovely Moon! if thou so mildly bright
Dost rouse, yet surely in thy own despite,
To fiercer mood the frenzy-stricken brain,
Let me a compensating faith maintain;
That there's a sensitive, a tender, part
Which thou canst touch in every human heart,
For healing and composure.—But, as least
And mightiest billows ever have confessed
Thy domination; as the whole vast Sea
Feels through her lowest depths thy sovereignty;
So shines that countenance with especial grace
On them who urge the keel her plains to trace
Furrowing its way right onward. The most rude,
Cut off from home and country, may have stood—
Even till long gazing hath bedimmed his eye,
Or the mute rapture ended in a sigh—
Touched by accordance of thy placid cheer,
With some internal lights to memory dear,
Or fancies stealing forth to soothe the breast
Tired with its daily share of earth's unrest —
Gentle awakenings, visitations meek;
A kindly influence whereof few will speak,
Though it can wet with tears the hardiest cheek.

And when thy beauty in the shadowy cave
Is hidden, buried in its monthly grave;
Then, while the Sailor, 'mid an open sea
Swept by a favouring wind that leaves thought free,
Paces the deck—no star perhaps in sight,
And nothing save the moving ship's own light
To cheer the long dark hours of vacant night—
Oft with his musings does thy image blend,
In his mind's eye thy crescent horns ascend,
And thou art still, O Moon, that Sailor's Friend!

TO THE MOON
(rydal)

QUEEN of the stars!—so gentle, so benign,
That ancient Fable did to thee assign,
When darkness creeping o'er thy silver brow
Warned thee these upper regions to forgo,
Alternate empire in the shades below—
A Bard, who, lately near the wide-spread sea
Traversed by gleaming ships, looked up to thee
With grateful thoughts, doth now thy rising hail
From the close confines of a shadowy vale.
Glory of night, conspicuous yet serene,
Nor less attractive when by glimpses seen
Through cloudy umbrage, well might that fair face,
And all those attributes of modest grace,
In days when Fancy wrought unchecked by fear,
Down to the green earth fetch thee from thy sphere,
To sit in leafy woods by fountains clear!

O still belov'd (for thine, meek Power, are charms
That fascinate the very Babe in arms,
While he, uplifted towards thee, laughs outright,
Spreading his little palms in his glad Mother's sight)
O still belov'd, once worshipp'd! Time, that frowns
In his destructive flight on earthly crowns,
Spares thy mild splendour; still those far-shot beams
Tremble on dancing waves and rippling streams
With stainless touch, as chaste as when thy praise
Was sung by Virgin-choirs in festal lays;
And through dark trials still dost thou explore
Thy way for increase punctual as of yore,
When teeming Matrons—yielding to rude faith
In mysteries of birth and life and death
And painful struggle and deliverance—prayed
Of thee to visit them with lenient aid.
What though the rites be swept away, the fanes
Extinct that echoed to the votive strains;
Yet thy mild aspect does not, cannot, cease
Love to promote and purity and peace;
And Fancy, unreproved, even yet may trace
Faint types of suffering in thy beamless face.

Then, silent Monitress! let us—not blind
To worlds unthought of till the searching mind
Of Science laid them open to mankind;
Told, also, how the voiceless heavens declare
God's glory; and acknowledging thy share
In that blest charge; let us—without offence
To aught of highest, holiest, influence—
Receive whatever good 'tis given thee to dispense.
May sage and simple, catching with one eye
The moral intimations of the sky,
Learn from thy course, where'er their own be taken,
'To look on tempests, and be never shaken';
To keep with faithful step the appointed way
Eclipsing or eclipsed, by night or day,
And from example of thy monthly range
Gently to brook decline and fatal change;
Meek, patient, stedfast, and with loftier scope,
Than thy revival yields, for gladsome hope!

XIV

TO LUCCA GIORDANO

GIORDANO, verily thy Pencil's skill
Hath here portrayed with Nature's happiest grace
The fair Endymion couched on Latmos-hill;
And Dian gazing on the Shepherd's face
In rapture,—yet suspending her embrace,
As not unconscious with what power the thrill
Of her most timid touch his sleep would chase,
And, with his sleep, that beauty calm and still.
O may this work have found its last retreat
Here in a Mountain-bard's secure abode,
One to whom, yet a School-boy, Cynthia showed
A face of love which he in love would greet,
Fixed, by her smile, upon some rocky seat;
Or lured along where green-wood paths he trod.

Rydal Mount, 1846.

XV

WHO but is pleased to watch the moon on high
Travelling where she from time to time en-
shrouds
Her head, and nothing loth her Majesty
Renounces, till among the scattered clouds
One with its kindling edge declares that soon
Will reappear before the uplifted eye
A Form as bright, as beautiful a moon,
To glide in open prospect through clear sky.
Pity that such a promise c'er should prove
False in the issue, that yon seeming space
Of sky should be in truth the stedfast face
Of a cloud flat and dense, through which must move
(By transit not unlike man's frequent doom)
The Wanderer lost in more determined gloom.

1846

XVI

WHERE lies the truth? has Man, in wisdom's
 creed,
A pitiable doom; for respite brief
A care more anxious, or a heavier grief?
Is he ungrateful, and doth little heed
God's bounty, soon forgotten; or indeed,
Must Man, with labour born, awake to sorrow
When Flowers rejoice and Larks with rival speed
Spring from their nests to bid the Sun good morrow?
They mount for rapture as their songs proclaim
Warbled in hearing both of earth and sky;
But o'er the contrast wherefore heave a sigh?
Like those aspirants let us soar—our aim,
Through life's worst trials, whether shocks or snares,
A happier, brighter, purer Heaven than theirs.

1846
POEMS

COMPOSED OR SUGGESTED DURING A TOUR,
IN THE SUMMER OF 1833

[Having been prevented by the lateness of the season, in 1831, from visiting Staffa and Iona, the author made these the principal objects of a short tour in the summer of 1833, of which the following series of poems is a Memorial. The course pursued was down the Cumberland river Derwent, and to Whitehaven; thence (by the Isle of Man, where a few days were passed) up the Frith of Clyde to Greenock, then to Oban, Staffa, Iona; and back towards England, by Loch Awe, Inverary, Loch Goil-head, Greenock, and through parts of Renfrewshire, Ayrshire, and Dumfries-shire, to Carlisle, and thence up the river Eden, and homewards by Ullswater.]

I

A

DIEU, Rydalian Laurels! that have grown
And spread as if ye knew that days might come
When ye would shelter in a happy home,
On this fair Mount, a Poet of your own,
One who ne'er ventured for a Delphic crown
To sue the God; but, haunting your green shade
All seasons through, is humbly pleased to braid
Ground-flowers, beneath your guardianship, self-sown.
Farewell! no Minstrels now with harp new-strung
For summer wandering quit their household bowers; 10
Yet not for this wants Poesy a tongue
To cheer the Itinerant on whom she pours
Her spirit, while he crosses lonely moors,
Or musing sits forsaken halls among.

II

WHY should the Enthusiast, journeying through this Isle,
Repine as if his hour were come too late?
Not unprotected in her mouldering state,
Antiquity salutes him with a smile,
'Mid fruitful fields that ring with jocund toil,
And pleasure-grounds where Taste, refined Co-mate
Of Truth and Beauty, strives to imitate,
Far as she may, primeval Nature's style.
Fair Land! by Time's parental love made free,
By Social Order's watchful arms embraced;
With unexampled union meet in thee,
For eye and mind, the present and the past;
With golden prospect for futurity,
If that be reverenced which ought to last.

III

THEY called Thee Merry England, in old time;
A happy people won for thee that name
With envy heard in many a distant clime;
And, spite of change, for me thou keep'st the same
Endearing title, a responsive chime
To the heart's fond belief; though some there are
Whose sterner judgments deem that word a snare
For inattentive Fancy, like the lime
Which foolish birds are caught with. Can, I ask,
This face of rural beauty be a mask
For discontent, and poverty, and crime;
These spreading towns a cloak for lawless will?
Forbid it, Heaven! and Merry England still
Shall be thy rightful name, in prose and rhyme!

IV

TO THE RIVER GRETA, NEAR KESWICK

GRETA, what fearful listening! when huge stones
Rumble along thy bed, block after block:
Or, whirling with reiterated shock,
Combat, while darkness aggravates the groans:
But if thou (like Cocytus from the moans
Heard on his rueful margin) thence wert named
The Mourner, thy true nature was defamed,
And the habitual murmur that atones
For thy worst rage, forgotten. Oft as Spring
Decks, on thy sinuous banks, her thousand thrones,
Seats of glad instinct and love's carolling,
The concert, for the happy, then may vie
With liveliest peals of birth-day harmony:
To a grieved heart the notes are benisons.

V

TO THE RIVER DERWENT

AMONG the mountains were we nursed, loved
Stream!
Thou near the eagle's nest—within brief sail,
I, of his bold wing floating on the gale,
Where thy deep voice could lull me! Faint the beam
Of human life when first allowed to gleam
On mortal notice.—Glory of the vale,
Such thy meek outset, with a crown, though frail,
Kept in perpetual verdure by the steam
Of thy soft breath!—Less vivid wreath entwined
Nemean victor’s brow; less bright was worn,
Meed of some Roman chief—in triumph borne
With captives chained; and shedding from his car
The sunset splendours of a finished war
Upon the proud enslavers of mankind!

Published 1819

VI

IN SIGHT OF THE TOWN OF COCKERMOUTH
(Where the Author was born, and his Father’s remains are laid)

A POINT of life between my Parent’s dust,
   And yours, my buried Little ones! am I;
And to those graves looking habitually
In kindred quiet I repose my trust.
Death to the innocent is more than just,
   And, to the sinner, mercifully bent;
So may I hope, if truly I repent
And meekly bear the ills which bear I must:
And You, my Offspring! that do still remain,
Yet may outstrip me in the appointed race,
If e’er, through fault of mine, in mutual pain
We breathed together for a moment’s space,
The wrong, by love provoked, let love arraign,
And only love keep in your hearts a place.

VII

ADDRESS FROM THE SPIRIT OF COCKERMOUTH CASTLE

‘Thou look’st upon me, and dost fondly think,
Poet! that, stricken as both are by years,
We, differing once so much, are now Compeers,
Prepared, when each has stood his time, to sink
Into the dust. Erewhile a sterner link
United us; when thou, in boyish play,
Entering my dungeon, didst become a prey
To soul-appalling darkness. Not a blink
Of light was there;—and thus did I, thy Tutor,
Make thy young thoughts acquainted with the grave;
While thou Wert chasing the wing’d butterfly
Through my green courts; or climbing, a bold suitor,
Up to the flowers whose golden progeny
Still round my shattered brow in beauty wave.’
NUN'S WELL, BRIGHAM

VIII

NUN'S WELL, BRIGHAM

The cattle crowding round this beverage clear
To slake their thirst, with reckless hoofs have trod
The encircling turf into a barren clod;
Through which the waters creep, then disappear,
Born to be lost in Derwent flowing near;
Yet, o'er the brink, and round the lime-stone cell
Of the pure spring (they call it the 'Nun's Well,'
Name that first struck by chance my startled ear)
A tender Spirit broods—the pensive Shade
Of ritual honours to this Fountain paid
By hooded Votaresses with saintly cheer;
Albeit oft the Virgin-mother mild
Looked down with pity upon eyes beguiled
Into the shedding of 'too soft a tear.'

IX

TO A FRIEND

(On the banks of the Derwent)

Pastor and Patriot!—at whose bidding rise
These modest walls, amid a flock that need,
For one who comes to watch them and to feed,
A fixed Abode—keep down presageful sights.
Threats, which the unthinking only can despise,
Perplex the Church; but be thou firm,—be true
To thy first hope, and this good work pursue,
Poor as thou art. A welcome sacrifice
Dost Thou prepare, whose sign will be the smoke
Of thy new hearth; and sooner shall its wreaths,
Mounting while earth her morning incense breathes,
From wandering fiends of air receive a yoke,
And straightway cease to aspire, than God disdain
This humble tribute as ill-timed or vain.

X

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

(Landing at the mouth of the Derwent, Workington)

Dear to the Loves, and to the Graces vowed,
The Queen drew back the wimple that she wore;
And to the throng, that on the Cumbrian shore
Her landing hailed, how touchingly she bowed!
And like a Star (that, from a heavy cloud
Of pine-tree foliage poised in air, forth darts,
When a soft summer gale at evening parts
The gloom that did its loveliness enshroud)
She smiled; but Time, the old Saturnian seer,
Sighed on the wing as her foot pressed the strand,
With step prelusive to a long array
Of woes and degradations hand in hand—
Weeping captivity, and shuddering fear
Stilled by the ensanguined block of Fotheringay!

XI

STANZAS

SUGGESTED IN A STEAMBOAT OFF SAINT BEES’ HEADS, ON THE
COAST OF CUMBERLAND

If Life were slumber on a bed of down,
Toil unimposed, vicissitude unknown,
Sad were our lot: no hunter of the hare
Exults like him whose javelin from the lair
Has roused the lion; no one plucks the rose,
Whose proffered beauty in safe shelter blows
‘Mid a trim garden’s summer luxuries,
With joy like his who climbs, on hands and knees,
For some rare plant, yon Headland of St. Bees.

This independence upon oar and sail,
This new indifference to breeze or gale,
This straight-lined progress, furrowing a flat lea,
And regular as if locked in certainty—
Depress the hours. Up, Spirit of the storm!
That Courage may find something to perform;
That Fortitude, whose blood disdains to freeze
At Danger’s bidding, may confront the seas,
Firm as the towering Headlands of St. Bees.

Dread cliff of Baruth! that wild wish may sleep,
Bold as if men and creatures of the Deep
Breathed the same element; too many wrecks
Have struck thy sides, too many ghastly decks
Hast thou looked down upon, that such a thought
Should here be welcome, and in verse enwrought:
With thy stern aspect better far agrees
Utterance of thanks that we have past with ease,
As millions thus shall do, the Headlands of St. Bees.
Yet, while each useful Art augments her store,
What boots the gain if Nature should lose more?
And Wisdom, as she holds a Christian place
In man's intelligence sublimed by grace?
When Bega sought of yore the Cumbrian coast,
Tempestuous winds her holy errand crossed:
She knelt in prayer—the waves their wrath appease;
And, from her vow well weighed in Heaven's decrees,
Rose, where she touched the strand, the Chantry of St. Bees.

'Cruel of heart were they, bloody of hand,'
Who in these Wilds then struggled for command;
The strong were merciless, without hope the weak;
Till this bright Stranger came, fair as day-break,
And as a cresset true that darts its length
Of beamy lustre from a tower of strength;
Guiding the mariner through troubled seas,
And cheering oft his peaceful reveries,
Like the fixed Light that crowns yon Headland of St. Bees.

To aid the Votaress, miracles believed
Wrought in men's minds, like miracles achieved;
So piety took root; and Song might tell
What humanizing virtues near her cell
Sprang up, and spread their fragrance wide around;
How savage bosoms melted at the sound
Of gospel-truth enchained in harmonies
Wafted o'er waves, or creeping through close trees,
From her religious Mansion of St. Bees.

When her sweet Voice, that instrument of love,
Was glorified, and took its place, above
The silent stars, among the angelic quire,
Her chantry blazed with sacrilegious fire,
And perished utterly; but her good deeds
Had sown the spot, that witnessed them, with seeds
Which lay in earth expectant, till a breeze
With quickening impulse answered their mute pleas,
And lo! a statelier pile, the Abbey of St. Bees.

There are the naked clothed, the hungry fed;
And Charity extendeth to the dead
Her intercessions made for the soul's rest
Of tardy penitents; or for the best
Among the good (when love might else have slept,
Sickened, or died) in pious memory kept:
Thanks to the austere and simple Devotees,
Who, to that service bound by venial fees,
Keep watch before the altars of St. Bees.

Are not, in sooth, their Requiems sacred ties
Woven out of passion's sharpest agonies,
Subdued, composed, and formalized by art,
To fix a wiser sorrow in the heart?
The prayer for them whose hour is past away
Says to the Living, profit while ye may!
A little part, and that the worst, he sees
Who thinks that priestly cunning holds the keys
That best unlock the secrets of St. Bees.

Conscience, the timid being's inmost light,
Hope of the dawn and solace of the night,
Cheers these Recluses with a steady ray
In many an hour when judgment goes astray.
Ah! scorn not hastily their rule who try
Earth to despise, and flesh to mortify;
Consume with zeal, in wingèd ecstasies
Of prayer and praise forget their rosaries,
Nor hear the loudest surges of St. Bees.

Yet none so prompt to succour and protect
The forlorn traveller, or sailor wrecked
On the bare coast; nor do they grudge the boon
Which staff and cockle hat and sandal shoon
Claim for the pilgrim: and, though chidings sharp
May sometimes greet the strolling minstrel's harp,
It is not then when, swept with sportive ease,
It charms a feast-day throng of all degrees,
Brightening the archway of revered St. Bees.

How did the cliffs and echoing hills rejoice
What time the Benedictine Brethren's voice,
Imploring, or commanding with meet pride,
Summoned the Chiefs to lay their feuds aside,
And under one blest ensign serve the Lord
In Palestine. Advance, indignant Sword!
Flaming till thou from Paynim hands release
That Tomb, dread centre of all sanctities
Nursed in the quiet Abbey of St. Bees.

But look we now to them whose minds from far
Follow the fortunes which they may not share.
While in Judea Fancy loves to roam,
She helps to make a Holy-land at home:
The Star of Bethlehem from its sphere invites
To sound the crystal depth of maiden rights;
And wedded Life, through scriptural mysteries,
Heavenward ascends with all her charities,
Taught by the hooded Celibates of St. Bees.

Nor be it e'er forgotten how by skill
Of cloistered Architects, free their souls to fill
With love of God, throughout the Land were raised
Churches, on whose symbolic beauty gazed
Peasant and mail-clad Chief with pious awe;
As at this day men seeing what they saw,
Or the bare wreck of faith's solemnities,
Aspire to more than earthly destinies;
Witness yon Pile that greets us from St. Bees.

Yet more; around those Churches gathered Towns
Safe from the feudal Castle's haughty frowns;
Peaceful abodes, where Justice might uphold
Her scales with even hand, and culture mould
The heart to pity, train the mind in care
For rules of life, sound as the Time could bear.
Nor dost thou fail, thro' abject love of ease,
Or hindrance raised by sordid purposes,
To bear thy part in this good work, St. Bees.

Who with the ploughshare clove the barren moors,
And to green meadows changed the swampy shores?
Thinned the rank woods; and for the cheerful grange
Made room where wolf and boar were used to range?
Who taught, and showed by deeds, that gentler chains
Should bind the vassal to his lord's domains?
The thoughtful Monks, intent their God to please,
For Christ's dear sake, by human sympathies
Poured from the bosom of thy Church, St. Bees!

But all availed not; by a mandate given
Through lawless will the Brotherhood was driven
Forth from their cells; their ancient House laid low
In Reformation's sweeping overthrow.
But now once more the local Heart revives,
The inextinguishable Spirit strives.
Oh may that Power who hushed the stormy seas,
And cleared a way for the first Votaries,
Prosper the new-born College of St. Bees!

Alas! the Genius of our age, from Schools
Less humble, draws her lessons, aims, and rules.
To Prowess guided by her insight keen
Matter and Spirit are as one Machine;
Boastful Idolatress of formal skill
She in her own would merge the eternal will:
Better, if Reason's triumphs match with these,
Her flight before the bold credulities
That furthered the first teaching of St. Bees.  
1

XII

IN THE CHANNEL, BETWEEN THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND
AND THE ISLE OF MAN

RANGING the heights of Scawfell or Black-comb,
In his lone course the Shepherd oft will pause,
And strive to fathom the mysterious laws
By which the clouds, arrayed in light or gloom,
On Mona settle, and the shapes assume
Of all her peaks and ridges. What he draws
From sense, faith, reason, fancy, of the cause,
He will take with him to the silent tomb.
Or, by his fire, a child upon his knee,
Haply the untaught Philosopher may speak
Of the strange sight, nor hide his theory
That satisfies the simple and the meek,
Blest in their pious ignorance, though weak
To cope with Sages undevoutly free.

XIII

AT SEA OFF THE ISLE OF MAN

BOLD words affirmed, in days when faith was strong
And doubts and scruples seldom teased the brain,
That no adventurer's bark had power to gain
These shores if he approached them bent on wrong;
For, suddenly up-conjured from the Main,
Mists rose to hide the Land—that search, though long
And eager, might be still pursued in vain.
O Fancy, what an age was 

That age, when not by laws inanimate,
As men believed, the waters were impelled,
The air controlled, the stars their courses held;
But element and orb on acts did wait
Of Powers endued with visible form, instinct
With will, and to their work by passion linked.

1 See Excursion, seventh part; and Ecclesiastical Sketches, second part, near the beginning.
ON ENTERING DOUGLAS BAY  

XIV

DESIRE we past illusions to recall?  
To reinstate wild Fancy, would we hide  
Truths whose thick veil Science has drawn aside?  
No,—let this Age, high as she may, instal  
In her esteem the thirst that wrought man's fall,  
The universe is infinitely wide;  
And conquering Reason, if self-glorified,  
Can nowhere move uncrossed by some new wall  
Or gulf of mystery, which thou alone,  
Imaginative Faith! canst overleap,  
In progress toward the fount of Love,—the throne  
Of Power whose ministers the records keep  
Of periods fixed, and laws established, less  
Flesh to exalt than prove its nothingness.

XV

ON ENTERING DOUGLAS BAY, ISLE OF MAN  
'Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori'

THE feudal Keep, the bastions of Cohorn,  
Even when they rose to check or to repel  
Tides of aggressive war, oft served as well  
Greedy ambition, armed to treat with scorn  
Just limits; but yon Tower, whose smiles adorn  
This perilous bay, stands clear of all offence;  
Blest work it is of love and innocence,  
A Tower of refuge built for the else forlorn.  
Spare it, ye waves, and lift the mariner,  
Struggling for life, into its saving arms!  
Spare, too, the human helpers! Do they stir  
'Mid your fierce shock like men afraid to die?  
No; their dread service nerves the heart it warms,  
And they are led by noble Hillary.  

XVI

BY THE SEA-SHORE, ISLE OF MAN  

WHY stand we gazing on the sparkling Brine,  
With wonder smit by its transparency,  
And all-enraptured with its purity?—  
Because the unstained, the clear, the crystalline,  
Have ever in them something of benign;  
Whether in gem, in water, or in sky,  
A sleeping infant's brow, or wakeful eye  
Of a young maiden, only not divine.

1 See Note.
Scarcely the hand forbears to dip its palm
For beverage drawn as from a mountain-well.
Temptation centres in the liquid Calm;
Our daily raiment seems no obstacle
To instantaneous plunging in, deep Sea!
And revelling in long embrace with thee.¹

XVII

ISLE OF MAN

A YOUTH too certain of his power to wade
On the smooth bottom of this clear bright sea,
To sight so shallow, with a bather's glee,
Leapt from this rock, and but for timely aid
He, by the alluring element betrayed,
Had perished. Then might Sea-nymphs (and with sighs
Of self-reproach) have chanted elegies
Bewailing his sad fate, when he was laid
In peaceful earth: for, doubtless, he was frank,
Utterly in himself devoid of guile;
Knew not the double-dealing of a smile;
Nor aught that makes men's promises a blank,
Or deadly snare: and He survives to bless
The Power that saved him in his strange distress.

XVIII

ISLE OF MAN

D ID pangs of grief for lenient time too keen,
Grief that devouring waves had caused—or guilt
Which they had witnessed, sway the man who built
This Homestead, placed where nothing could be seen,
Nought heard, of ocean troubled or serene?
A tired Ship-soldier on paternal land,
Tha to'er the channel holds august command,
The dwelling raised,—a veteran Marine.
He, in disgust, turned from the neighbouring sea
To shun the memory of a listless life
That hung between two callings. May no strife
More hurtful here beset him, doomed though free,
Self-doomed, to worse inaction, till his eye
Shrink from the daily sight of earth and sky!

¹ The sea-water on the coast of the Isle of Man is singularly pure and beautiful.
XIX
BY A RETIRED MARINER
(A Friend of the Author)

FROM early youth I ploughed the restless Main,
My mind as restless and as apt to change;
Through every clime and ocean did I range,
In hope at length a competence to gain;
For poor to Sea I went, and poor I still remain.
Year after year I strove, but strove in vain,
And hardships manifold did I endure,
For Fortune on me never deigned to smile;
Yet I at last a resting-place have found,
With just enough life's comforts to procure,
In a snug Cove on this our favoured Isle,
A peaceful spot where Nature's gifts abound;
Then sure I have no reason to complain,
Though poor to Sea I went, and poor I still remain.

XX
AT BALA-SALA, ISLE OF MAN
(Supposed to be written by a Friend)

BROKEN in fortune, but in mind entire
And sound in principle, I seek repose
Where ancient trees this convent-pile enclose,¹
In ruin beautiful. When vain desire
Intrudes on peace, I pray the eternal Sire
To cast a soul-subduing shade on me,
A grey-haired, pensive, thankful Refugee;
A shade—but with some sparks of heavenly fire
Once to these cells vouchsafed. And when I note
The old Tower's brow yellowed as with the beams
Of sunset ever there, albeit streams
Of stormy weather-stains that semblance wrought,
I thank the silent Monitor, and say
'Shine so, my aged brow, at all hours of the day!'

XXI
TYNWALD HILL

ONCE on the top of Tynwald's formal mound
(Still marked with green turf circles narrowing
Stage above stage) would sit this Island's King,
The laws to promulgate, enrobbed and crowned;

¹ Rushen Abbey.
While, compassing the little mound around,
Degrees and Orders stood, each under each:
Now, like to things within fate's easiest reach,
The power is merged, the pomp a grave has found.
Off with yon cloud, old Snafell! that thine eye
Over three Realms may take its widest range;
And let, for them, thy fountains utter strange
Voices, thy winds break forth in prophecy,
If the whole State must suffer mortal change,
Like Mona's miniature of sovereignty.

XXII

DES POND who will—I heard a voice exclaim,
'Though fierce the assault, and shattered the defence,
It cannot be that Britain's social frame,
The glorious work of time and providence,
Before a flying season's rash pretence
Should fall; that She, whose virtue put to shame,
When Europe prostrate lay, the Conqueror's aim,
Should perish, self-subverted. Black and dense
The cloud is; but brings that a day of doom
To Liberty? Her sun is up the while,
That orb whose beams round Saxon Alfred shone:
Then laugh, ye innocent Vales! ye Streams, sweep on,
Nor let one billow of our heaven-blest Isle
Toss in the fanning wind a humbler plume.'

XXIII

IN THE FRITH OF CLYDE, AILSA CRAG

During an Eclipse of the Sun, July 17

S INCE risen from ocean, ocean to defy,
Appeared the Crag of Ailsa, ne'er did morn
With gleaming lights more gracefully adorn
His sides, or wreathe with mist his forehead high:
Now, faintly darkening with the sun's eclipse,
Still is he seen, in lone sublimity,
Towering above the sea and little ships;
For dwarfs the tallest seem while sailing by,
Each for her haven; with her Freight of Care,
Pleasure, or Grief, and Toil that seldom looks
Into the secret of to-morrow's fare;
Though poor, yet rich, without the wealth of books,
Or aught that watchful Love to Nature owes
For her mute Powers, fix'd Forms, or transient Shows.
ARRAN! a single-crested Teneriffe,
A St. Helena next—in shape and hue,
Varying her crowded peaks and ridges blue;
Who but must covet a cloud-seat, or skiff
Built for the air, of wingèd Hippogriff?
That he might fly, where no one could pursue,
From this dull Monster and her sooty crew;
And, as a God, light on thy topmost cliff.
Impotent wish! which reason would despise
If the mind knew no union of extremes,
No natural bond between the boldest schemes
Ambition frames and heart-humilities.
Beneath stern mountains many a soft vale lies,
And lofty springs give birth to lowly streams.

THE captive Bird was gone;—to cliff or moor
Perchance had flown, delivered by the storm;
Or he had pined, and sunk to feed the worm:
Him found we not: but, climbing a tall tower,
There saw, impaved with rude fidelity
Of art mosaic, in a roofless floor,
An Eagle with stretched wings, but beamless eye—
An Eagle that could neither wail nor soar.
Effigy of the Vanished—(shall I dare
To call thee so?) or symbol of fierce deeds
And of the towering courage which past times
Rejoiced in—take, whate'er thou be, a share,
Not undeserved, of the memorial rhymes
That animate my way where'er it leads!

NOT to the clouds, not to the cliff, he flew;
But when a storm, on sea or mountain bred,
Came and delivered him, alone he sped
Into the castle-dungeon's darkest mew.
Now near his master's house in open view
He dwells, and hears indignant tempests howl,
Kennelled and chained. Ye tame domestic fowl,
Beware of him! Thou saucy cockatoo,
Look to thy plumage and thy life!—The roe,
Fleet as the west wind, is for him no quarry;
Balanced in ether he will never tarry,
Eyeing the sea's blue depths. Poor Bird! even so
Doth man of brother man a creature make
That clings to slavery for its own sad sake.

XXVII

WRITTEN IN A BLANK LEAF OF
MACPHERSON'S OSSIAN

Oft have I caught, upon a fitful breeze,
Fragments of far-off melodies,
With ear not coveting the whole,
A part so charmed the pensive soul:
While a dark storm before my sight
Was yielding, on a mountain height
Loose vapours have I watched, that won
Prismatic colours from the sun;
Nor felt a wish that heaven would show
The image of its perfect bow.
What need, then, of these finished Strains?
Away with counterfeit Remains!
An abbey in its lone recess,
A temple of the wilderness,
Wrecks though they be, announce with feeling
The majesty of honest dealing.
Spirit of Ossian! if imbound
In language thou may'st yet be found,
If aught (intrusted to the pen
Or floating on the tongues of men,
Albeit shattered and impaired)
Subsist thy dignity to guard,
In concert with memorial claim
Of old grey stone, and high-born name
That cleaves to rock or pillared cave
Where moans the blast, or beats the wave,
Let Truth, stern arbitress of all,
Interpret that Original,
And for presumptuous wrongs atone;—
Authentic words be given, or none!
Time is not blind;—yet He, who spares
Pyramid pointing to the stars,
Hath preyed with ruthless appetite
On all that marked the primal flight
Of the poetical ecstasy
Into the land of mystery.
No tongue is able to rehearse
One measure, Orpheus! of thy verse;
Museus, stationed with his lyre
Supreme among the Elysian quire,
Is, for the dwellers upon earth,
Mute as a lark ere morning's birth.
Why grieve for these, though past away
The music, and extinct the lay?
When thousands, by severer doom,
Full early to the silent tomb
Have sunk, at Nature's call; or strayed
From hope and promise, self-betrayed;
The garland withering on their brows;
Stung with remorse for broken vows;
Frantic—else how might they rejoice?
And friendless, by their own sad choice!

Hail, Bards of mightier grasp! on you
I chiefly call, the chosen Few,
Who cast not off the acknowledged guide,
Who faltered not, nor turned aside;
Whose lofty genius could survive
Privation, under sorrow thrive;
In whom the fiery Muse revered
The symbol of a snow-white beard,
Bedewed with meditative tears
Dropped from the lenient cloud of years.

Brothers in soul! though distant times
Produced you nursed in various climes,
Ye, when the orb of life had waned,
A plenitude of love retained:
Hence, while in you each sad regret
By corresponding hope was met,
Ye lingered among human kind,
Sweet voices for the passing wind;
Departing sunbeams, loth to stop,
Though smiling on the last hill-top!
Such to the tender-hearted maid
Even ere her joys begin to fade;
Such, haply, to the rugged chief
By fortune crushed, or tamed by grief;
Appears, on Morven's lonely shore,
Dim-gleaming through imperfect lore,
The Son of Fingal; such was blind
Maenides of ampler mind;
Such Milton, to the fountain-head
Of glory by Urania led!

XXVIII
CAVE OF STAFFA

We saw, but surely, in the motley crowd,
Not One of us has felt the far-famed sight;
How could we feel it? each the other's blight,
Hurried and hurrying, volatile and loud.
O for those motions only that invite
The Ghost of Fingal to his tuneful Cave
By the breeze entered, and wave after wave
Softly embosoming the timid light!
And by one Votary who at will might stand
Gazing and take into his mind and heart,
With undistracted reverence, the effect
Of those proportions where the almighty hand
That made the worlds, the sovereign Architect,
Has deigned to work as if with human Art!

XXIX
CAVE OF STAFFA

(After the Crowd had departed)

Thanks for the lessons of this Spot—fit school
For the presumptuous thoughts that would assign
Mechanic laws to agency divine;
And, measuring heaven by earth, would overrule
Infinite Power. The pillared vestibule,
Expanding yet precise, the roof embowed,
Might seem designed to humble man, when proud
Of his best workmanship by plan and tool.
Down-bearing with his whole Atlantic weight
Of tide and tempest on the Structure's base,
And flashing to that Structure's topmost height,
Ocean has proved its strength, and of its grace
In calms is conscious, finding for his freight
Of softest music some responsive place.
XXX
CAVE OF STAFFA

YE shadowy Beings, that have rights and claims
In every cell of Fingal's mystic Grot,
Where are ye? Driven or venturing to the spot,
Our fathers glimpses caught of your thin Frames,
And, by your mien and bearing, knew your names;
And they could hear his ghostly song who trod Earth, till the flesh lay on him like a load,
While he struck his desolate harp without hopes or aims.

Vanished ye are, but subject to recall;
Why keep we else the instincts whose dread law
Ruled here of yore, till what men felt they saw,
Not by black arts but magic natural!
If eyes be still sworn vassals of belief,
Yon light shapes forth a Bard, that shade a Chief.

XXXI
FLOWERS ON THE TOP OF THE PILLARS AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE CAVE

HOPE smiled when your nativity was cast,
Children of Summer! Ye fresh Flowers that brave
What Summer here escapes not, the fierce wave,
And whole artillery of the western blast,
Battering the Temple's front, its long-drawn nave
Smiting, as if each moment were their last.

But ye, bright Flowers, on frieze and architrave Survive, and once again the Pile stands fast:
Calm as the Universe, from specular towers
Of heaven contemplated by Spirits pure
With mute astonishment, it stands sustained
Through every part in symmetry, to endure,
Unhurt, the assault of Time with all his hours,
As the supreme Artificer ordained.

XXXII
IONA

O N to Iona!—What can she afford
To us save matter for a thoughtful sigh,
Heaved over ruin with stability
In urgent contrast? To diffuse the Word
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

(Thy Paramount, mighty Nature! and Time's Lord)
Her Temples rose, 'mid pagan gloom; but why,
Even for a moment, has our verse deplored
Their wrongs, since they fulfilled their destiny?
And when, subjected to a common doom
Of mutability, those far-famed Piles
Shall disappear from both the sister Isles,
Iona's Saints, forgetting not past days,
Garlands shall wear of amaranthine bloom,
While heaven's vast sea of voices chants their praise.

XXXIII

IONA

(Upon Landing)

How sad a welcome! To each voyager
Some ragged child holds up for sale a store
Of wave-worn pebbles, pleading on the shore
Where once came monk and nun with gentle stir,
Blessings to give, news ask, or suit prefer.
Yet is yon neat trim church a grateful speck
Of novelty amid the sacred wreck
Strewn far and wide. Think, proud Philosopher!
Fallen though she be, this Glory of the west,
Still on her sons the beams of mercy shine;
And 'hopes, perhaps more heavenly bright than thine,
A grace by thee unsought and unpossessed,
A faith more fixed, a rapture more divine
Shall gild their passage to eternal rest.'

XXXIV

THE BLACK STONES OF IONA

[See Martin's Voyage among the Western Isles]

Here on their knees men swore: the stones were black,
Black in the people's minds and words, yet they
Were at that time, as now, in colour grey.
But what is colour, if upon the rack
Of conscience souls are placed by deeds that lack
Concord with oaths? What differ night and day
Then, when before the Perjured on his way
Hell opens, and the heavens in vengeance crack
Above his head uplifted in vain prayer
To Saint, or Fiend, or to the Godhead whom
He had insulted—Peasant, King, or Thane?
Fly where the culprit may, guilt meets a doom;
And, from invisible worlds at need laid bare,
Come links for social order's awful chain.

XXXV

HOMEWARD we turn. Isle of Columba's Cell,
Where Christian piety's soul-cheering spark
(Kindled from Heaven between the light and dark
Of time) shone like the morning-star, farewell!—
And fare thee well, to Fancy visible,
Remote St Kilda, lone and loved sea-mark
For many a voyage made in her swift bark,
When with more hues than in the rainbow dwell
Thou a mysterious intercourse dost hold,
Extracting from clear skies and air serene,
And out of sun-bright waves, a lucid veil,
That thickens, spreads, and, mingling fold with fold,
Makes known, when thou no longer canst be seen,
Thy whereabout, to warn the approaching sail.

XXXVI

GREENOCK

Per me si va nella Città dolente

We have not passed into a doleful City,
We who were led to-day down a grim dell,
By some too boldly named 'the Jaws of Hell':
Where be the wretched ones, the sights for pity?
These crowded streets resound no plaintive ditty:—
As from the hive where bees in summer dwell,
Sorrow seems here excluded; and that knell,
It neither damps the gay, nor checks the witty.
Alas! too busy Rival of old Tyre,
Whose merchants Princes were, whose decks were thrones;
Soon may the punctual sea in vain respire
To serve thy need, in union with that Clyde
Whose nursling current brawls o'er mossy stones,
The poor, the lonely herdsman's joy and pride.
XXXVII

'THERE!' said a Stripling, pointing with meet pride
Towards a low roof with green trees half concealed,
'I's Mosgiel Farm; and that's the very field
Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy.' Far and wide
A plain below stretched seaward, while, descried
Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran rose;
And, by that simple notice, the repose
Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.
Beneath 'the random field of clod or stone'
Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour
Have passed away; less happy than the One
That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died to prove
The tender charm of poetry and love.

XXXVIII

THE RIVER EDEN, CUMBERLAND

EDEN! till now thy beauty had I viewed
By glimpses only, and confess with shame
That verse of mine, whate'er its varying mood,
Repeats but once the sound of thy sweet name:
Yet fetched from Paradise that honour came,
Rightfully borne; for Nature gives thee flowers
That have no rivals among British bowers;
And thy bold rocks are worthy of their fame.
Measuring thy course, fair Stream! at length I pay
To my life's neighbour dues of neighbourhood;
But I have traced thee on thy winding way
With pleasure sometimes by this thought restrained—
For things far off we toil, while many a good
Not sought, because too near, is never gained.

XXXIX

MONUMENT OF MRS. HOWARD

(by Nollekens)

In Wetheral Church, near Corby, on the banks of the Eden

STRETCHED on the dying Mother's lap, lies dead
Her new-born Babe; dire ending of bright hope!
But Sculpture here, with the divinest scope
Of luminous faith, heavenward hath raised that head
So patiently; and through one hand has spread
A touch so tender for the insensate Child—
(Earth’s lingering love to parting reconciled,
Brief parting, for the spirit is all but fled)—
That we, who contemplate the turns of life
Through this still medium, are consoled and cheered;
Feel with the Mother, think the severed Wife
Is less to be lamented than revered;
And own that Art, triumphant over strife
And pain, hath powers to Eternity endeared.

XL

SUGGESTED BY THE FOREGOING

TRANQUILLITY! the sovereign aim wert thou
   In heathen schools of philosophic lore;
Heart-stricken by stern destiny of yore
The Tragic Muse thee served with thoughtful vow;
And what of hope Elysium could allow
Was fondly seized by Sculpture, to restore
Peace to the Mourner. But when He who wore
The crown of thorns around his bleeding brow
Warmed our sad being with celestial light,
Then Arts, which still had drawn a softening grace
From shadowy fountains of the Infinite,
Communed with that Idea face to face:
And move around it now as planets run,
Each in its orbit round the central Sun.

XLI

NUNNERY

The floods are roused, and will not soon be weary;
Down from the Pennine Alps how fiercely sweeps
Croglin, the stately Eden’s tributary!
He raves, or through some moody passage creeps
Plotting new mischief—out again he leaps
Into broad light, and sends, through regions airy,
That voice which soothed the Nuns while on the steeps
They knelt in prayer, or sang to blissful Mary.
That union ceased: then, cleaving easy walks
Through crags, and smoothing paths beset with danger,
Came studious Taste; and many a pensive stranger
Dreams on the banks, and to the river talks.
What change shall happen next to Nunnery Dell?
Canal, and Viaduct, and Railway, tell!

1 The chain of Crossfell.
XLII

STEAMBOATS, VIADUCTS, AND RAILWAYS

MOTIONS and Means, on land and sea at war
With old poetic feeling, not for this,
Shall ye, by Poets even, be judged amiss!
Nor shall your presence, howso’er it mar
The loveliness of Nature, prove a bar
To the Mind’s gaining that prophetic sense
Of future change, that point of vision, whence
May be discovered what in soul ye are.
In spite of all that beauty may disown
In your harsh features, Nature doth embrace
Her lawful offspring in Man’s art; and Time,
Pleased with your triumphs o’er his brother Space,
Accepts from your bold hands the proffered crown
Of hope, and smiles on you with cheer sublime.

XLIII

THE MONUMENT COMMONLY CALLED LONG MEG AND HER DAUGHTERS, NEAR THE RIVER EDEN

A WEIGHT of awe, not easy to be borne,
Fell suddenly upon my Spirit—cast
From the dread bosom of the unknown past,
When first I saw that family forlorn.
Speak Thou, whose massy strength and stature scorn
The power of years—pre-eminent, and placed
Apart, to overlook the circle vast—
Speak, Giant-mother! tell it to the Morn
While she dispels the cumbrous shades of Night;
Let the Moon hear, emerging from a cloud;
At whose behest uprose on British ground
That Sisterhood, in hieroglyphic round
Forth-shadowing, some have deemed, the infinite
The inviolable God, that tames the proud.¹

XLIV

LOWTHER

LOWTHER! in thy majestic Pile are seen
Cathedral pomp and grace, in apt accord
With the baronial castle’s stern mien;
Union significant of God adored,

¹ See Note.
And charters won and guarded by the sword
Of ancient honour; whence that goodly state
Of polity which wise men venerate,
And will maintain, if God his help afford.
Hourly the democratic torrent swells;
For airy promises and hopes suborned
The strength of backward-looking thoughts is scorned.
Fall if ye must, ye Towers and Pinnacles,
With what ye symbolise; authentic Story
Will say, Ye disappeared with England's Glory!

XLV

TO THE EARL OF LONSDALE

'Magistratus indicat virum'

LONSDALE! it were unworthy of a Guest,
Whose heart with gratitude to thee inclines,
If he should speak, by fancy touched, of signs
On thy Abode harmoniously imprest,
Yet be unmoved with wishes to attest
How in thy mind and moral frame agree
Fortitude, and that Christian Charity
Which, filling, consecrates the human breast.
And if the Motto on thy 'scutcheon teach
With truth, 'The Magistracy shows the Man';
That searching test thy public course has stood;
As will be owned alike by bad and good,
Soon as the measuring of life's little span
Shall place thy virtues out of Envy's reach. 1

XLVI

THE SOMNAMBULIST

LIST, ye who pass by Lyulph's Tower 2
At eve; how softly then
Doth Aira-force, that torrent hoarse,
Speak from the woody glen!
Fit music for a solemn vale!
And holier seems the ground
To him who catches on the gale
The spirit of a mournful tale,
Embodied in the sound.

1 See Note.
2 A pleasure-house built by the late Duke of Norfolk upon the banks of Ullswater. Force is the word used in the Lake District for Water-fall.
Not far from that fair site whereon
The Pleasure-house is reared,
As story says, in antique days
A stern-browed house appeared;
Foil to a Jewel rich in light
There set, and guarded well;
Cage for a Bird of plumage bright,
Sweet-voiced, nor wishing for a flight
Beyond her native dell.

To win this bright Bird from her cage,
To make this Gem their own,
Came Barons bold, with store of gold,
And Knights of high renown;
But one She prized, and only one;
Sir Eglamore was he;
Full happy season, when was known,
Ye Dales and Hills! to you alone
Their mutual loyalty—

Known chiefly, Aira! to thy glen,
Thy brook, and bowers of holly;
Where Passion caught what Nature taught,
That all but love is folly;
Where Fact with Fancy stooped to play;
Doubt came not, nor regret—
To trouble hours that winged their way,
As if through an immortal day
Whose sun could never set.

But in old times Love dwelt not long
Sequestered with repose;
Bestthrove the fire of chaste desire,
Fanned by the breath of foes.
‘A conquering lance is beauty’s test,
And proves the Lover true’;
So spake Sir Eglamore, and pressed
The drooping Emma to his breast,
And looked a blind adieu.

They parted.—Well with him it fared
Through wide-spread regions errant;
A knight of proof in love’s behoof,
The thirst of fame his warrant:
And She her happiness can build
On woman's quiet hours;
Though faint, compared with spear and shield,
The solace beads and masses yield,
And needlework and flowers.

Yet blest was Emma when she heard
Her Champion's praise recounted;
Though brain would swim, and eyes grow dim,
And high her blushes mounted;
Or when a bold heroic lay
She warbled from full heart;
Delightful blossoms for the May
Of absence! but they will not stay,
Born only to depart.

Hope wanes with her, while lustre fills
Whatever path he chooses;
As if his orb, that owns no curb,
Received the light hers loses.
He comes not back; an ampler space
Requires for nobler deeds;
He ranges on from place to place,
Till of his doings is no trace,
But what her fancy breeds.

His fame may spread, but in the past
Her spirit finds its centre;
Clear sight She has of what he was,
And that would now content her.
'Still is he my devoted Knight?'
The tear in answer flows;
Month falls on month with heavier weight;
Day sickens round her, and the night
Is empty of repose.

In sleep She sometimes walked abroad,
Deep sighs with quick words blending,
Like that pale Queen whose hands are seen
With fancied spots contending;
But she is innocent of blood,—
The moon is not more pure
That shines aloft, while through the wood
She thrids her way, the sounding Flood
Her melancholy lure!
While 'mid the fern-brake sleeps the doe,
   And owls alone are waking,
In white arrayed, glides on the Maid
   The downward pathway taking,
That leads her to the torrent's side
   And to a holly bower;
By whom on this still night desired?
By whom in that lone place espied?
   By thee, Sir Eglamore!

A wandering Ghost, so thinks the Knight,
   His coming step has thwarted,
Beneath the boughs that heard their vows,
   Within whose shade they parted.
Hush, hush, the busy Sleeper see!
   Perplexed her fingers seem,
As if they from the holly tree
Green twigs would pluck, as rapidly
   Flung from her to the stream.

What means the Spectre? Why intent
   To violate the Tree,
Thought Eglamore, by which I swore
   Unfading constancy?
Here am I, and to-morrow's sun,
   To her I left, shall prove
That bliss is ne'er so surely won
As when a circuit has been run
   Of valour, truth and love.

So from the spot whereon he stood,
   He moved with stealthy pace;
And, drawing nigh, with his living eye,
   He recognised the face;
And whispers caught, and speeches small,
   Some to the green-leaved tree,
Some muttered to the torrent-fall;—
   'Roar on, and bring him with thy call;
I heard, and so may He!'

Soul-shattered was the Knight, nor knew
   If Emma's Ghost it were,
Or boding Shade, or if the Maid
   Her very self stood there.
He touched; what followed who shall tell?  
The soft touch snapped the thread  
Of slumber—shrieking back she fell,  
And the Stream whirled her down the dell  
Along its foaming bed.

In plunged the Knight!—when on firm ground  
The rescued Maiden lay,  
Her eyes grew bright with blissful light,  
Confusion passed away;  
She heard, ere to the throne of grace  
Her faithful Spirit flew,  
His voice—beheld his speaking face;  
And, dying, from his own embrace  
She felt that he was true.

So was he reconciled to life:  
Brief words may speak the rest;  
Within the dell he built a cell,  
And there was Sorrow's guest;  
In hermits' weeds repose he found,  
From vain temptations free;  
Beside the torrent dwelling—bound  
By one deep heart-controlling sound,  
And awed to piety.

Wild stream of Aira, hold thy course,  
Nor fear memorial lays,  
Where clouds that spread in solemn shade,  
Are edged with golden rays!  
Dear art thou to the light of heaven,  
Though minister of sorrow;  
Sweet is thy voice at pensive even;  
And thou, in lovers' hearts forgiven,  
Shalt take thy place with Yarrow!  
Probably before 1833

XLVII

TO CORDELIA M——

Hallsteads, Ullswater

NOT in the mines beyond the western main,  
You say, Cordelia, was the metal sought,  
Which a fine skill, of Indian growth, has wrought  
Into this flexible yet faithful Chain;
Nor is it silver of romantic Spain;
But from our loved Helvellyn's depths was brought,
Our own domestic mountain. Thing and thought
Mix strangely; trifles light, and partly vain,
Can prop, as you have learnt, our nobler being:
Yes, Lady, while about your neck is wound
(Your casual glance oft meeting) this bright cord,
What witchery, for pure gifts of inward seeing,
Lurks in it, Memory's Helper, Fancy's Lord,
For precious tremblings in your bosom found!

XLVIII

MOST sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:
With Thought and Love companions of our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.
EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

I

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

‘WHY, William, on that old grey stone,
    Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

‘Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

‘You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!’

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

‘The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where’er they be,
Against or with our will.

‘Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

‘Think you, ’mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?'
'—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,  
Conversing as I may,  
I sit upon this old grey stone,  
And dream my time away.'  
1798

II

THE TABLES TURNED

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;  
Or surely you'll grow double:  
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;  
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,  
A freshening lustre mellow  
Through all the long green fields has spread,  
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:  
Come, hear the woodland linnet,  
How sweet his music! on my life,  
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!  
He, too, is no mean preacher:  
Come forth into the light of things,  
Let Nature be your Teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,  
Our minds and hearts to bless—  
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,  
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;  
Our meddling intellect  
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—  
We murder to dissect.
Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

1798

III

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

I

HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

1798

IV

A CHARACTER

I

MARVEL how Nature could ever find space
For so many strange contrasts in one human face:
There's thought and no thought, and there's paleness and bloom
And bustle and slughishness, pleasure and gloom.
There's weakness, and strength both redundant and vain;
Such strength as, if ever affliction and pain
Could pierce through a temper that's soft to disease,
Would be rational peace—a philosopher's ease.

There's indifference, alike when he fails or succeeds,
And attention full ten times as much as there needs; 10
Pride where there's no envy, there's so much of joy;
And mildness, and spirit both forward and coy.

There's freedom, and sometimes a diffident stare
Of shame scarcely seeming to know that she's there,
There's virtue, the title it surely may claim,
Yet wants heaven knows what to be worthy the name.

This picture from nature may seem to depart,
Yet the Man would at once run away with your heart;
And I for five centuries right gladly would be
Such an odd such a kind happy creature as he. 20

V
TO MY SISTER

T is the first mild day of March:
   Each minute sweeter than before,
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
   That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My sister! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you;—and, pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar:
We from to-day, my Friend, will date
The opening of the year.
Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth:
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason:
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey:
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls:
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my Sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

VI

SIMON LEE

THE OLD HUNTSMAN

With an incident in which he was concerned

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old Man dwells, a little man,—
'Tis said he once was tall.
Full five-and-thirty years he lived
A running huntsman merry;
And still the centre of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And hill and valley rang with glee
When Echo bandied, round and round,
The halloo of Simon Lee.
In those proud days, he little cared
For husbandry or tillage;
To blither tasks did Simon rouse
The sleepers of the village.
He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind;
And often, ere the chase was done,
He reeled, and was stone-blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices!

But, oh the heavy change!—bereft
Of health, strength, friends, and kindred, see!
Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
His Master's dead,—and no one now
Dwells in the Hall of Ivor;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean and he is sick;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swoln and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.
One prop he has, and only one,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village Common.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer?

Oft, working by her Husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do;
For she, with scanty cause for pride,
Is stouter of the two.
And, though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
'Tis little, very little—all
That they can do between them.
Few months of life has he in store
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
My gentle Reader, I perceive
How patiently you 've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O Reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle Reader! you would find
A tale in every thing.
What more I have to say is short,
And you must kindly take it:
It is no tale; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you 'll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old Man doing all he could
To unearth the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock tottered in his hand;
So vain was his endeavour,
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked for ever.

'You 're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool,' to him I said;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffered aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I severed,
At which the poor old Man so long
And vainly had endeavoured.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
—I' ve heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.

1798
VII
WRITTEN IN GERMANY
ON ONE OF THE COLDEST DAYS OF THE CENTURY

The Reader must be apprised that the Stoves in North Germany generally have the impression of a galloping horse upon them, this being part of the Brunswick Arms.

A PLAGUE on your languages, German and Norse! Let me have the song of the kettle; And the tongs and the poker, instead of that horse That gallops away with such fury and force On this dreary dull plate of black metal.

See that Fly,—a disconsolate creature! perhaps A child of the field or the grove; And, sorrow for him! the dull treacherous heat Has seduced the poor fool from his winter retreat, And he creeps to the edge of my stove.

Alas! how he fumbles about the domains Which this comfortless oven environ! He cannot find out in what track he must crawl, Now back to the tiles, then in search of the wall, And now on the brink of the iron.

Stock-still there he stands like a traveller bemazed: The best of his skill he has tried; His feelers, methinks, I can see him put forth To the east and the west, to the south and the north, But he finds neither guide-post nor guide.

His spindles sink under him, foot, leg, and thigh! His eyesight and hearing are lost; Between life and death his blood freezes and thaws; And his two pretty pinions of blue dusky gauze Are glued to his sides by the frost.

No brother, no mate has he near him—while I Can draw warmth from the cheek of my Love; As blest and as glad, in this desolate gloom, As if green summer grass were the floor of my room, And woodbines were hanging above.
Yet, God is my witness, thou small helpless Thing!
Thy life I would gladly sustain
Till summer come up from the south, and with crowds
Of thy brethren a march thou shouldst sound through
the clouds,
And back to the forests again!

1799

VIII

A POET’S EPITAPH

ART thou a Statist in the van
Of public conflicts trained and bred?
—First learn to love one living man;
Then may’st thou think upon the dead.

A Lawyer art thou? draw not nigh!
Go, carry to some fitter place
The keenness of that practised eye,
The hardness of that sallow face.

Art thou a Man of purple cheer?
A rosy Man, right plump to see?
Approach; yet, Doctor, not too near,
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Or art thou one of gallant pride,
A Soldier and no man of chaff?
Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a peasant’s staff.

Physician art thou?—one, all eyes,
Philosopher!—a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanize
Upon his mother’s grave?

Wrapped closely in thy sensual fleece,
O turn aside,—and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy ever-dwindling soul, away!

A Moralist perchance appears;
Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod:
And he has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;
One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All-in-all!

Shut close the door; press down the latch;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust;
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
Near this unprofitable dust.

But who is He, with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has viewed;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart,—
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak; both Man and Boy,
Hath been an idler in the land;
Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

—Come hither in thy hour of strength;
Come, weak as is a breaking wave!
Here stretch thy body at full length;
Or build thy house upon this grave.

IX
TO THE DAISY

BRIGHT Flower! whose home is everywhere,
Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy and sorrow;
Methinks that there abides in thee
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest thorough!

Is it that Man is soon deprest?
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
Or on his reason,
And Thou wouldst teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Uncheck'd by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
Yet pleased and willing;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical
In peace fulfilling.

X
MATTHEW

In the School of —— is a tablet, on which are inscribed, in gilt letters, the Names of the several persons who have been Schoolmasters there since the foundation of the School, with the time at which they entered upon and quitted their office. Opposite to one of those Names the Author wrote the following lines.

If Nature, for a favourite child,
  In thee hath tempered so her clay,
That every hour thy heart runs wild,
Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines; and then review
This tablet, that thus humbly rears
In such diversity of hue
Its history of two hundred years.

—When through this little wreck of fame,
Cipher and syllable! thine eye
Has travelled down to Matthew's name,
Pause with no common sympathy.
And if a sleeping tear should wake,
Then be it neither checked nor stayed:
For Matthew a request I make
Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,
Is silent as a standing pool;
Far from the chimney's merry roar,
And murmur of the village school.

The sighs which Matthew heaved were sighs
Of one tired out with fun and madness;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness.

Yet, sometimes, when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round,
It seemed as if he drank it up—
He felt with spirit so profound.

—Thou soul of God's best earthly mould!
Thou happy Soul! and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee?

XI

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS

W e walked along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun;
And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,
'The will of God be done!'

A village schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering grey;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the steaming rills,
We travelled merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

'Our work,' said I, 'was well begun,
Then from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought?'
A second time did Matthew stop;  
And fixing still his eye  
Upon the eastern mountain-top,  
To me he made reply:

'Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

'And just above yon slope of corn
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky, that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

'With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave,
And, to the church-yard come, stopped short
Beside my daughter's grave.

'Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale;
And then she sang;—she would have been
A very nightingale.

'Six feet in earth my Emma lay;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e'er had loved before.

'And, turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the church-yard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

'A basket on her head she bare;
Her brow was smooth and white:
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

'No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

'There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I looked at her, and looked again:
And did not wish her mine!'
Matthew is in his grave, yet now,
Methinks, I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding in his hand.

1799

XII

THE FOUNTAIN

A CONVERSATION

We talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

'Now, Matthew!' said I, 'let us match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon;'

'Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!'

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-haired man of glee:

'No check, no stay, this Streamlet fears;
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

'And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.
‘My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

‘Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

‘The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

‘With Nature never do they wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

‘But we are pressed by heavy laws;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

‘If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own;
It is the man of mirth.

‘My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved.’

‘Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains;

‘And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I’ll be a son to thee!’
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
‘Alas! that cannot be.’
We rose up from the fountain-side;
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

We rose up from the fountain-side;
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

XIII
PERSONAL TALK

I

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk,—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight:
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint under-song.

II

'Yet life,' you say, 'is life; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself; and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe.'
Even be it so: yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me!
Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies
More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
And part far from them:—sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a Slave; the meanest we can meet!
Wings have we,—and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:
And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

Published 1807

DISCOURSE was deemed Man's noblest attribute,
And written words the glory of his hand;
Then followed Printing with enlarged command
For thought—dominion vast and absolute
For spreading truth, and making love expand.
Now prose and verse sunk into disrepute
Must lacquey a dumb Art that best can suit
The taste of this once-intellectual Land.
A backward movement surely have we here,
From manhood—back to childhood; for the age—
Back towards caverned life's first rude career.
Avaunt this vile abuse of pictured page!
Must eyes be all in all, the tongue and ear
Nothing? Heaven keep us from a lower stage!

XV

TO THE SPADE OF A FRIEND

(AN AGRICULTURIST)

Composed while we were labouring together in his pleasure-ground

S PADE! with which Wilkinson hath tilled his lands,
And shaped these pleasant walks by Emont's side,
Thou art a tool of honour in my hands;
I press thee, through the yielding soil, with pride.

Rare master has it been thy lot to know;
Long hast Thou served a man to reason true;
Whose life combines the best of high and low,
The labouring many and the resting few;

Health, meekness, ardour, quietness secure,
And industry of body and of mind;
And elegant enjoyments, that are pure
As nature is;—too pure to be refined.

Here often hast Thou heard the Poet sing
In concord with his river murmuring by;
Or in some silent field, while timid spring
Is yet uncheered by other minstrelsy.

Who shall inherit Thee when death has laid
Low in the darksome cell thine own dear lord?
That man will have a trophy, humble Spade!
A trophy nobler than a conqueror's sword.

If he be one that feels, with skill to part
False praise from true, or greater from the less,
Thee will he welcome to his hand and heart,
Thou monument of peaceful happiness!

He will not dread with Thee a toilsome day—
Thee his loved servant, his inspiring mate!
And, when thou art past service, worn away,
No dull oblivious nook shall hide thy fate.

1846
His thrift thy uselessness will never scorn;
An heir-loom in his cottage wilt Thou be:
High will he hang thee up, well pleased to adorn
His rustic chimney with the last of Thee!

XVI

A NIGHT THOUGHT

Lo! where the Moon along the sky
Sails with her happy destiny;
Oft is she hid from mortal eye
Or dimly seen,
But when the clouds asunder fly
How bright her mien!

Far different we—a froward race,
Thousands though rich in Fortune's grace
With cherished sullenness of pace
Their way pursue,
Ingrates who wear a smileless face
The whole year through.

If kindred humours e'er would make
My spirit droop for drooping's sake,
From Fancy following in thy wake,
Bright ship of heaven!
A counter impulse let me take
And be forgiven.

Published 1837

XVII

INCIDENT

CHARACTERISTIC OF A FAVOURITE DOG

On his morning rounds the Master
Goes to learn how all things fare;
Searches pasture after pasture,
Sheep and cattle eyes with care
And, for silence or for talk,
He hath comrades in his walk;
Four dogs, each pair of different breed,
Distinguished two for scent, and two for speed.
See a hare before him started!
—Off they fly in earnest chase;
Every dog is eager-hearted,
All the four are in the race:
And the hare whom they pursue,
Knows from instinct what to do;
Her hope is near: no turn she makes;
But, like an arrow, to the river takes.

Deep the river was, and crusted
Thinly by a one night's frost;
But the nimble Hare hath trusted
To the ice, and safely crost;
She hath crost, and without heed
All are following at full speed,
When, lo! the ice, so thinly spread,
Breaks—and the greyhound, Dart, is overhead!

Better fate have Prince and Swallow—
See them cleaving to the sport!
Music has no heart to follow,
Little Music, she stops short.
She hath neither wish nor heart,
Hers is now another part:
A loving creature she, and brave!
And fondly strives her struggling friend to save.

From the brink her paws she stretches,
Very hands as you would say!
And afflicting moans she fetches,
As he breaks the ice away.
For herself she hath no fears,—
Him alone she sees and hears,—
Makes efforts with complaining ; nor gives o'er
Until her fellow sinks to re-appear no more.

XVIII

TRIBUTE

TO THE MEMORY OF THE SAME DOG

LIE here, without a record of thy worth,
Beneath a covering of the common earth!
It is not from unwillingness to praise,
Or want of love, that here no Stone we raise;
More thou deserv'st; but this man gives to man
Brother to brother, this is all we can.
Yet they to whom thy virtues made thee dear
Shall find thee through all changes of the year:
This Oak points out thy grave; the silent tree
Will gladly stand a monument of thee.

We grieved for thee, and wished thy end were past;
And willingly have laid thee here at last:
For thou hadst lived till every thing that cheers
In thee had yielded to the weight of years;
Extreme old age had wasted thee away,
And left thee but a glimmering of the day;
Thy ears were deaf, and feeble were thy knees,—
I saw thee stagger in the summer breeze,
Too weak to stand against its sportive breath,
And ready for the gentlest stroke of death.
It came, and we were glad; yet tears were shed;
Both man and woman wept when thou wert dead;
Not only for a thousand thoughts that were,
Old household thoughts, in which thou hadst thy share;
But for some precious boons vouchsafed to thee,
Found scarcely any where in like degree!
For love, that comes wherever life and sense
Are given by God, in thee was most intense;
A chain of heart, a feeling of the mind,
A tender sympathy, which did thee bind
Not only to us Men, but to thy Kind:
Yea, for thy fellow-brutes in thee we saw
A soul of love, love's intellectual law:—
Hence, if we wept, it was not done in shame;
Our tears from passion and from reason came,
And, therefore, shalt thou be an honoured name!

XIX

FIDELITY

A BARKING sound the Shepherd hears,
A cry as of a dog or fox;
He halts—and searches with his eyes
Among the scattered rocks:
And now at distance can discern
A stirring in a brake of fern;
And instantly a dog is seen,
Glancing through that covert green.
The Dog is not of mountain breed;
Its motions, too, are wild and shy;
With something, as the Shepherd thinks,
Unusual in its cry:
Nor is there any one in sight
All round, in hollow or on height;
Nor shout, nor whistle strikes his ear;
What is the creature doing here?

It was a cove, a huge recess,
That keeps, till June, December’s snow;
A lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn¹ below!
Far in the bosom of Helvellyn,
Remote from public road or dwelling,
Pathway, or cultivated land;
From trace of human foot or hand.

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

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

From those abrupt and perilous rocks
The Man had fallen, that place of fear!
At length upon the Shepherd’s mind
It breaks, and all is clear:
He instantly recalled the name,
And who he was, and whence he came;
Remembered, too, the very day
On which the Traveller passed this way.

¹ Tarn is a small Mere or Lake, mostly high up in the mountains.
ODE TO DUTY

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

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

XX

ODE TO DUTY

'Sam non consilio bonus, sed more eò percutus, ut non tantum recté facere
possim, sed nisi recté facere non possim'

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around
them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee,
are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

50

So done by W. W. in Ed. 1837: but originally written
not later than Sept. 1804.
WHO is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright;
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature’s highest dower:
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—‘Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
—He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe’er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
’Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation’s eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven’s applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.

1806
XXII

THE FORCE OF PRAYER

OR, THE FOUNDING OF BOLTON PRIORY

A TRADITION

'What is good for a bootless bane?'
With these dark words begins my Tale;
And their meaning is, whence can comfort spring
When Prayer is of no avail?

'What is good for a bootless bane?'
The Falconer to the Lady said;
And she made answer 'Endless sorrow!'
For she knew that her Son was dead.

She knew it by the Falconer's words,
And from the look of the Falconer's eye;
And from the love which was in her soul
For her youthful Romilly.

—Young Romilly through Barden woods
Is ranging high and low;
And holds a greyhound in a leash,
To let slip upon buck or doe.

The pair have reached that fearful chasm,
How tempting to bestride!
For lordly Wharf is there pent in
With rocks on either side.

This striding-place is called The Strid,
A name which it took of yore:
A thousand years hath it borne that name,
And shall a thousand more.

And hither is young Romilly come,
And what may now forbid
That he, perhaps for the hundredth time,
Shall bound across The Strid?

He sprang in glee,—for what cared he
That the river was strong, and the rocks were steep?—
But the greyhound in the leash hung back,
And checked him in his leap.

1 See The White Doe of Rylstone.
The Boy is in the arms of Wharf,
And strangled by a merciless force;
For never more was young Romilly seen
Till he rose a lifeless corse.

Now there is stillness in the vale,
And long, unspeaking, sorrow:
Wharf shall be to pitying hearts
A name more sad than Yarrow.

If for a lover the Lady wept,
A solace she might borrow
From death, and from the passion of death:—
Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weeps not for the wedding-day
Which was to be to-morrow:
Her hope was a further-looking hope,
And hers is a mother's sorrow.

He was a tree that stood alone,
And proudly did its branches wave;
And the root of this delightful tree
Was in her husband's grave!

Long, long in darkness did she sit,
And her first words were, 'Let there be
In Bolton, on the field of Wharf,
A stately Priory!'

The stately Priory was reared;
And Wharf, as he moved along,
To matins joined a mournful voice,
Nor failed at even-song.

And the Lady prayed in heaviness
That looked not for relief!
But slowly did her succour come,
And a patience to her grief.

Oh! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end,
If but to God we turn, and ask
Of Him to be our friend!
A FACT, AND AN IMAGINATION

XXIII

A FACT, AND AN IMAGINATION

OR, CANUTE AND ALFRED ON THE SEA-SHORE

The Danish Conqueror, on his royal chair,
Mustering a face of haughty sovereignty,
To aid a covert purpose, cried—"O ye
Approaching Waters of the deep, that share
With this green isle my fortunes, come not where
Your Master's throne is set."—Deaf was the Sea;
Her waves rolled on, respecting his decree
Less than they heed a breath of wanton air.
—Then Canute, rising from the invaded throne,
Said to his servile Courtiers,—"Poor the reach,
The undisguised extent, of mortal sway!
He only is a King, and he alone
Deserves the name (this truth the billows preach)
Whose everlasting laws, sea, earth, and heaven obey.'

This just reproof the prosperous Dane
Drew from the influx of the main,
For some whose rugged northern mouths would strain
At oriental flattery;
And Canute (fact more worthy to be known)
From that time forth did for his brows disown
The ostentatious symbol of a crown;
Esteeming earthly royalty
Contemptible as vain.

Now hear what one of elder days,
Rich theme of England's fondest praise,
Her darling Alfred, might have spoken;
To cheer the remnant of his host
When he was driven from coast to coast,
Distressed and harassed, but with mind unbroken:

"My faithful followers, lo! the tide is spent
That rose, and steadily advanced to fill
The shores and channels, working Nature's will
Among the mazy streams that backward went,
And in the sluggish pools where ships are pent:
And now, his task performed, the flood stands still,
At the green base of many an inland hill,
In placid beauty and sublime content!
Such the repose that sage and hero find;
Such measured rest the sedulous and good
Of humbler name; whose souls do, like the flood
Of Ocean, press right on; or gently wind,
Neither to be diverted nor withstood,
Until they reach the bounds by Heaven assigned.

1816

XXIV

‘A LITTLE onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on!’
—What trick of memory to my voice hath brought
This mournful iteration? For though Time,
The Conqueror, crowns the Conquered, on this brow
Planting his favourite silver diadem,
Nor he, nor minister of his—intent
To run before him, hath enrolled me yet,
Though not unmenaced, among those who lean
Upon a living staff, with borrowed sight.
—O my own Dora, my beloved child!
Should that day come—but hark! the birds salute
The cheerful dawn, brightening for me the east;
For me, thy natural leader, once again
Impatient to conduct thee, not as erst
A tottering infant, with compliant stoop
From flower to flower supported; but to curb
Thy nymph-like step swift-bounding o’er the lawn,
Along the loose rocks, or the slippery verge
Of foaming torrents.—From thy orisons
Come forth; and, while the morning air is yet
Transparent as the soul of innocent youth,
Let me, thy happy guide, now point thy way,
And now precede thee, winding to and fro,
Till we by perseverance gain the top
Of some smooth ridge, whose brink precipitous
Kindles intense desire for powers withheld
From this corporeal frame; whereon who stands,
Is seized with strong incitement to push forth
His arms, as swimmers use, and plunge—dread thought,
For pastime plunge—into the ‘abrupt abyss,’
Where ravens spread their plummy vans, at ease!

And yet more gladly thee would I conduct
Through woods and spacious forests,—to behold
There, how the Original of human art,
Heaven-prompted Nature, measures and erects
Her temples, fearless for the stately work,
Though waves, to every breeze, its high-arched roof,
And storms the pillars rock. But we such schools
ODE TO LYCORIS

Of reverential awe will chiefly seek
In the still summer noon, while beams of light,
Reposing here, and in the aisles beyond
Traceably gliding through the dusk, recall
To mind the living presences of nuns;
A gentle, pensive, white-robed sisterhood,
Whose saintly radiance mitigates the gloom
Of those terrestrial fabrics, where they serve,
To Christ, the Sun of righteousness, espoused.

Now also shall the page of classic lore,
To these glad eyes from bondage freed, again
Lie open; and the book of Holy Writ,
Again unfolded, passage clear shall yield
To heights more glorious still, and into shades
More awful, where, advancing hand in hand,
We may be taught, O Darling of my care!
To calm the affections, elevate the soul,
And consecrate our lives to truth and love.

XXV
ODE TO LYCORIS
MAY 1817

I

A

N age hath been when Earth was proud
Of lustre too intense
To be sustained; and Mortals bowed
The front in self-defence.
Who then, if Dian's crescent gleamed,
Or Cupid's sparkling arrow streamed
While on the wing the Urchin played,
Could fearlessly approach the shade?
—Enough for one soft vernal day,
If I, a bard of ebbing time,
And nurtured in a fickle clime,
May haunt this hornèd bay;
Whose amorous water multiplies
The flitting halcyon's vivid dyes;
And smooths her liquid breast—to show
These swan-like specks of mountain snow,
White as the pair that slid along the plains
Of heaven, when Venus held the reins!
In youth we love the darksome lawn
Brushed by the owlet's wing;
Then, Twilight is preferred to Dawn,
And Autumn to the Spring.
Sad fancies do we then affect,
In luxury of disrespect
To our own prodigal excess
Of too familiar happiness.
Lycoris (if such name befit
Thee, thee my life's celestial sign!)
When Nature marks the year's decline,
Be ours to welcome it;
Pleased with the harvest hope that runs
Before the path of milder suns;
Pleased while the sylvan world displays
Its ripeness to the feeding gaze;
Pleased when the sullen winds resound the knell
Of the resplendent miracle.

But something whispers to my heart
That, as we downward tend,
Lycoris! life requires an art
To which our souls must bend;
A skill—to balance and supply;
And, ere the flowing fount be dry,
As soon it must, a sense to sip,
Or drink, with no fastidious lip.
Then welcome, above all, the Guest
Whose smiles, diffused o'er land and sea,
Seem to recall the Deity
Of youth into the breast:
May pensive Autumn ne'er present
A claim to her disparagement!
While blossoms and the budding spray
Inspire us in our own decay;
Still, as we nearer draw to life's dark goal,
Be hopeful Spring the favourite of the Soul!

TO THE SAME

ENOUGH of climbing toil!—Ambition treads
Here, as 'mid busier scenes, ground steep and rough,
Or slippery even to peril! and each step,
TO THE SAME

As we for most uncertain recompense
Mount toward the empire of the fickle clouds,
Each weary step, dwarfing the world below,
Induces, for its old familiar sights,
Unacceptable feelings of contempt,
With wonder mixed—that Man could e'er be tied,
In anxious bondage, to such nice array
And formal fellowship of petty things!
—Oh! 'tis the heart that magnifies this life,
Making a truth and beauty of her own;
And moss-grown alleys, circumscribing shades,
And gurgling rills, assist her in the work
More efficaciously than realms outspread,
As in a map, before the adventurer's gaze—
Ocean and Earth contending for regard.

The umbrageous woods are left—how far beneath!
But lo! where darkness seems to guard the mouth
Of yon wild cave, whose jagged brows are fringed
With flaccid threads of ivy, in the still
And sultry air, depending motionless.
Yet cool the space within, and not uncheered
(As whoso enters shall ere long perceive)
By stealthy influx of the timid day
Mingling with night, such twilight to compose
As Numa loved; when, in the Egerian grot,
From the sage Nymph, appearing at his wish,
He gained whate'er a regal mind might ask,
Or need, of counsel breathed through lips divine.

Long as the heat shall rage, let that dim cave
Protect us, there deciphering as we may
Diluvian records; or the sighs of Earth
Interpreting; or counting for old Time
His minutes, by reiterated drops,
Audible tears, from some invisible source
That deepens upon fancy—more and more
Drawn toward the centre whence those sighs creep forth
To awe the lightness of humanity.
Or, shutting up thyself within thyself,
There let me see thee sink into a mood
Of gentler thought, protracted till thine eye
Be calm as water when the winds are gone,
And no one can tell whither. Dearest Friend!
We two have known such happy hours together
That, were power granted to replace them (fetch
From out the pensive shadows where they lie
In the first warmth of their original sunshine,
Loth should I be to use it: passing sweet
Are the domains of tender memory!

1817

XXVII

SEPTEMBER 1819

The sylvan slopes with corn-clad fields
Are hung, as if with golden shields,
Bright trophies of the sun!
Like a fair sister of the sky,
Unruffled doth the blue lake lie,
The mountains looking on.

And, sooth to say, yon vocal grove,
Albeit uninspired by love,
By love untaught to ring,
May well afford to mortal ear
An impulse more profoundly dear
Than music of the Spring.

For that from turbulence and heat
Proceeds, from some uneasy seat
In nature's struggling frame,
Some region of impatient life:
And jealousy, and quivering strife,
Therein a portion claim.

This, this is holy;—while I hear
These vespers of another year,
This hymn of thanks and praise,
My spirit seems to mount above
The anxieties of human love,
And earth's precarious days.

But list!—though winter storms be nigh,
Unchecked is that soft harmony:
There lives Who can provide
For all His creatures; and in Him,
Even like the radiant Seraphim,
These choristers confide.
DEPARTING summer hath assumed
An aspect tenderly illumed,
The gentlest look of spring;
That calls from yonder leafy shade
Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,
A timely carolling.

No faint and hesitating trill,
Such tribute as to winter chill
The lonely redbreast pays!
Clear, loud, and lively is the din,
From social warblers gathering in
Their harvest of sweet lays.

Nor doth the example fail to cheer
Me, conscious that my leaf is sere,
And yellow on the bough:—
Fall, rosy garlands, from my head!
Ye myrtle wreaths, your fragrance shed
Around a younger brow!

Yet will I temperately rejoice;
Wide is the range, and free the choice
Of undiscordant themes;
Which, haply, kindred souls may prize
Not less than vernal ecstasies,
And passion's feverish dreams.

For deathless powers to verse belong,
And they like Demi-gods are strong
On whom the Muses smile;
But some their function have disclaimed,
Best pleased with what is aptliest framed
To enervate and defile.

Not such the initiatory strains
Committed to the silent plains
In Britain's earliest dawn:
Trembled the groves, the stars grew pale,
While all-too-daringly the veil
Of nature was withdrawn!
Nor such the spirit-stirring note
When the live chords Alceus smote,
Inflamed by sense of wrong;
Woe! woe to Tyrants! from the lyre
Broke threateningly, in sparkles dire
Of fierce vindictive song.

And not unhallowed was the page
By wingèd Love inscribed, to assuage
The pangs of vain pursuit;
Love listening while the Lesbian Maid
With finest touch of passion swayed
Her own Æolian lute.

O ye, who patiently explore
The wreck of Herculanean lore,
What rapture! could ye seize
Some Theban fragment, or unroll
One precious, tender-hearted, scroll
Of pure Simonides.

That were, indeed, a genuine birth
Of poesy; a bursting forth
Of genius from the dust:
What Horace gloried to behold,
What Maro loved, shall we enfold?
Can haughty Time be just!

XXIX
MEMORY

A PEN—to register; a key—
That winds through secret wards;
Are well assigned to Memory
By allegoric Bards.

As aptly, also, might be given
A Pencil to her hand;
That, softening objects, sometimes even
Outstrips the heart’s demand;

That smoothes foregone distress, the lines
Of lingering care subdues,
Long-vanished happiness refines,
And clothes in brighter hues;
Yet, like a tool of Fancy, works
Those Spectres to dilate
That startle Conscience, as she lurks
Within her lonely seat.

O! that our lives, which flee so fast,
In purity were such,
That not an image of the past
Should fear that pencil's touch!

Retirement then might hourly look
Upon a soothing scene,
Age steal to his allotted nook
Contented and serene;

With heart as calm as lakes that sleep,
In frosty moonlight glistening;
Or mountain rivers, where they creep
Along a channel smooth and deep,
To their own far-off murmurs listening.

XXX

THIS Lawn, a carpet all alive
With shadows flung from leaves—to strive
In dance, amid a press
Of sunshine, an apt emblem yields
Of Worldlings revelling in the fields
Of strenuous idleness;

Less quick the stir when tide and breeze
Encounter, and to narrow seas
Forbid a moment's rest;
The medley less when boreal Lights
Glance to and fro, like aery Sprites
To feats of arms addrest!

Yet, spite of all this eager strife,
This ceaseless play, the genuine life
That serves the steadfast hours,
Is in the grass beneath, that grows
Unheeded, and the mute repose
Of sweetly-breathing flowers.
HUMANITY

[The Rocking-stones, alluded to in the beginning of the following verses, are supposed to have been used, by our British ancestors, both for judicial and religious purposes. Such stones are not uncommonly found, at this day, both in Great Britain and in Ireland.]

WHAT though the Accused, upon his own appeal
To righteous Gods when man has ceased to feel,
Or at a doubting Judge’s stern command,
Before the Stone of Power no longer stand—
To take his sentence from the balanced Block,
As, at his touch, it rocks, or seems to rock;
Though, in the depths of sunless groves, no more
The Druid-priest the hallowed Oak adore;
Yet, for the Initiate, rocks and whispering trees
Do still perform mysterious offices!
And functions dwell in beast and bird that sway
The reasoning mind, or with the fancy play,
Inviting, at all seasons, ears and eyes
To watch for undelusive auguries:—
Not uninspired appear their simplest ways;
Their voices mount symbolical of praise—
To mix with hymns that Spirits make and hear;
And to fallen man their innocence is dear.
Enraptured Art draws from those sacred springs
Streams that reflect the poetry of things!
Where Christian Martyrs stand in hues portrayed,
That, might a wish avail, would never fade,
Borne in their hands the lily and the palm
Shed round the altar a celestial calm;
There, too, behold the lamb and guileless dove
Prest in the tenderness of virgin love
To saintly bosoms!—Glorious is the blending
Of right affections climbing or descending
Along a scale of light and life, with cares
Alternate; carrying holy thoughts and prayers
Up to the sovereign seat of the Most High;
Descending to the worm in charity;
Like those good Angels whom a dream of night
Gave, in the field of Luz, to Jacob’s sight
All, while he slept, treading the pendent stairs
Earthward or heavenward, radiant messengers,
That, with a perfect will in one accord
Of strict obedience, serve the Almighty Lord;
And with untired humility forbore
To speed their errand by the wings they wore.
What a fair world were ours for verse to paint,
If Power could live at ease with self-restraint!
Opinion bow before the naked sense
Of the great Vision,—faith in Providence;
Merciful over all his creatures, just
To the least particle of sentient dust;
But fixing, by immutable decrees,
Seedtime and harvest for his purposes!
Then would be closed the restless oblique eye
That looks for evil like a treacherous spy;
Disputes would then relax, like stormy winds
That into breezes sink; impetuous minds
By discipline endeavour to grow meek
As Truth herself, whom they profess to seek.
Then Genius, shunning fellowship with Pride,
Would braid his golden locks at Wisdom's side;
Love ebb and flow untroubled by caprice;
And not alone harsh tyranny would cease,
But unoffending creatures find release
From qualified oppression, whose defence
Rests on a hollow plea of recompense;
Thought-tempered wrongs, for each humane respect
Oft worse to bear, or deadlier in effect.
Witness those glances of indignant scorn
From some high-minded Slave, impelled to spurn
The kindness that would make him less forlorn;
Or, if the soul to bondage be subdued,
His look of pitiable gratitude!

Alas for thee, bright Galaxy of Isles,
Whose day departs in pomp, returns with smiles—
To greet the flowers and fruitage of a land,
As the sun mounts, by sea-born breezes fanned;
A land whose azure mountain-tops are seats
For Gods in council, whose green vales, retreats
Fit for the shades of heroes, mingling there
To breathe Elysian peace in upper air.

Though cold as winter, gloomy as the grave,
Stone-walls a prisoner make, but not a slave.
Shall man assume a property in man?
Lay on the moral will a withering ban?
Shame that our laws at distance still protect
Enormities, which they at home reject!
'Slaves cannot breathe in England'—yet that boast
Is but a mockery! when from coast to coast,
Though fettered slave be none, her floors and soil
Groan underneath a weight of slavish toil,
For the poor Many, measured out by rules
Fetched with cupidity from heartless schools,
That to an Idol, falsely called 'the Wealth
Of Nations,' sacrifice a People's health,
Body and mind and soul; a thirst so keen
Is ever urging on the vast machine
Of sleepless Labour, 'mid whose dizzy wheels
The Power least prized is that which thinks and feels.

Then, for the pastimes of this delicate age,
And all the heavy or light vassalage
Which for their sakes we fasten, as may suit
Our varying moods, on human kind or brute,
'Twere well in little, as in great, to pause,
Lest Fancy trifle with eternal laws.
Not from his fellows only man may learn
Rights to compare and duties to discern!
All creatures and all objects, in degree,
Are friends and patrons of humanity.
There are to whom the garden, grove, and field,
Perpetual lessons of forbearance yield;
Who would not lightly violate the grace
The lowliest flower possesses in its place;
Nor shorten the sweet life, too fugitive,
Which nothing less than Infinite Power could give.

XXXII

The unremitting voice of nightly streams
That wastes so oft, we think, its tuneful powers,
If neither soothing to the worm that gleams
Through dewy grass nor small birds hushed in bowers,
Nor unto silent leaves and drowsy flowers,—
That voice of unpretending harmony
(For who what is shall measure by what seems
To be, or not to be,
Or tax high Heaven with prodigality?)
Wants not a healing influence that can creep
Into the human breast, and mix with sleep
To regulate the motion of our dreams
For kindly issues—as through every clime
Was felt near murmuring brooks in earliest time;
As, at this day, the rudest swains who dwell
Where torrents roar, or hear the tinkling knell
Of water-breaks, with grateful heart could tell.
XXXIII

THOUGHTS ON THE SEASONS

FLATTERED with promise of escape
From every hurtful blast,
Spring takes, O sprightly May! thy shape,
Her loveliest and her last.

Less fair is summer riding high
In fierce solstitial power,
Less fair than when a lenient sky
Brings on her parting hour.

When earth repays with golden sheaves
The labours of the plough,
And ripening fruits and forest leaves
All brighten on the bough;

What pensive beauty autumn shows,
Before she hears the sound
Of winter rushing in, to close
The emblematic round!

Such be our Spring, our Summer such;
So may our Autumn blend
With hoary Winter, and Life touch,
Through heaven-born hope, her end!

XXXIV

TO ——

UPON THE BIRTH OF HER FIRST-BORN CHILD, MARCH 1833

‘Turn porro puer, ut saevis projectus ab undis
Navita, nudus humi jacet,’ etc.—Lucretius.

LIKE a shipwreck’d Sailor tost
By rough waves on a perilous coast,
Lies the Babe, in helplessness
And in tenderest nakedness,
Flung by labouring nature forth
Upon the mercies of the earth.
Can its eyes beseech?—no more
Than the hands are free to implore:
Voice but serves for one brief cry;
Plaint was it? or prophecy
Of sorrow that will surely come?
Omen of man's grievous doom!

But, O Mother! by the close
Duly granted to thy throes;
By the silent thanks, now tending
Incense-like to Heaven, descending
Now to mingle and to move
With the gush of earthly love,
As a debt to that frail Creature,
Instrument of struggling Nature
For the blissful calm, the peace
Known but to this one release—
Can the pitying spirit doubt
That for human-kind springs out
From the penalty a sense
Of more than mortal recompense?

As a floating summer cloud,
Though of gorgeous drapery proud,
To the sun-burnt traveller,
Or the stooping labourer,
Oft-times makes its bounty known
By its shadow round him thrown;
So, by chequerings of sad cheer,
Heavenly Guardians, brooding near,
Of their presence tell—too bright
Haply for corporeal sight!
Ministers of grace divine
Feelingly their brows incline
O'er this seeming Castaway
Breathing, in the light of day,
Something like the faintest breath
That has power to baffle death—
Beautiful, while very weakness
Captivates like passive meekness.

And, sweet Mother! under warrant
Of the universal Parent,
Who repays in season due
Them who have, like thee, been true
To the filial chain let down
From his everlasting throne,
Angels hovering round thy couch,
With their softest whispers vouch,
That—whatever griefs may fret,
Cares entangle, sins beset,
This thy First-born, and with tears
Stain her cheek in future years—
Heavenly succour, not denied
To the babe, whate'er betide,
Will to the woman be supplied!

Mother! blest be thy calm ease;
Blest the starry promises,—
And the firmament benign
Hallowed be it, where they shine!
Yes, for them whose souls have scope
Ample for a wing'd hope,
And can earthward bend an ear
For needful listening, pledge is here,
That, if thy new-born Charge shall tread
In thy footsteps, and be led
By that other Guide, whose light
Of manly virtues, mildly bright,
Gave him first the wished-for part
In thy gentle virgin heart;
Then, amid the storms of life
Presignified by that dread strife
Whence ye have escaped together,
She may look for serene weather;
In all trials sure to find
Comfort for a faithful mind;
Kindlier issues, holier rest,
Than even now await her prest,
Conscious Nursling, to thy breast!

March 1833

XXXV

THE WARNING

A SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING

LIST, the winds of March are blowing;
Her ground-flowers shrink, afraid of showing
Their meek heads to the nipping air,
Which ye feel not, happy pair!
Sunk into a kindly sleep.
We, meanwhile, our hope will keep;
And if Time leagued with adverse Change
(Too busy fear!) shall cross its range,
Whatsoever check they bring,
Anxious duty hindering,
To like hope our prayers will cling.

Thus, while the ruminating spirit feeds
Upon the events of home as life proceeds,
Affections pure and holy in their source
Gain a fresh impulse, run a livelier course;
Hopes that within the Father's heart prevail,
Are in the experienced Grandsire's slow to fail;
And if the harp pleased his gay youth, it rings
To his grave touch with no unready strings,
While thoughts press on, and feelings overflow,
And quick words round him fall like flakes of snow.

Thanks to the Powers that yet maintain their sway,
And have renewed the tributary Lay.
Truths of the heart flock in with eager pace,
And Fancy greets them with a fond embrace;
Swift as the rising sun his beams extends
She shoots the tidings forth to distant friends;
Their gifts she hails (deemed precious, as they prove
For the unconscious Babe so prompt a love!)
But from this peaceful centre of delight
Vague sympathies have urged her to take flight:
Rapt into upper regions, like the bee
That sucks from mountain-heath her honey fee,
Or, like the warbling lark intent to shroud
His head in sunbeams or a bowery cloud,
She soars—and here and there her pinions rest
On proud towers, like this humble cottage, blest
With a new visitant, an infant guest—
Towers where red streamers flout the breezy sky
In pomp foreseen by her creative eye,
When feasts shall crowd the hall, and steeple bells
Glad proclamation make, and heights and dells
Catch the blithe music as it sinks and swells,
And harboured ships, whose pride is on the sea,
Shall hoist their topmost flags in sign of glee,
Honouring the hope of noble ancestry.

But who (though neither reckoning ills assigned
By Nature, nor reviewing in the mind
The track that was, and is, and must be, worn
With weary feet by all of woman born)—
Shall now by such a gift with joy be moved,
Nor feel the fulness of that joy reproved?
Not He, whose last faint memory will command
The truth that Britain was his native land;
Whose infant soul was tutored to confide
In the cleansed faith for which her martyrs died;
Whose boyish ear the voice of her renown
With rapture thrilled; whose Youth revered the crown
Of Saxon liberty that Alfred wore,
Alfred, dear Babe, thy great Progenitor!

—Not He, who from her mellowed practice drew
His social sense of just, and fair, and true;
And saw, thereafter, on the soil of France
Rash Polity begin her maniac dance,
Foundations broken up, the deeps run wild,
Nor grieved to see (himself not unbeguiled)—
Woke from the dream, the dreamer to upbraid,
And learn how sanguine expectations fade
When novel trusts by folly are betrayed,—
To see Presumption, turning pale, refrain
From further havoc, but repent in vain,—
Good aims lie down, and perish in the road
Where guilt had urged them on with ceaseless goad,
Proofs thickening round her that on public ends
Domestic virtue vitally depends,
That civic strife can turn the happiest hearth
Into a grievous sore of self-tormenting earth.

Can such a One, dear Babe! though glad and proud
To welcome thee, repel the fears that crowd
Into his English breast, and spare to quake
Less for his own than for thy innocent sake?
Too late—or, should the providence of God
Lead, through dark ways by sin and sorrow trod,
Justice and peace to a secure abode,
Too soon—thou com'st into this breathing world;
Ensigns of mimic outrage are unfurled.
Who shall preserve or prop the tottering Realm?
What hand suffice to govern the state-helm?
If, in the aims of men, the surest test
Of good or bad (whate'er be sought for or profest)
Lie in the means required, or ways ordained,
For compassing the end, else never gained;
Yet governors and governed both are blind
To this plain truth, or fling it to the wind;
If to expediency principle must bow;
Past, future, shrinking up beneath the incumbent Now;
If cowardly concession still must feed
The thirst for power in men who ne'er concede;
Nor turn aside, unless to shape a way
For domination at some riper day;
If generous Loyalty must stand in awe
Of subtle Treason, in his mask of law,
Or with bravado insolent and hard
Provoking punishment, to win reward;
If office help the factious to conspire,
And they, who should extinguish, fan the fire—
Then, will the sceptre be a straw, the crown
Sit loosely, like the thistle's crest of down;
To be blown off at will, by Power that spares it
In cunning patience, from the head that wears it.

Lost people, trained to theoretic feud!
Lost above all, ye labouring multitude!
Bewildered whether ye, by slanderous tongues
Deceived, mistake calamities for wrongs;
And over fancied usurpations brood,
Oft snapping at revenge in sullen mood;
Or from long stress of real injuries fly
To desperation for a remedy;
In bursts of outrage spread your judgments wide,
And to your wrath cry out, 'Be thou our guide';
Or, bound by oaths, come forth to tread earth's floor
In marshalled thousands, darkening street and moor
With the worst shape mock-patience ever wore;
Or, to the giddy top of self-esteem
By Flatterers carried, mount into a dream
Of boundless suffrage, at whose sage behest
Justice shall rule, disorder be supprest,
And every man sit down as Plenty's Guest!
—O for a bridle bitted with remorse
To stop your Leaders in their headstrong course!
Oh may the Almighty scatter with His grace
These mists, and lead you to a safer place,
By paths no human wisdom can foretrace!
May He pour round you, from worlds far above
Man's feverish passions, His pure light of love,
That quietly restores the natural mien
To hope, and makes truth willing to be seen!
Else shall your blood-stained hands in frenzy reap
Fields gaily sown when promises were cheap.—
Why is the Past belied with wicked art,
The Future made to play so false a part,
Among a people famed for strength of mind,
Foremost in freedom, noblest of mankind?
We act as if we joyed in the sad tune  
Storms make in rising, valued in the moon  
Nought but her changes. Thus, ungrateful Nation!  
If thou persist, and, scorning moderation,  
Spread for thyself the snares of tribulation,  
Whom, then, shall meekness guard? What saving skill  
Lie in forbearance, strength in standing still?  
—Soon shall the widow (for the speed of Time  
Nought equals when the hours are winged with crime)  
Widow, or wife, implore on tremulous knee,  
From him who judged her lord, a like decree;  
The skies will weep o'er old men desolate:  
Ye little-ones! Earth shudders at your fate,  
Outcasts and homeless orphans——

But turn, my Soul, and from the sleeping pair  
Learn thou the beauty of omniscient care!  
Be strong in faith, bid anxious thoughts lie still;  
Seek for the good and cherish it—the ill  
Oppose, or bear with a submissive will.

XXXVI

IF this great world of joy and pain  
Revolve in one sure track;  
If freedom, set, will rise again,  
And virtue, flown, come back;  
Woe to the purblind crew who fill  
The heart with each day's care;  
Nor gain, from past or future, skill  
To bear, and to forbear!

XXXVII

THE LABOURER'S NOON-DAY HYMN

UP to the throne of God is borne  
The voice of praise at early morn,  
And he accepts the punctual hymn  
Sung as the light of day grows dim.  

Nor will he turn his ear aside  
From holy offerings at noontide.  
Then here reposing let us raise  
A song of gratitude and praise.
What though our burthen be not light,
We need not toil from morn to night;
The respite of the mid-day hour
Is in the thankful Creature's power.

Blest are the moments, doubly blest,
That, drawn from this one hour of rest,
Are with a ready heart bestowed
Upon the service of our God!

Each field is then a hallowed spot,
An altar is in each man's cot,
A church in every grove that spreads
Its living roof above our heads.

Look up to Heaven! the industrious Sun
Already half his race hath run;
He cannot halt nor go astray,
But our immortal Spirits may.

Lord! since his rising in the East,
If we have faltered or transgressed,
Guide, from thy love's abundant source,
What yet remains of this day's course:

Help with thy grace, through life's short day,
Our upward and our downward way;
And glorify for us the west,
When we shall sink to final rest.

XXXVIII
ODE

COMPOSED ON MAY MORNING

WHILE from the purpling east departs
The star that led the dawn,
Blithe Flora from her couch upstarts,
For May is on the lawn.
A quickening hope, a freshening glee,
Foreran the expected Power,
Whose first-drawn breath, from bush and tree,
Shakes off that pearly shower.

All Nature welcomes Her whose sway
Tempers the year's extremes;
Who scattereth lustres o'er noon-day,
Like morning's dewy gleams;
While mellow warble, sprightly trill,
    The tremulous heart excite;
And hums the balmy air to still
    The balance of delight.

Time was, blest Power! when youths and maids
    At peep of dawn would rise,
And wander forth, in forest glades
    Thy birth to solemnize.
Though mute the song— to grace the rite
    Untouched the hawthorn bough,
Thy Spirit triumphs o'er the slight;
    Man changes, but not Thou!

Thy feathered Lieges bill and wings
    In love's disport employ;
Warmed by thy influence, creeping things
    Awake to silent joy:
Queen art thou still for each gay plant
    Where the slim wild deer roves;
And served in depths where fishes haunt
    Their own mysterious groves.

Cloud-piercing peak, and trackless heath,
    Instinctive homage pay;
Nor wants the dim-lit cave a wreath
    To honour thee, sweet May!
Where cities fanned by thy brisk airs
    Behold a smokeless sky,
Their puniest flower-pot-nursling dares
    To open a bright eye.

And if, on this thy natal morn,
    The pole, from which thy name
Hath not departed, stands forlorn
    Of song and dance and game;
Still from the village-green a vow
    Aspires to thee addrest,
Wherever peace is on the brow,
    Or love within the breast.

Yes! where Love nestles thou canst teach
    The soul to love the more;
Hearts also shall thy lessons reach
    That never loved before.
Stript is the haughty one of pride,
    The bashful freed from fear,
While rising, like the ocean-tide,
    In flows the joyous year.

Hush, feeble lyre! weak words refuse
    The service to prolong!
To yon exulting thrush the Muse
    Entrusts the imperfect song;
His voice shall chant, in accents clear,
    Throughout the live-long day,
Till the first silver star appear,
    The sovereignty of May.

XXXIX
TO MAY

THOUGH many suns have risen and set
Since thou, blithe May, wert born,
And Bards, who hailed thee, may forget
    Thy gifts, thy beauty scorn;
There are who to a birthday strain
    Confine not harp and voice,
But evermore throughout thy reign
    Are grateful and rejoice!

Delicious odours! music sweet,
    Too sweet to pass away!
Oh for a deathless song to meet
    The soul’s desire—a lay
That, when a thousand years are told,
    Should praise thee, genial Power!
Through summer heat, autuminal cold,
    And winter’s dreariest hour.

Earth, sea, thy presence feel—nor less,
    If yon ethereal blue
With its soft smile the truth express,
    The heavens have felt it too.
The inmost heart of man if glad
    Partakes a livelier cheer;
And eyes that cannot but be sad
    Let fall a brightened tear
Since thy return, through days and weeks  
Of hope that grew by stealth,
How many wan and faded cheeks  
Have kindled into health!
The Old, by thee revived, have said,  
‘Another year is ours’;  
And wayworn Wanderers, poorly fed,  
Have smiled upon thy flowers.

Who tripping lisps a merry song  
Amid his playful peers?
The tender Infant who was long  
A prisoner of fond fears;
But now, when every sharp-edged blast  
Is quiet in its sheath,
His Mother leaves him free to taste  
Earth’s sweetness in thy breath.

Thy help is with the weed that creeps  
Along the humblest ground;
No cliff so bare but on its steeps  
Thy favours may be found;
But most on some peculiar nook  
That our own hands have drest,  
Thou and thy train are proud to look,  
And seem to love it best.

And yet how pleased we wander forth  
When May is whispering, ‘Come!’
Choose from the bowers of virgin earth  
The happiest for your home;
Heaven’s bounteous love through me is spread  
From sunshine, clouds, winds, waves,
Drops on the mouldering turret’s head,  
And on your turf-clad graves!’

Such greeting heard, away with sighs  
For lilies that must fade,
Or ‘the rathe primrose as it dies  
Forsaken’ in the shade!
Vernal fruitions and desires  
Are linked in endless chase;
While, as one kindly growth retires,  
Another takes its place.
And what if thou, sweet May, hast known
Mishap by worm and blight;
If expectations newly blown
Have perished in thy sight;
If loves and joys, while up they sprung,
Were caught as in a snare;
Such is the lot of all the young,
However bright and fair.

Lo! Streams that April could not check
Are patient of thy rule;
Gurgling in foamy water-break,
Loitering in glassy pool:
By thee, thee only, could be sent
Such gentle mists as glide,
Curling with unconfirmed intent,
On that green mountain's side.

How delicate the leafy veil
Through which yon house of God
Gleams 'mid the peace of this deep dale
By few but shepherds trod!
And lowly huts, near beaten ways,
No sooner stand attired
In thy fresh wreaths, than they for praise
Peep forth, and are admired.

Season of fancy and of hope,
Permit not for one hour
A blossom from thy crown to drop,
Nor add to it a flower!
Keep, lovely May, as if by touch
Of self-restraining art,
This modest charm of not too much,
Part seen, imagined part!

1826-1834

XL

LINES

SUGGESTED BY A PORTRAIT FROM THE PENCIL OF
F. STONE

BEGUILED into forgetfulness of care
Due to the day's unfinished task; of pen
Or book regardless, and of that fair scene
In Nature's prodigality displayed
Before my window, oftentimes and long
I gaze upon a Portrait whose mild gleam
Of beauty never ceases to enrich
The common light; whose stillness charms the air,
Or seems to charm it, into like repose;
Whose silence, for the pleasure of the ear,
Surpasses sweetest music. There she sits
With emblematic purity attired
In a white vest, white as her marble neck
Is, and the pillar of the throat would be
But for the shadow by the drooping chin
Cast into that recess—the tender shade,
The shade and light, both there and everywhere,
And through the very atmosphere she breathes,
Broad, clear, and toned harmoniously, with skill
That might from nature have been learnt in the hour
When the lone shepherd sees the morning spread
Upon the mountains. Look at her, who'er
Thou be that, kindling with a poet's soul,
Hast loved the painter's true Promethean craft
Intensely—from Imagination take
The treasure,—what mine eyes behold see thou,
Even though the Atlantic ocean roll between.

A silver line, that runs from brow to crown
And in the middle parts the braided hair,
Just serves to show how delicate a soil
The golden harvest grows in; and those eyes,
Soft and capacious as a cloudless sky
Whose azure depth their colour emulates,
Must needs be conversant with upward looks,
Prayer's voiceless service; but now, seeking nought
And shunning nought, their own peculiar life
Of motion they renounce, and with the head
Partake its inclination towards earth
In humble grace, and quiet pensiveness
Caught at the point where it stops short of sadness.

Offspring of soul-bewitching Art, make me
Thy confidant! say, whence derived that air
Of calm abstraction? Can the ruling thought
Be with some lover far away, or one
Crossed by misfortune, or of doubted faith?
Inapt conjecture! Childhood here, a moon
Crescent in simple loveliness serene,
Has but approached the gates of womanhood,
Not entered them; her heart is yet unpierced
By the blind Archer-god; her fancy free:
The fount of feeling, if unsought elsewhere,
Will not be found.

Her right hand, as it lies
Across the slender wrist of the left arm
Upon her lap reposing, holds—but mark
How slackly, for the absent mind permits
No firmer grasp—a little wild-flower, joined,
As in a posy, with a few pale ears
Of yellowing corn, the same that overtopped
And in their common birthplace sheltered it
Till they were plucked together; a blue flower
Called by the thrifty husbandman a weed;
But Ceres, in her garland, might have worn
That ornament, unblamed. The floweret, held
In scarcely conscious fingers, was, she knows,
(Her Father told her so) in youth's gay dawn
Her Mother’s favourite; and the orphan Girl,
In her own dawn—a dawn less gay and bright,
Loves it, while there in solitary peace
She sits, for that departed Mother's sake.
—Not from a source less sacred is derived
(Surely I do not err) that pensive air
Of calm abstraction through the face diffused
And the whole person.

Words have something told
More than the pencil can, and verily
More than is needed, but the precious Art
Forgives their interference—Art divine,
That both creates and fixes, in despite
Of Death and Time, the marvels it hath wrought.

Strange contrasts have we in this world of ours!
That posture, and the look of filial love
Thinking of past and gone, with what is left
Dearly united, might be swept away
From this fair Portrait's fleshly Archetype,
Even by an innocent fancy's slightest freak
Banished, nor ever, haply, be restored,
To their lost place, or meet in harmony
So exquisite; but here do they abide,
Enshrined for ages. Is not then the Art
Godlike, a humble branch of the divine,
In visible quest of immortality,
Stretched forth with trembling hope?—In every realm,
From high Gibraltar to Siberian plains,
Thousands, in each variety of tongue
That Europe knows, would echo this appeal;
One above all, a Monk who waits on God
In the magnific Convent built of yore
To sanctify the Escorial palace. He—
Guiding, from cell to cell and room to room,
A British Painter (eminent for truth
In character, and depth of feeling, shown)
By labours that have touched the hearts of kings,
And are endared to simple cottagers)—
Came, in that service, to a glorious work,
Our Lord's Last Supper, beautiful as when first
The appropriate Picture, fresh from Titian's hand,
Graced the Refectory: and there, while both
Stood with eyes fixed upon that masterpiece,
The hoary Father in the Stranger's ear
Breathed out these words:—‘Here daily do we
sit,
Thanks given to God for daily bread, and here
Pondering the mischiefs of these restless times,
And thinking of my Brethren, dead, dispersed,
Or changed and changing, I not seldom gaze
Upon this solemn Company unmoved
By shock of circumstance, or lapse of years,
Until I cannot but believe that they—
They are in truth the Substance, we the Shadows.'

So spake the mild Jeronymite, his griefs
Melting away within him like a dream
Ere he had ceased to gaze, perhaps to speak:
And I, grown old, but in a happier land,
DOMESTIC PORTRAIT! have to verse consigned
In thy calm presence those heart-moving words:
Words that can soothe, more than they agitate;
Whose spirit, like the angel that went down
Into Bethesda's pool, with healing virtue
Informs the fountain in the human breast
Which by the visitation was disturbed.
—But why this stealing tear? Companion mute,
On thee I look, not sorrowing; fare thee well,
My Song's Inspirer, once again farewell!

1 The pile of buildings, composing the palace and convent of San Lorenzo, has, in common usage, lost its proper name in that of the Escorial, a village at the foot of the hill upon which the splendid edifice, built by Philip the Second, stands. It need scarcely be added that Wilkie is the painter alluded to.
AMONG a grave fraternity of Monks,
For One, but surely not for One alone,
Triumphs, in that great work, the Painter's skill,
Humbling the body, to exalt the soul;
Yet representing, amid wreck and wrong
And dissolution and decay, the warm
And breathing life of flesh, as if already
Clothed with impassive majesty, and graced
With no mean earnest of a heritage
Assigned to it in future worlds. Thou, too,
With thy memorial flower, meek Portraiture!
From whose serene companionship I passed
Pursued by thoughts that haunt me still; thou also—
Though but a simple object, into light
Called forth by those affections that endear
The private hearth; though keeping thy sole seat
In singleness, and little tried by time,
Creation, as it were, of yesterday—
With a congenial function art endued
For each and all of us, together joined
In course of nature under a low roof
By charities and duties that proceed
Out of the bosom of a wiser vow.
To a like salutary sense of awe
Or sacred wonder, growing with the power
Of meditation that attempts to weigh,
In faithful scales, things and their opposites,
Can thy enduring quiet gently raise
A household small and sensitive,—whose love,
Dependent as in part its blessings are
Upon frail ties dissolving or dissolved
On earth, will be revived, we trust, in heaven.¹

1834

SO fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive,
Would that the little Flowers were born to live,
Conscious of half the pleasure which they give;

¹ In the class entitled 'Musings,' in Mr. Southey's Minor Poems, is one
upon his own miniature Picture, taken in childhood, and another upon a
landscape painted by Gaspar Poussin. It is possible that every word of the
above verses, though similar in subject, might have been written had the
author been unacquainted with those beautiful effusions of poetic sentiment.
But, for his own satisfaction, he must be allowed thus publicly to acknowledge the pleasure those two Poems of his Friend have given him, and the grateful influence they have upon his mind as often as he reads them, or thinks of them.
That to this mountain-daisy's self were known
The beauty of its star-shaped shadow, thrown
On the smooth surface of this naked stone!

And what if hence a bold desire should mount
High as the Sun, that he could take account
Of all that issues from his glorious fount!

So might he ken how by his sovereign aid
These delicate companionships are made;
And how he rules the pomp of light and shade;

And were the Sister-power that shines by night
So privileged, what a countenance of delight
Would through the clouds break forth on human sight!

Fond fancies! wheresoe'er shall turn thine eye
On earth, air, ocean, or the starry sky,
Converse with Nature in pure sympathy;

All vain desires, all lawless wishes quelled,
Be Thou to love and praise alike impelled,
Whatever boon is granted or withheld.

UPON SEEING A COLOURED DRAWING OF THE BIRD OF PARADISE IN AN ALBUM

Who rashly strove thy Image to portray?
Thou buoyant minion of the tropic air;
How could he think of the live creature—gay
With a divinity of colours, drest
In all her brightness, from the dancing crest
Far as the last gleam of the filmy train
Extended and extending to sustain
The motions that it graces—and forbear
To drop his pencil! Flowers of every clime
Depicted on these pages smile at time;
And gorgeous insects copied with nice care
Are here, and likenesses of many a shell
Tossed ashore by restless waves,
Or in the diver's grasp fetched up from caves
Where sea-nymphs might be proud to dwell:
But whose rash hand (again I ask) could dare,  
'Mid casual tokens and promiscuous shows,  
To circumscribe this Shape in fixed repose;  
Could imitate for indolent survey,  
Perhaps for touch profane,  
Plumes that might catch, but cannot keep, a stain;  
And, with cloud-streaks lightest and loftiest, share  
The sun's first greeting, his last farewell ray!

Resplendent Wanderer! followed with glad eyes  
Where'er her course; mysterious Bird!  
To whom, by wondering Fancy stirred,  
Eastern Islanders have given  
A holy name—the Bird of Heaven!  
And even a title higher still,  
The Bird of God! whose blessed will  
She seems performing as she flies  
Over the earth and through the skies  
In never-wearied search of Paradise—  
Region that crowns her beauty with the name  
She bears for us—for us how blest,  
How happy at all seasons, could like aim  
Uphold our Spirits urged to kindred flight  
On wings that fear no glance of God's pure sight,  
No tempest from his breath, their promised rest  
Seeking with indefatigable quest  
Above a world that deems itself most wise  
When most enslaved by gross realities!

1835
SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY AND ORDER

I

COMPOSED AFTER READING A NEWSPAPER OF THE DAY

PEOPLE! your chains are severing link by link;
Soon shall the Rich be levelled down—the Poor
Meet them half way.' Vain boast! for These, the more
They thus would rise, must low and lower sink
Till, by repentance stung, they fear to think;
While all lie prostrate, save the tyrant few
Bent in quick turns each other to undo,
And mix the poison, they themselves must drink.
Mistrust thyself, vain Country! cease to cry,
'Knowledge will save me from the threatened woe.'
For, if than other rash ones more thou know,
Yet on presumptuous wing as far would fly
Above thy knowledge as they dared to go,
Thou wilt provoke a heavier penalty.

1831

II

UPON THE LATE GENERAL FAST. MARCH 1832

RELUCTANT call it was; the rite delayed;
And in the Senate some there were who doffed
The last of their humanity, and scoffed
At providential judgments, undismayed
By their own daring. But the People prayed
As with one voice; their flinty heart grew soft
With penitential sorrow, and aloft
Their spirit mounted, crying, 'God us aid!'
Oh that with aspirations more intense,
Chastised by self-abasement more profound,
This People, once so happy, so renowned
For liberty, would seek from God defence
Against far heavier ill, the pestilence
Of revolution, impiously unbound!
III

Said Secrecy to Cowardice and Fraud,
Falsehood and Treachery, in close council met,
Deep under ground, in Pluto’s cabinet,
‘The frost of England’s pride will soon be thawed;
Hooded the open brow that overawed
Our schemes; the faith and honour, never yet
By us with hope encountered, be upset;—
For once I burst my bands, and cry, applaud!’
Then whispered she, ‘The Bill is carrying out!’
They heard, and, starting up, the Brood of Night
Clapped hands, and shook with glee their matted locks;
All Powers and Places that abhor the light
Joined in the transport, echoed back their shout,
Hurrah for ——, hugging his Ballot-box!

1838

IV

Blest Statesman He, whose Mind’s unselfish will
Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts:
whose eye
Sees that, apart from magnanimity,
Wisdom exists not; nor the humbler skill
Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill
With patient care. What tho’ assaults run high,
They daunt not him who holds his ministry,
Resolute, at all hazards, to fulfil
Its duties;—prompt to move, but firm to wait,—
Knowing, things rashly sought are rarely found;
That, for the functions of an ancient State—
Strong by her charters, free because imbound,
Servant of Providence, not slave of Fate—
Perilous is sweeping change, all chance unsound.

1838

V

In Allusion to Various Recent Histories and Notices of the French Revolution

Portentous change when History can appear
As the cool Advocate of foul device;
Reckless audacity extol, and jeer
At consciences perplexed with scruples nice
SONNETS TO LIBERTY AND ORDER

They who bewail not, must abhor, the sneer
Born of Conceit, Power's blind Idolater;
Or haply sprung from vaunting Cowardice
Betrayed by mockery of holy fear.
Hath it not long been said the wrath of Man
Works not the righteousness of God? Oh bend,
Bend, ye Perverse! to judgments from on High,
Laws that lay under Heaven's perpetual ban
All principles of action that transcend
The sacred limits of humanity.

Published 1842

VI

CONTINUED

Who ponders National events shall find
An awful balancing of loss and gain,
Joy based on sorrow, good with ill combined,
And proud deliverance issuing out of pain
And direful throes; as if the All-ruling Mind,
With whose perfection it consists to ordain
Volcanic burst, earthquake, and hurricane,
Dealt in like sort with feeble human kind
By laws immutable. But woe for him
Who thus deceived shall lend an eager hand
To social havoc. Is not Conscience ours,
And Truth, whose eye guilt only can make dim;
And Will, whose office, by divine command,
Is to control and check disordered Powers?

Published 1842

VII

CONCLUDED

Long-favoured England! be not thou misled
By monstrous theories of alien growth,
Lest alien frenzy seize thee, waxing wroth,
Self-smitten till thy garments reek dyed red
With thy own blood, which tears in torrents shed
Fail to wash out, tears flowing ere thy troth
Be plighted, not to ease but sullen sloth,
Or wan despair—the ghost of false hope fled
Into a shameful grave. Among thy youth,
My Country! if such warning be held dear,
Then shall a Veteran's heart be thrilled with joy,
One who would gather from eternal truth,
For time and season, rules that work to cheer—
Not scourge, to save the People—not destroy.

Published 1842
VIII

MEN of the Western World! in Fate's dark book
Whence these opprobrious leaves of dire portent?
Think ye your British Ancestors forsook
Their native Land, for outrage provident;
From unsubmitive necks the bridle shook
To give, in their Descendants, freer vent
And wider range to passions turbulent,
To mutual tyranny a deadlier look?
Nay, said a voice, soft as the south wind's breath,
Dive through the stormy surface of the flood
To the great current flowing underneath;
Explore the countless springs of silent good;
So shall the truth be better understood,
And thy grieved Spirit brighten strong in faith. 1839

IX

TO THE PENNSYLVANIANS

DAYS undefiled by luxury or sloth,
Firm self-denial, manners grave and staid,
Rights equal, laws with cheerfulness obeyed,
Words that require no sanction from an oath,
And simple honesty a common growth—
This high repute, with bounteous Nature's aid,
Won confidence, now ruthlessly betrayed
At will, your power the measure of your troth!—
All who revere the memory of Penn
Grieve for the land on whose wild woods his name
Was fondly grafted with a virtuous aim,
Renounced, abandoned by degenerate Men
For state-dishonour black as ever came
To upper air from Mammon's loathsome den. 1845

X

AT BOLOGNA, IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LATE INSURRECTIONS, 1837

A why deceive ourselves! by no mere fit
Of sudden passion roused shall men attain
True freedom where for ages they have lain
Bound in a dark abominable pit,
With life's best sinews more and more unknit.
Here, there, a banded few who loathe the chain
May rise to break it: effort worse than vain
For thee, O great Italian nation, split
Into those jarring fractions.—Let thy scope
Be one fixed mind for all; thy rights approve
To thy own conscience gradually renewed;
Learn to make Time the father of wise Hope;
Then trust thy cause to the arm of Fortitude,
The light of Knowledge, and the warmth of Love.

XI

CONTINUED

II

HARD task! exclaim the undisciplined, to lean
On Patience coupled with such slow endeavour,
That long-lived servitude must last for ever.
Perish the grovelling few, who, prest between
Wrongs and the terror of redress, would wean
Millions from glorious aims. Our chains to sever
Let us break forth in tempest now or never!—
What, is there then no space for golden mean
And gradual progress?—Twilight leads to day,
And, even within the burning zones of earth,
The harshest sunrise yields a temperate ray;
The softest breeze to fairest flowers gives birth:
Think not that Prudence dwells in dark abodes,
She scans the future with the eye of gods.

XII

CONCLUDED

III

AS leaves are to the tree whereon they grow
And wither, every human generation
Is to the Being of a mighty nation,
Locked in our world's embrace through weal and woe;
Thought that should teach the zealot to forego
Rash schemes, to abjure all selfish agitation,
And seek through noiseless pains and moderation
The unblemished good they only can bestow.
Alas! with most, who weigh futurity
Against time present, passion holds the scales:
Hence equal ignorance of both prevails,
And nations sink; or, struggling to be free,
Are doomed to flounder on, like wounded whales
Tossed on the bosom of a stormy sea.

XIII

YOUNG ENGLAND—what is then become of Old,
Of dear Old England? Think they she is dead,
Dead to the very name? Presumption fed
On empty air! That name will keep its hold
In the true filial bosom's inmost fold
For ever.—The Spirit of Alfred, at the head
Of all who for her rights watch'd, toil'd and bled,
Knows that this prophecy is not too bold.
What—how! shall she submit in will and deed
To Beardless Boys—an imitative race,
The servum pecus of a Gallic breed?
Dear Mother! if thou must thy steps retrace,
Go where at least meek Innocency dwells;
Let Babes and Sucklings be thy oracles.

XIV

FEEL for the wrongs to universal ken
Daily exposed, woe that unshrouded lies;
And seek the Sufferer in his darkest den,
Whether conducted to the spot by sighs
And moanings, or he dwells (as if the wren
Taught him concealment) hidden from all eyes
In silence and the awful modesties
Of sorrow;—feel for all, as brother Men!
Rest not in hope want's icy chain to thaw
By casual boons and formal charities;
Learn to be just, just through impartial law;
Far as ye may, erect and equalise;
And, what ye cannot reach by statute, draw
Each from his fountain of self-sacrifice!

Published 1842
SONNETS UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH

IN SERIES

I

SUGGESTED BY THE VIEW OF LANCASTER CASTLE (ON THE ROAD FROM THE SOUTH)

THIS Spot—at once unfolding sight so fair
Of sea and land, with yon grey towers that still
Rise up as if to lord it over air—
Might soothe in human breasts the sense of ill,
Or charm it out of memory; yea, might fill
The heart with joy and gratitude to God
For all his bounties upon man bestowed:
Why bears it then the name of 'Weeping Hill'?
Thousands, as toward yon old Lancastrian Towers,
A prison's crown, along this way they past
For lingering durance or quick death with shame,
From this bare eminence thereon have cast
Their first look—blinded as tears fell in showers
Shed on their chains; and hence that doleful name.

II

TENDERLY do we feel by Nature's law
For worst offenders: though the heart will heave
With indignation, deeply moved we grieve,
In after-thought, for Him who stood in awe
Neither of God nor man, and only saw,
Lost wretch, a horrible device enthroned
On proud temptations, till the victim groaned
Under the steel his hand had dared to draw.
But O, restrain compassion, if its course,
As oft befalls, prevent or turn aside
Judgments and aims and acts whose higher source
Is sympathy with the unforewarned, who died
Blameless—with them that shuddered o'er his grave,
And all who from the law firm safety crave.
III

THE Roman Consul doomed his sons to die
Who had betrayed their country. The stern word
Afforded (may it through all time afford)
A theme for praise and admiration high.
Upon the surface of humanity
He rested not; its depths his mind explored;
He felt; but his parental bosom's lord
Was Duty,—Duty calmed his agony.
And some, we know, when they by wilful act
A single human life have wrongly taken,
Pass sentence on themselves, confess the fact
And, to atone for it, with soul unshaken
Kneel at the feet of Justice, and, for faith
Broken with all mankind, solicit death.

IV

Is Death, when evil against good has fought
With such fell mastery that a man may dare
By deeds the blackest purpose to lay bare—
Is Death, for one to that condition brought,—
For him, or any one,—the thing that ought
To be most dreaded? Lawgivers, beware,
Lest, capital pains remitting till ye spare
The murderer, ye, by sanction to that thought
Seemingly given, debase the general mind;
Tempt the vague will tried standards to disown;
Nor only palpable restraints unbind,
But upon Honour's head disturb the crown,
Whose absolute rule permits not to withstand
In the weak love of life his least command.

V

Not to the object specially designed,
How'er momentous in itself it be,
Good to promote or curb depravity,
Is the wise Legislator's view confined.
His Spirit, when most severe, is oft most kind;
As all Authority in earth depends
On Love and Fear, their several powers he blends,
Copying with awe the one Paternal mind.
THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH

Uncaught by processes in show humane,
He feels how far the act would derogate
From even the humblest functions of the State,
If she, self-shorn of Majesty, ordain
That never more shall hang upon her breath
The last alternative of Life or Death.

VI

YE brood of Conscience—Spectres! that frequent
The bad man's restless walk, and haunt his bed—
Fiends in your aspect, yet beneficent
In act, as hovering Angels when they spread
Their wings to guard the unconscious Innocent—
Slow be the Statutes of the land to share
A laxity that could not but impair
Your power to punish crime, and so prevent.
And ye, Beliefs! coiled serpent-like about
The adage on all tongues, 'Murder will out,'
How shall your ancient warnings work for good
In the full might they hitherto have shown,
If for deliberate shedder of man's blood
Survive not Judgment that requires his own?

VII

BEFORE the world had past her time of youth
While polity and discipline were weak,
The precept eye for eye, and tooth for tooth,
Came forth—a light, though but as of day-break,
Strong as could then be borne. A Master meek
Proscribed the spirit fostered by that rule,
Patience his law, long-suffering his school,
And love the end, which all through peace must seek.
But lamentably do they err who strain
His mandates, given rash impulse to control
And keep vindictive thirstings from the soul,
So far that, if consistent in their scheme,
They must forbid the State to inflict a pain,
Making of social order a mere dream.

VIII

FIT retribution, by the moral code
Determined, lies beyond the State's embrace,
Yet, as she may, for each peculiar case
She plants well-measured terrors in the road
Of wrongful acts. Downward it is and broad,
And, the main fear once doomed to banishment,
Far oftener then, bad ushering worse event,
Blood would be spilt that in his dark abode
Crime might lie better hid. And, should the change
Take from the horror due to a foul deed,
Pursuit and evidence so far must fail,
And, guilt escaping, passion then might plead
In angry spirits for her old free range,
And the ‘wild justice of revenge’ prevail.

IX

THOUGH to give timely warning and deter
Is one great aim of penalty, extend
Thy mental vision further and ascend
Far higher, else full surely shalt thou err.
What is a State? The wise behold in her
A creature born of time, that keeps one eye
Fixed on the statutes of Eternity,
To which her judgments reverently defer.
Speaking through Law’s dispassionate voice the State
Endues her conscience with external life
And being, to preclude or quell the strife
Of individual will, to elevate
The grovelling mind, the erring to recall,
And fortify the moral sense of all.

X

OUR bodily life, some plead, that life the shrine
Of an immortal spirit, is a gift
So sacred, so informed with light divine,
That no tribunal, though most wise to sift
Deed and intent, should turn the Being adrift
Into that world where penitential tear
May not avail, nor prayer have for God’s ear
A voice—that world whose veil no hand can lift
For earthly sight. ‘Eternity and Time,’
They urge, ‘have interwoven claims and rights
Not to be jeopardised through foulest crime:
The sentence rule by mercy’s heaven-born lights.’
Even so; but measuring not by finite sense
Infinite Power, perfect Intelligence.
XI

AH, think how one compelled for life to abide
Locked in a dungeon needs must eat the heart
Out of his own humanity, and part
With every hope that mutual cares provide;
And, should a less unnatural doom confide
In life-long exile on a savage coast,
Soon the relapsing penitent may boast
Of yet more heinous guilt, with fiercer pride.
Hence thoughtful Mercy, Mercy sage and pure,
Sanctions the forfeiture that Law demands,
Leaving the final issue in His hands
Whose goodness knows no change, whose love is sure,
Who sees, foresees; who cannot judge amiss,
And wafts at will the contrite soul to bliss.

XII

SEE the Condemned alone within his cell
And prostrate at some moment when remorse
Stings to the quick, and, with resistless force,
Assaults the pride she strove in vain to quell.
Then mark him, him who could so long rebel,
The crime confessed, a kneeling Penitent
Before the Altar, where the Sacrament
Softens his heart, till from his eyes outwell
Tears of salvation. Welcome death! while Heaven
Does in this change exceedingly rejoice;
While yet the solemn heed the State hath given
Helps him to meet the last Tribunal's voice
In faith, which fresh offences, were he cast
On old temptations, might for ever blast.

XIII

CONCLUSION

YES, though He well may tremble at the sound
Of his own voice, who from the judgment-seat
Sends the pale Convict to his last retreat
In death; though Listeners shudder all around,
They know the dread requital's source profound;
Nor is, they feel, its wisdom obsolete—
(Would that it were!) the sacrifice unmeet
For Christian Faith. But hopeful signs abound;
The social rights of man breathe purer air;
Religion deepens her preventive care;
Then, moved by needless fear of past abuse,
Strike not from Law's firm hand that awful rod,
But leave it thence to drop for lack of use:
Oh, speed the blessed hour, Almighty God!

XIV

APOLOGY

The formal World relaxes her cold chain
For One who speaks in numbers; ampler scope
His utterance finds; and, conscious of the gain,
Imagination works with bolder hope
The cause of grateful reason to sustain;
And, serving Truth, the heart more strongly beats
Against all barriers which his labour meets
In lofty place, or humble Life's domain.
Enough;—before us lay a painful road,
And guidance have I sought in duteous love
From Wisdom's heavenly Father. Hence hath flowed
Patience, with trust that, whatsoever the way
Each takes in this high matter, all may move
Cheered with the prospect of a brighter day.

1840
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

I

EPISTLE

TO SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT, BART.

From the South-west Coast of Cumberland.—1811

Far from our home by Grasmere's quiet Lake,
From the Vale's peace which all her fields partake,
Here on the bleakest point of Cumbria's shore
We sojourn stunned by Ocean's ceaseless roar;
While, day by day, grim neighbour! huge Black Comb
Frowns deepening visibly his native gloom,
Unless, perchance rejecting in despite
What on the Plain we have of warmth and light,
In his own storms he hides himself from sight.
Rough is the time; and thoughts, that would be free
From heaviness, oft fly, dear Friend, to thee;
Turn from a spot where neither sheltered road
Nor hedge-row screen invites my steps abroad;
Where one poor Plane-tree, having as it might
Attained a stature twice a tall man's height,
Hopeless of further growth, and brown and sere
Through half the summer, stands with top cut sheer,
Like an unshifting weathercock which proves
How cold the quarter that the wind best loves,
Or like a Centinel that, evermore
Darkening the window, ill defends the door
Of this unfinished house—a Fortress bare,
Where strength has been the Builder's only care;
Whose rugged walls may still for years demand
The final polish of the Plasterer's hand.
—This Dwelling's Inmate more than three weeks' space
And oft a Prisoner in the cheerless place,
I—of whose touch the fiddle would complain,
Whose breath would labour at the flute in vain,
In music all unversed, nor blessed with skill
A bridge to copy, or to paint a mill.
Tired of my books, a scanty company!
And tired of listening to the boisterous sea—
Pace between door and window muttering rhyme,
An old resource to cheat a froward time!
Though these dull hours (mine is it, or their shame?)
Would tempt me to renounce that humble aim.
—But if there be a Muse who, free to take
Her seat upon Olympus, doth forsake
Those heights (like Phæbus when his golden locks
He veiled, attendant on Thessalian flocks)
And, in disguise, a Milkmaid with her pail,
Trips down the pathways of some winding dale;
Or, like a Mermaid, warbles on the shores
To fishers mending nets beside their doors;
Or, Pilgrim-like, on forest moss reclined,
Gives plaintive ditties to the heedless wind,
Or listens to its play among the boughs
Above her head and so forgets her vows—
If such a Visitant of Earth there be
And she would deign this day to smile on me
And aid my verse, content with local bounds
Of natural beauty and life's daily rounds,
Thoughts, chances, sights, or doings, which we tell
Without reserve to those whom we love well—
Then haply, Beaumont! words in current clear
Will flow, and on a welcome page appear
Duly before thy sight, unless they perish here.

What shall I treat of? News from Mona's Isle?
Such have we, but unvaried in its style;
No tales of Runagates fresh landed, whence
And wherefore fugitive or on what pretence;
Of feasts, or scandal, eddying like the wind
Most restlessly alive when most confined.
Ask not of me, whose tongue can best appease
The mighty tumults of the House of Keys;
The last year's cup whose Ram or Heifer gained,
What slopes are planted, or what mosses drained:
An eye of fancy only can I cast
On that proud pageant now at hand or past,
When full five hundred boats in trim array,
With nets and sails outspread and streamers gay,
And chanted hymns and stiller voice of prayer,
For the old Manx-harvest to the Deep repair,
Soon as the herring-shoals at distance shine
Like beds of moonlight shifting on the brine
Mona from our Abode is daily seen,  
But with a wilderness of waves between;  
And by conjecture only can we speak  
Of aught transacted there in bay or creek;  
No tidings reach us thence from town or field,  
Only faint news her mountain-sunbeams yield,  
And some we gather from the misty air,  
And some the hovering clouds, our telegraph, declare.  
But these poetic mysteries I withhold;  
For Fancy hath her fits both hot and cold.  
And should the colder fit with You be on  
When You might read, my credit would be gone.

Let more substantial themes the pen engage,  
And nearer interests culled from the opening stage  
Of our migration.—Ere the welcome dawn  
Had from the east her silver star withdrawn,  
The Wain stood ready, at our Cottage-door,  
Thoughtfully freighted with a various store;  
And long or ere the uprising of the Sun  
O'er dew-damped dust our journey was begun,  
A needful journey, under favouring skies,  
Through peopled Vales; yet something in the guise  
Of those old Patriarchs when from well to well  
They roamed through Wastes where now the tented  
Arabs dwell.

Say first, to whom did we the charge confide,  
Who promptly undertook the Wain to guide  
Up many a sharply-twining road and down,  
And over many a wide hill's craggy crown,  
Through the quick turns of many a hollow nook,  
And the rough bed of many an unbridged brook?  
A blooming Lass—who in her better hand  
Bore a light switch, her sceptre of command  
When, yet a slender Girl, she often led,  
Skilful and bold, the horse and burthened sled  
From the peat-yielding Moss on Gowdar's head.  
What could go wrong with such a Charioteer  
For goods and chattels, or those Infants dear,  
A Pair who smilingly sat side by side,  
Our hope confirming that the salt-sea tide,  
Whose free embraces we were bound to seek,  
Would their lost strength restore and freshen the  
pale cheek?

Such hope did either Parent entertain  
Pacing behind along the silent lane.

1 A local word for sledge.
Blithe hopes and happy musings soon took flight, 120
For lo! an uncouth melancholy sight—
On a green bank a creature stood forlorn
Just half protruded to the light of morn,
Its hinder part concealed by hedge-row thorn.
The Figure called to mind a beast of prey
Stript of its frightful powers by slow decay,
And, though no longer upon rapine bent,
Dim memory keeping of its old intent.
We started, looked again with anxious eyes, 130
And in that griesly object recognise
The Curate’s Dog—his long-tried friend, for they,
As well we knew, together had grown grey.
The Master died, his drooping servant’s grief
Found at the Widow’s feet some sad relief;
Yet still he lived in pining discontent,
Sadness which no indulgence could prevent;
Hence whole-day wanderings, broken nightly sleeps
And lonesome watch that out of doors he keeps;
Not oftentimes, I trust, as we, poor brute!
Espied him on his legs sustained, blank, mute, 140
And of all visible motion destitute,
So that the very heaving of his breath
Seemed stopt, though by some other power than death.
Long as we gazed upon the form and face,
A mild domestic pity kept its place,
Unscarred by thronging fancies of strange hue
That haunted us in spite of what we knew.
Even now I sometimes think of him as lost
In second-sight appearances, or crost
By spectral shapes of guilt, or to the ground,
On which he stood, by spells unnatural bound,
Like a gaunt shaggy Porter forced to wait
In days of old romance at Archimago’s gate.

Advancing Summer, Nature’s law fulfilled,
The choristers in every grove had stilled;
But we, we lacked not music of our own,
For lightsome Fanny had thus early thrown,
Mid the gay prattle of those infant tongues,
Some notes prelusive, from the round of songs
With which, more zealous than the liveliest bird
That in wild Arden’s brakes was ever heard,
Her work and her work’s partners she can cheer,
The whole day long, and all days of the year.
Thus gladdened from our own dear Vale we pass
And soon approach Diana’s Looking-glass!
To Loughrigg-tarn, round clear and bright as heaven,
Such name Italian fancy would have given,
Ere on its banks the few grey cabins rose
That yet disturb not its concealed repose
More than the feeblest wind that idly blows.

Ah, Beaumont! when an opening in the road
Stopped me at once by charm of what it showed,
The encircling region vividly exprest
Within the mirror’s depth, a world at rest—
Sky streaked with purple, grove and craggy bield, ¹
And the smooth green of many a pendent field,
And, quieted and soothed, a torrent small,
A little daring would-be waterfall,
One chimney smoking and its azure wreath,
Associate all in the calm Pool beneath,
With here and there a faint imperfect gleam
Of water-lilies veiled in misty steam—
What wonder at this hour of stillness deep,
A shadowy link ’tween wakefulness and sleep,
When Nature’s self, amid such blending, seems
To render visible her own soft dreams,
If, mixed with what appeared of rock, lawn, wood,
Fondly embosomed in the tranquil flood,
A glimpse I caught of that Abode, by Thee
Designed to rise in humble privacy,
A lowly Dwelling, here to be outspread,
Like a small Hamlet, with its bashful head
Half hid in native trees. Alas ’tis not,
Nor ever was; I sighed, and left the spot
Unconscious of its own untoward lot,
And thought in silence, with regret too keen,
Of unexperienced joys that might have been;
Of neighbourhood and intermingling arts,
And golden summer days uniting cheerful hearts.
But time, irrevocable time, is flown,
And let us utter thanks for blessings sown
And reaped—what hath been, and what is, our own.

Not far we travelled ere a shout of glee,
Startling us all, dispersed my reverie;
Such shout as many a sportive echo meeting
Oft-times from Alpine chalets sends a greeting.

¹ A word common in the country, signifying shelter, as in Scotland.
2–CC
Whence the blithe hail? behold a Peasant stand
On high, a kerchief waving in her hand!
Not unexpectant that by early day
Our little Band would thrild this mountain-way,
Before her cottage on the bright hill-side
She hath advanced with hope to be descried.
Right gladly answering signals we displayed,
Moving along a tract of morning shade,
And vocal wishes sent of like good-will
To our kind Friend high on the sunny hill—
Luminous region, fair as if the prime
Were tempting all astir to look aloft or climb;
Only the centre of the shining cot
With door left open makes a gloomy spot,
Emblem of those dark corners sometimes found
Within the happiest breast on earthly ground.

Rich prospect left behind of stream and vale,
And mountain-tops, a barren ridge we scale;
Descend and reach, in Yewdale's depths, a plain
With haycocks studded, striped with yellowing grain—
An area level as a Lake and spread
Under a rock too steep for man to tread,
Where sheltered from the north and bleak north-west
Aloft the Raven hangs a visible nest,
Fearless of all assaults that would her brood molest.
Hot sunbeams fill the steaming vale; but hark,
At our approach, a jealous watch-dog's bark,
Noise that brings forth no liveried Page of state,
But the whole household, that our coming wait.
With Young and Old warm greetings we exchange,
And jocund smiles, and toward the lowly Grange
Press forward by the teasing dogs unscared.
Entering, we find the morning meal prepared:
So down we sit, though not till each had cast
Pleased looks around the delicate repast—
Rich cream, and snow-white eggs fresh from the nest,
With amber honey from the mountain's breast;
Strawberries from lane or woodland, offering wild
Of children's industry, in hillocks piled;
Cakes for the nonce, and butter fit to lie
Upon a lordly dish; frank hospitality
Where simple art with bounteous nature vied,
And cottage comfort shunned not seemly pride.

Kind Hostess! Handmaid also of the feast,
If thou be lovelier than the kindling East,
Words by thy presence unrestrained may speak
Of a perpetual dawn from brow and cheek
Instinct with light whose sweetest promise lies,
Never retreating, in thy large dark eyes,
Dark but to every gentle feeling true,
As if their lustre flowed from ether's purest blue.

Let me not ask what tears may have been wept
By those bright eyes, what weary vigils kept,
Beside that hearth what sighs may have been heaved
For wounds inflicted, nor what toil relieved
By fortitude and patience, and the grace
Of heaven in pity visiting the place.
Not unadvisedly those secret springs
I leave unsearched: enough that memory clings,
Here as elsewhere, to notices that make
Their own significance for hearts awake,
To rural incidents, whose genial powers
Filled with delight three summer morning hours.

More could my pen report of grave or gay
That through our gipsy travel cheered the way;
But, bursting forth above the waves, the Sun
Laughs at my pains, and seems to say, 'Be done.'
Yet, Beaumont, thou wilt not, I trust, reprove
This humble offering made by Truth to Love,
Nor chide the Muse that stooped to break a spell
Which might have else been on me yet:—Farewell.

UPON PERUSING THE FOREGOING EPISTLE
THIRTY YEARS AFTER ITS COMPOSITION

Soon did the Almighty Giver of all rest
Take those dear young Ones to a fearless nest;
And in Death's arms has long reposed the Friend
For whom this simple Register was penned.
Thanks to the moth that spared it for our eyes;
And Strangers even the slighted Scroll may prize,
Moved by the touch of kindred sympathies.
For—save the calm, repentance sheds o'er strife
Raised by remembrances of misused life,
The light from past endeavours purely willed
And by Heaven's favour happily fulfilled;
Save hope that we, yet bound to Earth, may share
The joys of the Departed—what so fair
As blameless pleasure, not without some tears,
Reviewed through Love's transparent veil of years?

1841

Note.—Loughrigg Tarn, alluded to in the foregoing Epistle, resembles, though much smaller in compass, the Lake Nemi, or Speculum Dianæ as it is often called, not only in its clear waters and circular form, and the beauty immediately surrounding it, but also as being overlooked by the eminence of Langdale Pikes as Lake Nemi is by that of Monte Calvo. Since this Epistle was written Loughrigg Tarn has lost much of its beauty by the felling of many natural clumps of wood, relics of the old forest, particularly upon the farm called 'The Oaks,' from the abundance of that tree which grew there.

It is to be regretted, upon public grounds, that Sir George Beaumont did not carry into effect his intention of constructing here a Summer Retreat in the style I have described; as his taste would have set an example how buildings, with all the accommodations modern society requires, might be introduced even into the most secluded parts of this country without injuring their native character. The design was not abandoned from failure of inclination on his part, but in consequence of local untowardness which need not be particularised.

II

GOLD AND SILVER FISHES IN A VASE

THE soaring lark is blest as proud
When at heaven's gate she sings;
The roving bee proclaims aloud
Her flight by vocal wings;
While Ye, in lasting durance pent,
Your silent lives employ
For something more than dull content,
Though haply less than joy.

Yet might your glassy prison seem
A place where joy is known,
Where golden flash and silver gleam
Have meanings of their own;
While, high and low, and all about,
Your motions, glittering Elves!
Ye weave—no danger from without,
And peace among yourselves.

Type of a sunny human breast
Is your transparent cell;
Where Fear is but a transient guest,
No sullen Humours dwell;
Where, sensitive of every ray
That smites this tiny sea,
Your scaly panoplies repay
The loan with usury.
How beautiful!—Yet none knows why
This ever-graceful change,
Renewed—renewed incessantly—
Within your quiet range.
Is it that ye with conscious skill
For mutual pleasure glide;
And sometimes, not without your will,
Are dwarfed, or magnified?

Fays, Genii of gigantic size!
And now, in twilight dim,
Clustering like constellated eyes
In wings of Cherubim
When the fierce orbs abate their glare;—
Whate’er your forms express,
Whate’er ye seem, whate’er ye are—
All leads to gentleness.

Cold though your nature be, ’tis pure;
Your birthright is a fence
From all that haughtier kinds endure
Through tyranny of sense.
Ah! not alone by colours bright
Are Ye to heaven allied,
When, like essential Forms of light,
Ye mingle, or divide.

For day-dreams soft as e’er beguiled
Day-thoughts while limbs repose;
For moonlight fascinations mild,
Your gift, ere shutters close—
Accept, mute Captives! thanks and praise;
And may this tribute prove
That gentle admirations raise
Delight resembling love.

III

LIBERTY

(Addressed to the preceding)

Addressed to a friend; the gold and silver fishes having been removed to a pool in the pleasure-ground of Rydal Mount.

'The liberty of a people consists in being governed by laws which they have made for themselves, under whatever form it be of government. The
liberty of a private man, in being master of his own time and actions, as far as may consist with the laws of God and of his country. Of this latter we are here to discourse.'—Cowley [Essays: of Liberty; 111.].

THOSE breathing Tokens of your kind regard,
(Suspect not, Anna, that their fate is hard;
Not soon does aught to which mild fancies cling
In lonely spots, become a slighted thing;)
Those silent Inmates now no longer share,
Nor do they need, our hospitable care,
Removed in kindness from their glassy Cell
To the fresh waters of a living Well—
An elfin pool so sheltered that its rest
No winds disturb; the mirror of whose breast
Is smooth as clear, save where with dimples small
A fly may settle, or a blossom fall.
—There swims, of blazing sun and beating shower
Fearless (but how obscured!) the golden Power,
That from his bauble prison used to cast
Gleams by the richest jewel unsurpast;
And near him, darkling like a sullen Gnome,
The silver Tenant of the crystal dome;
Dissevered both from all the mysteries
Of hue and altering shape that charmed all eyes.
Alas! they pined, they languished while they shone;
And, if not so, what matters beauty gone
And admiration lost, by change of place
That brings to the inward creature no disgrace?
But if the change restore his birthright, then,
Whate'er the difference, boundless is the gain.
Who can divine what impulses from God
Reach the caged lark, within a town-abode,
From his poor inch or two of daisied sod?
O yield him back his privilege!—No sea
Swell like the bosom of a man set free;
A wilderness is rich with liberty.
Roll on, ye spouting whales, who die or keep
Your independence in the fathomless Deep!
Spread, tiny nautilus, the living sail;
Dive, at thy choice, or brave the freshening gale!
If unreproved the ambitious eagle mount
Sunward to seek the daylight in its fount,
Bays, gulfs, and ocean's Indian width, shall be,
Till the world perishes, a field for thee!

While musing here I sit in shadow cool,
And watch these mute Companions, in the pool,
(Among reflected boughs of leafy trees)
By glimpses caught—disporting at their ease,
Enlivened, braced, by hardy luxuries,
I ask what warrant fixed them (like a spell
Of witchcraft fixed them) in the crystal cell;
To wheel with languid motion round and round,
Beautiful, yet in mournful durance bound.
Their peace, perhaps, our lightest footfall marred; 50
On their quick sense our sweetest music jarred;
And whither could they dart, if seized with fear?
No sheltering stone, no tangled root was near.
When fire or taper ceased to cheer the room,
They wore away the night in starless gloom;
And, when the sun first dawned upon the streams,
How faint their portion of his vital beams!
Thus, and unable to complain, they fared,
While not one joy of ours by them was shared.

Is there a cherished bird (I venture now
To snatch a sprig from Chaucer's reverend brow)—
Is there a brilliant fondling of the cage,
Though sure of plaudits on his costly stage,
Though fed with dainties from the snow-white hand
Of a kind mistress, fairest of the land,
But gladly would escape; and, if need were,
Scatter the colours from the plumes that bear
The emancipated captive through blithe air
Into strange woods, where he at large may live
On best or worst which they and Nature give?

The beetle loves his unpretending track,
The snail the house he carries on his back;
The far-fetched worm with pleasure would disown
The bed we give him, though of softest down;
A noble instinct; in all kinds the same,
All ranks! What Sovereign, worthy of the name,
If doomed to breathe against his lawful will
An element that flatters him—to kill,
But would rejoice to barter outward show
For the least boon that freedom can bestow?

But most the Bard is true to inborn right,
Lark of the dawn, and Philomel of night,
Exults in freedom, can with rapture vouch
For the dear blessings of a lowly couch,
A natural meal—days, months, from Nature's hand;
Time, place, and business, all at his command!—
Who bends to happier duties, who more wise
Than the industrious Poet, taught to prize,
Above all grandeur, a pure life uncrossed
By cares in which simplicity is lost?
That life—the flowery path that winds by stealth—
Which Horace needed for his spirit’s health;
Sighed for, in heart and genius, overcome
By noise and strife and questions wearisome,
And the vain splendours of Imperial Rome?—
Let easy mirth his social hours inspire,
And fiction animate his sportive lyre,
Attuned to verse that, crowning light Distress
With garlands, cheats her into happiness;
Give me the humblest note of those sad strains
Drawn forth by pressure of his gilded chains,
As a chance-sunbeam from his memory fell
Upon the Sabine farm he loved so well;
Or when the prattle of Bandusia’s spring
Haunted his ear—he only listening—
He proud to please, above all rivals, fit
To win the palm of gaiety and wit;
He, doubt not, with involuntary dread,
Shrinking from each new favour to be shed,
By the world’s Ruler, on his honoured head!

In a deep vision’s intellectual scene,
Such earnest longings and regrets as keen
Depressed the melancholy Cowley, laid
Under a fancied yew-tree’s luckless shade;
A doleful bower for penitential song,
Where Man and Muse complained of mutual wrong;
While Cam’s ideal current glided by,
And antique towers nodded their foreheads high,
Citadels dear to studious privacy.
But Fortune, who had long been used to sport
With this tried Servant of a thankless Court,
Relenting met his wishes; and to you
The remnant of his days at least was true;
You, whom, though long deserted, he loved best;
You, Muses, books, fields, liberty, and rest!

Far happier they who, fixing hope and aim
On the humanities of peaceful fame,
Enter betimes with more than martial fire
The generous course, aspire, and still aspire;
Upheld by warnings heeded not too late
Stifle the contradictions of their fate,
And to one purpose cleave, their Being’s godlike mate!
Thus, gifted Friend, but with the placid brow
That woman ne'er should forfeit, keep thy vow;
With modest scorn reject whate'er would blind
The ethereal eyesight, cramp the wingèd mind!
Then, with a blessing granted from above
To every act, word, thought, and look of love,
Life's book for Thee may lie unclosed, till age
Shall with a thankful tear bedrop its latest page.\(^1\) 1829

IV
POOR ROBIN \(^2\)

NOW when the primrose makes a splendid show,
And lilies face the March-winds in full blow,
And humbler growths as moved with one desire
Put on, to welcome spring, their best attire,
Poor Robin is yet flowerless; but how gay
With his red stalks upon this sunny day!
And, as his tufts of leaves he spreads, content
With a hard bed and scanty nourishment,
Mixed with the green, some shine not lacking power
To rival summer's brightest scarlet flower;
And flowers they well might seem to passers-by
If looked at only with a careless eye;
Flowers—or a richer produce (did it suit
The season) sprinklings of ripe strawberry fruit.

But while a thousand pleasures come unsought,
Why fix upon his wealth or want a thought?
Is the string touched in prelude to a lay
Of pretty fancies that would round him play
When all the world acknowledged elfin sway?

\(^1\) There is now, alas! no possibility of the anticipation, with which the above Epistle concludes, being realised: nor were the verses ever seen, by the Individual for whom they were intended. She accompanied her husband, the Rev. Wm. Fletcher, to India, and died of cholera, at the age of thirty-two or thirty-three years, on her way from Shalapore to Bombay, deeply lamented by all who knew her.

Her enthusiasm was ardent, her piety steadfast; and her great talents would have enabled her to be eminently useful in the difficult path of life to which she had been called. The opinion she entertained of her own performances, given to the world under her maiden name, Jewsbury, was modest and humble, and, indeed, far below their merits; as is often the case with those who are making trial of their powers, with a hope to discover what they are best fitted for. In one quality, viz., quickness in the motions of her mind, she had, within the range of the Author's acquaintance, no equal.

\(^2\) The small wild Geranium known by that name.
Or does it suit our humour to commend
Poor Robin as a sure and crafty friend,
Whose practice teaches, spite of names, to show
Bright colours, whether they deceive or no?—
Nay, we would simply praise the free good-will
With which, though slighted, he, on naked hill
Or in warm valley, seeks his part to fill;
Cheerful alike if bare of flowers as now,
Or when his tiny gems shall deck his brow:
Yet more, we wish that men by men despised,
And such as lift their foreheads overprized,
Should sometimes think, where'er they chance to spy
This child of Nature's own humility,
What recompense is kept in store or left
For all that seem neglected or bereft;
With what nice care equivalents are given,
How just, how bountiful, the hand of Heaven.

March 1840

V

THE GLEANER

(suggested by a picture)

That happy gleam of vernal eyes,
Those locks from summer's golden skies,
That o'er thy brow are shed;
That cheek—a kindling of the morn,
That lip—a rose-bud from the thorn,
I saw; and Fancy sped
To scenes Arcadian, whispering, through soft air,
Of bliss that grows without a care,
And happiness that never flies—
(How can it where love never dies?)
Whispering of promise, where no blight
Can reach the innocent delight;
Where pity, to the mind conveyed
In pleasure, is the darkest shade
That Time, unwrinkled grandsire, flings
From his smoothly gliding wings.

What mortal form, what earthly face
Inspired the pencil, lines to trace,
And mingle colours, that should breed
Such rapture, nor want power to feed?
For had thy charge been idle flowers,
Fair Damsel! o'er my captive mind,
To truth and sober reason blind,
'Mid that soft air, those long-lost bowers,  
The sweet illusion might have hung, for hours.

Thanks to this tell-tale sheaf of corn,  
That touchingly bespeaks thee born  
Life's daily tasks with them to share  
Who, whether from their lowly bed  
They rise, or rest the weary head,  
Ponder the blessing they entreat  
From Heaven, and feel what they repeat,  
While they give utterance to the prayer  
That asks for daily bread.

VI

TO A REDBREAST

(IN SICKNESS)

STAY, little cheerful Robin! stay,  
And at my casement sing,  
Though it should prove a farewell lay  
And this our parting spring.

Though I, alas! may ne'er enjoy  
The promise in thy song;  
A charm, that thought can not destroy,  
Doth to thy strain belong.

Methinks that in my dying hour  
Thy song would still be dear,  
And with a more than earthly power  
My passing Spirit cheer.

Then, little Bird, this boon confer,  
Come, and my requiem sing,  
Nor fail to be the harbinger  
Of everlasting Spring.

S. H.

Published 1842.

VII

I KNOW an aged Man constrained to dwell  
In a large house of public charity,  
Where he abides, as in a Prisoner's cell,  
With numbers near, alas! no company.
When he could creep about, at will, though poor
And forced to live on alms, this old Man fed
A Redbreast, one that to his cottage door
Came not, but in a lane partook his bread.

There, at the root of one particular tree,
An easy seat this worn-out Labourer found
While Robin pecked the crumbs upon his knee
Laid one by one, or scattered on the ground.

Dear intercourse was theirs, day after day;
What signs of mutual gladness when they met!
Think of their common peace, their simple play,
The parting moment and its fond regret.

Months passed in love that failed not to fulfil,
In spite of season’s change, its own demand,
By fluttering pinions here and busy bill;
There by caresses from a tremulous hand.

Thus in the chosen spot a tie so strong
Was formed between the solitary pair,
That when his fate had housed him mid a throng
The Captive shunned all converse proffered there.

Wife, children, kindred, they were dead and gone;
But, if no evil hap his wishes crossed,
One living Stay was left, and on that one
Some recompense for all that he had lost.

O that the good old Man had power to prove,
By message sent through air or visible token,
That still he loves the Bird, and still must love;
That friendship lasts though fellowship is broken!

VIII

SONNET

TO AN OCTOGENARIAN

AFFECTIONS lose their object; Time brings forth
No successors; and, lodged in memory,
If love exist no longer, it must die,—
Wanting accustomed food, must pass from earth,
Or never hope to reach a second birth.
FLOATING ISLAND

This sad belief, the happiest that is left
To thousands, share not Thou; howe'er bereft,
Scorned, or neglected, fear not such a dearth.
Though poor and destitute of friends thou art,
Perhaps the sole survivor of thy race,
One to whom Heaven assigns that mournful part
The utmost solitude of age to face,
Still shall be left some corner of the heart
Where Love for living Thing can find a place.

1846

IX

FLOATING ISLAND

These lines are by the Author of the Address to the Wind, etc., published heretofore along with my poems. Those to a Redbreast are by a deceased female Relative.

HARMONIOUS Powers with Nature work
On sky, earth, river, lake and sea;
Sunshine and cloud, whirlwind and breeze,
All in one duteous task agree.

Once did I see a slip of earth
(By throbbing waves long undermined)
Loosed from its hold; how, no one knew,
But all might see it float, obedient to the wind;

 Might see it, from the mossy shore
 Dissevered, float upon the Lake,
 Float with its crest of trees adorned
 On which the warbling birds their pastime take.

Food, shelter, safety, there they find;
There berries ripen, flowerets bloom;
There insects live their lives, and die;
A peopled world it is; in size a tiny room.

And thus through many seasons' space
This little Island may survive;
But Nature, though we mark her not,
Will take away, may cease to give.

Perchance when you are wandering forth
Upon some vacant sunny day,
Without an object, hope, or fear,
Thither your eyes may turn—the Isle is passed away;
Buried beneath the glittering Lake,  
Its place no longer to be found;  
Yet the lost fragments shall remain  
To fertilise some other ground.

D. W.  
Published 1842

HOW beautiful the Queen of Night, on high  
Her way pursuing among scattered clouds,  
Where, ever and anon, her head she shrouds  
Hidden from view in dense obscurity.  
But look, and to the watchful eye  
A brightening edge will indicate that soon  
We shall behold the struggling Moon  
Break forth,—again to walk the clear blue sky.

Published 1850

'Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone  
Wi' the auld moone in hir arme.'  
Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,  
Percy's Reliques.

ONCE I could hail (howe'er serene the sky)  
The Moon re-entering her monthly round,  
No faculty yet given me to espy  
The dusky Shape within her arms imbound,  
That thin memento of effulgence lost  
Which some have named her Predecessor's ghost.

Young, like the Crescent that above me shone,  
Nought I perceived within it dull or dim;  
All that appeared was suitable to One  
Whose fancy had a thousand fields to skim;  
To expectations spreading with wild growth,  
And hope that kept with me her plighted troth.

I saw (ambition quickening at the view)  
A silver boat launched on a boundless flood;  
A pearly crest, like Dian's when it threw  
Its brightest splendour round a leafy wood;  
But not a hint from under-ground, no sign  
Fit for the glimmering brow of Proserpine.
Or was it Dian's self that seemed to move
Before me?—nothing blemished the fair sight;
On her I looked whom jocund Fairies love,
Cynthia, who puts the little stars to flight,
And by that thinning magnifies the great,
For exaltation of her sovereign state.

And when I learned to mark the spectral Shape
As each new Moon obeyed the call of Time,
If gloom fell on me, swift was my escape;
Such happy privilege hath life's gay Prime,
To see or not to see, as best may please
A buoyant Spirit, and a heart at ease.

Now, dazzling Stranger! when thou meet'st my glance,
Thy dark Associate ever I discern;
Emblem of thoughts too eager to advance
While I salute my joys, thoughts sad or stern;
Shades of past bliss, or phantoms that, to gain
Their fill of promised lustre, wait in vain.

So changes mortal Life with fleeting years;
A mournful change, should Reason fail to bring
The timely insight that can temper fears,
And from vicissitude remove its sting;
While Faith aspires to seats in that domain
Where joys are perfect—neither wax nor wane.

XII

TO THE LADY FLEMING

ON SEEING THE FOUNDATION PREPARING FOR THE ERECTION
OF RYDAL CHAPEL, WESTMORELAND

BLEST is this Isle—our native Land;
Where battlement and moated gate
Are objects only for the hand
Of hoary Time to decorate;
Where shady hamlet, town that breathes
Its busy smoke in social wreaths,
No rampart's stern defence require,
Nought but the heaven-directed spire,
And steeple tower (with pealing bells
Far-heard)—our only citadels.
II

O Lady! from a noble line
Of chieftains sprung, who stoutly bore
The spear, yet gave to works divine
A bounteous help in days of yore,
(As records mouldering in the Dell
Of Nightshade 1 haply yet may tell;)
Thee kindred aspirations moved
To build, within a vale beloved,
For Him upon whose high behests
All peace depends, all safety rests.

III

How fondly will the woods embrace
This daughter of thy pious care,
Lifting her front with modest grace
To make a fair recess more fair;
And to exalt the passing hour;
Or soothe it with a healing power
Drawn from the Sacrifice fulfilled,
Before this rugged soil was tilled,
Or human habitation rose
To interrupt the deep repose!

IV

Well may the villagers rejoice!
Nor heat, nor cold, nor weary ways,
Will be a hindrance to the voice
That would unite in prayer and praise;
More duly shall wild wandering Youth
Receive the curb of sacred truth,
Shall tottering Age, bent earthward, hear
The Promise, with uplifted ear;
And all shall welcome the new ray
Imparted to their sabbath-day.

V

Nor deem the Poet's hope misplaced,
His fancy cheated—that can see
A shade upon the future cast,
Of time's pathetic sanctity;
Can hear the monitory clock
Sound o'er the lake with gentle shock
At evening, when the ground beneath
Is ruffled o'er with cells of death;

1 Bekangs Ghyll—or the dell of Nightshade—in which stands St. Mary's Abbey in Low Furness.
Where happy generations lie,
Here tutored for eternity.

VI
Lives there a man whose sole delights
Are trivial pomp and city noise,
Hardening a heart that loathes or slight
What every natural heart enjoys?
Who never caught a noon-tide dream
From murmur of a running stream;
Could strip, for aught the prospect yields
To him, their verdure from the fields;
And take the radiance from the clouds
In which the sun his setting shrouds.

VII
A soul so pitiably forlorn,
If such do on this earth abide,
May season apathy with scorn,
May turn indifference to pride;
And still be not unblest—compared
With him who grovels, self-debarred
From all that lies within the scope
Of holy faith and christian hope;
Or, shipwreck'd, kindles on the coast
False fires, that others may be lost.

VIII
Alas! that such perverted zeal
Should spread on Britain's favoured ground!
That public order, private weal,
Should e'er have felt or feared a wound
From champions of the desperate law
Which from their own blind hearts they draw;
Who tempt their reason to deny
God, whom their passions dare defy,
And boast that they alone are free
Who reach this dire extremity!

IX
But turn we from these 'bold bad' men;
The way, mild Lady! that hath led
Down to their 'dark opprobrious den,'
Is all too rough for Thee to tread.
Softly as morning vapours glide
Down Rydal-cove from Fairfield's side,
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Should move the tenor of his song
Who means to charity no wrong;
Whose offering gladly would accord
With this day's work, in thought and word.

x

Heaven prosper it! may peace, and love,
And hope, and consolation, fall,
Through its meek influence, from above,
And penetrate the hearts of all;
All who, around the hallowed Fane,
Shall sojourn in this fair domain;
Grateful to Thee, while service pure,
And ancient ordinance, shall endure,
For opportunity bestowed
To kneel together, and adore their God!

1822-23

XIII

ON THE SAME OCCASION

Oh! gather whencesoe'er ye safely may
The help which slackening Piety requires;
Nor deem that he perforce must go astray
Who treads upon the footmarks of his sires.

Our churches, invariably perhaps, stand east and west, but why is by few persons exactly known; nor, that the degree of deviation from due east often noticeable in the ancient ones was determined, in each particular case, by the point in the horizon, at which the sun rose upon the day of the saint to whom the church was dedicated. These observances of our ancestors, and the causes of them, are the subject of the following stanzas.

WHEN in the antique age of bow and spear
And feudal rapine clothed with iron mail,
Came ministers of peace, intent to rear
The Mother Church in yon sequestered vale;

Then, to her Patron Saint a previous rite
Resounded with deep swell and solemn close,
Through unremitting vigils of the night,
Till from his couch the wished-for Sun uprose.

He rose, and straight—as by divine command,
They, who had waited for that sign to trace
Their work's foundation, gave with careful hand
To the high altar its determined place;
Mindful of Him who in the Orient born
There lived, and on the cross his life resigned,
And who, from out the regions of the morn,
Issuing in pomp, shall come to judge mankind.

So taught their creed;—nor failed the eastern sky,
'Mid these more awful feelings, to infuse
The sweet and natural hopes that shall not die,
Long as the sun his gladsome course renews.

For us hath such prelusive vigil ceased;
Yet still we plant, like men of elder days
Our Christian altar faithful to the east,
Whence the tall window drinks the morning rays;

That obvious emblem giving to the eye
Of meek devotion, which erewhile it gave,
That symbol of the day-spring from on high,
Triumphant o'er the darkness of the grave.

XIV

THE HORN OF EGREMONT CASTLE

ERE the Brothers through the gateway
Issued forth with old and young,
To the Horn Sir Eustace pointed
Which for ages there had hung.
Horn it was which none could sound,
No one upon living ground,
Save He who came as rightful Heir
To Egremont's Domains and Castle fair.

Heirs from times of earliest record
Had the House of Lucie born,
Who of right had held the Lordship
Claimed by proof upon the Horn:
Each at the appointed hour
Tried the Horn,—it owned his power;
He was acknowledged: and the blast,
Which good Sir Eustace sounded, was the last.

With his lance Sir Eustace pointed,
And to Hubert thus said he,
'What I speak this Horn shall witness
For thy better memory.
Hear, then, and neglect me not!
At this time, and on this spot,
The words are uttered from my heart,
As my last earnest prayer ere we depart.

'On good service we are going
Life to risk by sea and land,
In which course if Christ our Saviour
Do my sinful soul demand,
Hither come thou back straightway,
Hubert, if alive that day;
Return, and sound the Horn, that we
May have a living House still left in thee!'

'Fear not,' quickly answered Hubert;
'As I am thy Father's son,
What thou askest, noble Brother,
With God's favour shall be done.'
So were both right well content:
Forth they from the Castle went,
And at the head of their Array
To Palestine the Brothers took their way.

Side by side they fought (the Lucies
Were a line for valour famed)
And where'er their strokes alighted,
There the Saracens were tamed.
Whence, then, could it come—the thought—
By what evil spirit brought?
Oh! can a brave Man wish to take
His Brother's life, for Lands' and Castle's sake?

'Sir!' the Ruffians said to Hubert,
'Deep he lies in Jordan flood.'
Stricken by this ill assurance,
Pale and trembling Hubert stood.
'Take your earnings.'—Oh! that I
Could have seen my Brother die!
It was a pang that vexed him then;
And oft returned, again, and yet again.

Months passed on, and no Sir Eustace!
Nor of him were tidings heard;
Wherefore, bold as day, the Murderer
Back again to England steered.
To his Castle Hubert sped;
Nothing has he now to dread.
But silent and by stealth he came,  
And at an hour which nobody could name.

None could tell if it were night-time,  
Night or day, at even or morn;  
No one’s eye had seen him enter,  
No one’s ear had heard the Horn.  
But bold Hubert lives in glee:  
Months and years went smilingly;  
With plenty was his table spread;  
And bright the Lady is who shares his bed.

Likewise he had sons and daughters;  
And, as good men do, he sate  
At his board by these surrounded,  
Flourishing in fair estate.  
And while thus in open day  
Once he sate, as old books say,  
A blast was uttered from the Horn,  
Where by the Castle-gate it hung forlorn.

'Tis the breath of good Sir Eustace!  
He is come to claim his right:  
Ancient castle, woods, and mountains  
Hear the challenge with delight.  
Hubert! though the blast be blown  
He is helpless and alone:  
Thou hast a dungeon, speak the word!  
And there he may be lodged, and thou be Lord.

Speak!—astounded Hubert cannot;  
And, if power to speak he had,  
All are daunted, all the household  
Smitten to the heart, and sad.  
'Tis Sir Eustace; if it be  
Living man, it must be he!  
Thus Hubert thought in his dismay,  
And by a postern-gate he slunk away.

Long, and long was he unheard of:  
To his Brother then he came,  
Made confession, asked forgiveness,  
Asked it by a brother’s name,  
And by all the saints in heaven;  
And of Eustace was forgiven:  
Then in a convent went to hide  
His melancholy head, and there he died.
But Sir Eustace, whom good angels
Had preserved from murderers' hands,
And from Pagan chains had rescued,
Lived with honour on his lands.
Sons he had, saw sons of theirs:
And through ages, heirs of heirs,
A long posterity renowned,
Sounded the Horn which they alone could sound.

XV

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL

A TRUE STORY

O H! what's the matter? what's the matter?
What is 't that ails young Harry Gill?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still!
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle grey, and flannel fine;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon.
His teeth they chatter, chatter still!

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover;
His voice was like the voice of three.
Old Goody Blake was old and poor;
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad;
And any man who passed her door
Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling:
And then her three hours' work at night,
Alas! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
Remote from sheltered village-green,
On a hill's northern side she dwelt,
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,
And hoary dews are slow to melt.  

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old Dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage;
But she, poor Woman! housed alone.  
'Twas well enough, when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the canty Dame
Would sit, as any linnet, gay.  

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh then how her old bones would shake!
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead:
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed;
And then for cold not sleep a wink.  

O joy for her! whene'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout;
And scattered many a lusty splinter
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile beforehand, turf or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.  

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could any thing be more alluring
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake?
And, now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.  

Now Harry he had long suspected
This trespass of old Goody Blake;
And vowed that she should be detected—
That he on her would vengeance take.
And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
And to the fields his road would take;
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watched to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand:
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble land.
—He hears a noise—he's all awake—
Again?—on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps—'tis Goody Blake;
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill!

Right glad was he when he beheld her:
Stick after stick did Goody pull:
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about,
The by-way back again to take;
He started forward, with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast,
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, 'I've caught you then at last!'
Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall;
And, kneeling on the sticks, she prayed
To God that is the judge of all.

She prayed, her withered hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm—
'God! who art never out of hearing,
O may he never more be warm!'
The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray;
Young Harry heard what she had said:
And icy cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
That he was cold and very chill:
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
Alas! that day for Harry Gill!
That day he wore a riding-coat,
But not a whit the warmer he;
Another was on Thursday brought,
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,
And blankets were about him pinned;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
Like a loose casement in the wind.
And Harry's flesh it fell away;
And all who see him say, 'tis plain,
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old;
But ever to himself he mutters,
'Poor Harry Gill is very cold.'
A-bed or up, by night or day,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill!

XVI

IN desultory walk through orchard grounds,
Or some deep chestnut grove, oft have I paused
The while a Thrush, urged rather than restrained
By gusts of vernal storm, attuned his song
To his own genial instincts; and was heard
(Though not without some plaintive tones between)
To utter, above showers of blossom swept
From tossing boughs, the promise of a calm,
Which the unsheltered traveller might receive
With thankful spirit. The descant, and the wind
That seemed to play with it, in love or scorn,
Encouraged and endeared the strain of words
That haply flowed from me, by fits of silence
Impelled to livelier pace. But now, my Book!
Charged with those lays, and others of like mood,
Or loftier pitch if higher rose the theme,
Go, single—yet aspiring to be joined
With thy Forerunners that through many a year
Have faithfully prepared each other’s way—
Go forth upon a mission best fulfilled
When and wherever, in this changeful world,
Power hath been given to please for higher ends
Than pleasure only; gladdening to prepare
For wholesome sadness, troubling to refine,
Calming to raise; and, by a sapient Art
Diffused through all the mysteries of our Being,
Softening the toils and pains that have not ceased
To cast their shadows on our mother Earth
Since the primeval doom. Such is the grace
Which, though unused for, fails not to descend
With heavenly inspiration; such the aim
That Reason dictates; and, as even the wish
Has virtue in it, why should hope to me
Be wanting that sometimes, where fancied ills
Harass the mind and strip from off the bower
Of private life their natural pleasantness,
A Voice—devoted to the love whose seeds
Are sown in every human breast, to beauty
Lodged within compass of the humblest sight,
To cheerful intercourse with wood and field,
And sympathy with man’s substantial griefs—
Will not be heard in vain? And in those days
When unforeseen distress spreads far and wide
Among a People mournfully cast down,
Or into anger roused by venal words
In recklessness flung out to overturn
The judgment, and divert the general heart
From mutual good—some strain of thine, my Book!
Caught at propitious intervals, may win
Listeners who not unwillingly admit
Kindly emotion tending to console
And reconcile; and both with young and old
Exalt the sense of thoughtful gratitude
For benefits that still survive, by faith
In progress, under laws divine, maintained.

Rydal Mount, March 26, 1842

XVII

TO A CHILD

WRITTEN IN HER ALBUM

Small service is true service while it lasts:
Of humblest Friends, bright Creature! scorn not one:
The Daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dew-drop from the Sun.

1834
LADY! a Pen (perhaps with thy regard,
Among the Favoured, favoured not the least)
Left, 'mid the Records of this Book inscribed,
Deliberate traces, registers of thought
And feeling, suited to the place and time
That gave them birth:—months passed, and still this hand,
That had not been too timid to imprint
Words which the virtues of thy Lord inspired,
Was yet not bold enough to write of Thee.
And why that scrupulous reserve? In sooth
The blameless cause lay in the Theme itself.
Flowers are there many that delight to strive
With the sharp wind, and seem to court the shower,
Yet are by nature careless of the sun
Whether he shine on them or not; and some,
Where'er he moves along the unclouded sky,
Turn a broad front full on his flattering beams:
Others do rather from their notice shrink,
Loving the dewy shade,—a humble band,
Modest and sweet, a progeny of earth,
Congenial with thy mind and character,
High-born Augusta!
Witness, Towers and Groves!

And Thou, wild Stream, that giv'st the honoured name
Of Lowther to this ancient Line, bear witness
From thy most secret haunts; and ye Parterres,
Which She is pleased and proud to call her own,
Witness how oft upon my noble Friend
Mute offerings, tribute from an inward sense
Of admiration and respectful love,
Have waited—till the affections could no more
Endure that silence, and broke out in song,
Snatches of music taken up and dropt
Like those self-solacing, those under, notes
Trilled by the redbreast, when autumnal leaves
Are thin upon the bough. Mine, only mine,
The pleasure was, and no one heard the praise,
Checked, in the moment of its issue, checked
And reprehended, by a fancied blush
From the pure qualities that called it forth.
Thus Virtue lives debarred from Virtue's meed;  
Thus, Lady, is retiredness a veil  
That, while it only spreads a softening charm  
O'er features looked at by discerning eyes,  
Hides half their beauty from the common gaze;  
And thus, even on the exposed and breezy hill  
Of lofty station, female goodness walks,  
When side by side with lunar gentleness,  
As in a cloister. Yet the grateful Poor  
(Such the immunities of low estate,  
Plain Nature's enviable privilege,  
Her sacred recompense for many wants)  
Open their hearts before Thee, pouring out  
All that they think and feel, with tears of joy;  
And benedictions not unheard in heaven:  
And friend in the ear of friend, where speech is free  
To follow truth, is eloquent as they.

Then let the Brook receive in these prompt lines  
A just memorial; and thine eyes consent  
To read that they, who mark thy course, behold  
A life declining with the golden light  
Of summer, in the season of sere leaves;  
See cheerfulness undamped by stealing Time;  
See studied kindness flow with easy stream,  
Illustrated with inborn courtesy;  
And an habitual disregard of self  
Balanced by vigilance for others' weal.

And shall the Verse not tell of lighter gifts  
With these ennobling attributes conjoined  
And blended, in peculiar harmony,  
By Youth's surviving spirit? What agile grace!  
A nymph-like liberty, in nymph-like form,  
Beheld with wonder; whether floor or path  
Thou tread; or sweep—borne on the managed steed—  
Fleet as the shadows, over down or field,  
Driven by strong winds at play among the clouds.

Yet one word more—one farewell word—a wish  
Which came, but it has passed into a prayer—  
That, as thy sun in brightness is declining,  
So—at an hour yet distant for their sakes  
Whose tender love, here faltering on the way  
Of a diviner love, will be forgiven—  
So may it set in peace, to rise again  
For everlasting glory won by faith.

1834
AMONG the dwellers in the silent fields
The natural heart is touched, and public way
And crowded street resound with ballad strains,
Inspired by one whose very name bespeaks
Favour divine, exalting human love;
Whom, since her birth on bleak Northumbria's coast,
Known unto few but prized as far as known,
A single Act endears to high and low
Through the whole land—to Manhood, moved in spite
Of the world's freezing cares—to generous Youth—
To Infancy, that lisps her praise—to Age
Whose eye reflects it, glistening through a tear
Of tremulous admiration. Such true fame
Awaits her now; but, verily, good deeds
Do no imperishable record find
Save in the rolls of heaven, where hers may live
A theme for angels, when they celebrate
The high-souled virtues which forgetful earth
Has witnessed. Oh! that winds and waves could speak
Of things which their united power called forth
From the pure depths of her humanity!
A Maiden gentle, yet, at duty's call,
Firm and unflinching, as the Lighthouse reared
On the Island-rock, her lonely dwelling-place;
Or like the invincible Rock itself that braves,
Age after age, the hostile elements,
As when it guarded holy Cuthbert's cell.

All night the storm had raged, nor ceased, nor paused,
When, as day broke, the Maid, through misty air,
Espies far off a Wreck, amid the surf,
Beating on one of those disastrous isles—
Half of a Vessel, half—no more; the rest
Had vanished, swallowed up with all that there
Had for the common safety striven in vain,
Or thither thronged for refuge. With quick glance
Daughter and Sire through optic-glass discern,
Clinging about the remnant of this Ship,
Creatures—how precious in the Maiden's sight!
For whom, belike, the old Man grieves still more
Than for their fellow-sufferers engulfed.
Where every parting agony is hushed,
And hope and fear mix not in further strife.
'But courage, Father! let us out to sea—
A few may yet be saved.' The Daughter's words,
Her earnest tone, and look beaming with faith,
Dispel the Father's doubts: nor do they lack
The noble-minded Mother's helping hand
To launch the boat; and with her blessing cheered,
And inwardly sustained by silent prayer,
Together they put forth, Father and Child!
Each grasps an oar, and struggling on they go—
Rivals in effort; and, alike intent
Here to elude and there surmount, they watch
The billows lengthening, mutually crossed
And shattered, and re-gathering their might;
As if the tumult, by the Almighty's will
Were, in the conscious sea, roused and prolonged
That woman's fortitude—so tried, so proved—
May brighten more and more!

True to the mark,
They stem the current of that perilous gorge,
Their arms still strengthening with the strengthening heart,
Though danger, as the Wreck is near'd, becomes
More imminent. Not unseen do they approach;
And rapture, with varieties of fear
Incessantly conflicting, thrills the frames
Of those who, in that dauntless energy,
Foretaste deliverance; but the least perturbed
Can scarcely trust his eyes, when he perceives
That of the pair—tossed on the waves to bring
Hope to the hopeless, to the dying, life—
One is a Woman, a poor earthly sister,
Or, be the Visitant other than she seems,
A guardian Spirit sent from pitying Heaven,
In woman's shape. But why prolong the tale,
Casting weak words amid a host of thoughts
Armed to repel them? Every hazard faced
And difficulty mastered, with resolve
That no one breathing should be left to perish,
This last remainder of the crew are all
Placed in the little boat, then o'er the deep
Are safely borne, landed upon the beach,
And, in fulfilment of God's mercy, lodged
Within the sheltering Lighthouse.—Shout, ye Waves!
Send forth a song of triumph. Waves and Winds,
Exult in this deliverance wrought through faith
In Him whose Providence your rage hath served!
Ye screaming Sea-mews, in the concert join!
And would that some immortal Voice—a Voice
Fitly attuned to all that gratitude
Breathes out from floor or couch, through pallid lips
Of the survivors—to the clouds might bear—
Blended with praise of that parental love,
Beneath whose watchful eye the Maiden grew
Pious and pure, modest and yet so brave,
Though young so wise, though meek so resolute—
Might carry to the clouds and to the stars,
Yea, to celestial Choirs, Grace Darling's name!

XX
THE RUSSIAN FUGITIVE

PART I

ENOUGH of rose-bud lips, and eyes
Like harebells bathed in dew,
Of cheek that with carnation vies,
And veins of violet hue;
Earth wants not beauty that may scorn
A likening to frail flowers;
Yea, to the stars, if they were born
For seasons and for hours.

Through Moscow's gates, with gold unbarred,
Stepped One at dead of night,
Whom such high beauty could not guard
From meditated blight;
By stealth she passed, and fled as fast
As doth the hunted fawn,
Nor stopped, till in the dappling east
Appeared unwelcome dawn.

Seven days she lurked in brake and field,
Seven nights her course renewed,
Sustained by what her scrip might yield,
Or berries of the wood;
At length, in darkness travelling on,
When lowly doors were shut,
The haven of her hope she won,
Her Foster-mother's hut.
'To put your love to dangerous proof
I come,' said she, 'from far;
For I have left my Father's roof,
In terror of the Czar.'
No answer did the Matron give,
No second look she cast,
But hung upon the Fugitive,
Embracing and embraced.

She led the Lady to a seat
Beside the glimmering fire,
Bathed duteously her wayworn feet,
Prevented each desire:
The cricket chirped, the house-dog dosed,
And on that simple bed,
Where she in childhood had reposed,
Now rests her weary head.

When she, whose couch had been the sod,
Whose curtain pine or thorn,
Had breathed a sigh of thanks to God,
Who comforts the forlorn;
While over her the Matron bent
Sleep sealed her eyes, and stole
Feeling from limbs with travel spent,
And trouble from the soul.

Refreshed, the Wanderer rose at morn,
And soon again was dight
In those unworthy vestments worn
Through long and perilous flight;
And 'O beloved Nurse,' she said,
'My thanks with silent tears
Have unto Heaven and You been paid:
Now listen to my fears!

'Have you forgot'—and here she smiled—
'The babbling flatteries
You lavished on me when a child
Disporting round your knees?
I was your lambkin, and your bird,
Your star, your gem, your flower;
Light words, that were more lightly heard
In many a cloudless hour!'
The blossom you so fondly praised
Is come to bitter fruit;
A mighty One upon me gazed;
I spurned his lawless suit,
And must be hidden from his wrath:
You, Foster-father dear,
Will guide me in my forward path;
I may not tarry here!

'I cannot bring to utter woe
Your proved fidelity.'—
'Dear Child, sweet Mistress, say not so!
For you we both would die.'
'Nay, nay, I come with semblance feigned
And cheek embrowned by art;
Yet, being inwardly unstained,
With courage will depart.'

'But whither would you, could you, flee?
A poor Man's counsel take;
The Holy Virgin gives to me
A thought for your dear sake;
Rest, shielded by our Lady's grace,
And soon shall you be led
Forth to a safe abiding-place,
Where never foot doth tread.'

PART II

The dwelling of this faithful pair
In a straggling village stood,
For One who breathed unquiet air
A dangerous neighbourhood;
But wide around lay forest ground
With thickets rough and blind;
And pine-trees made a heavy shade
Impervious to the wind.

And there, sequestered from the sight,
Was spread a treacherous swamp,
On which the noonday sun shed light
As from a lonely lamp;
And midway in the unsafe morass,
A single Island rose
Of firm dry ground, with healthful grass
Adorned, and shady boughs.
The Woodman knew, for such the craft
This Russian vassal plied,
That never fowler's gun, nor shaft
Of archer, there was tried;
A sanctuary seemed the spot
From all intrusion free;
And there he planned an artful Cot
For perfect secrecy.

With earnest pains unchecked by dread
Of Power's far-stretching hand,
The bold good Man his labour sped
At nature's pure command;
Heart-soothed, and busy as a wren,
While, in a hollow nook,
She moulds her sight-eluding den
Above a murmuring brook.

His task accomplished to his mind,
The twain ere break of day
Creep forth, and through the forest wind
Their solitary way;
Few words they speak, nor dare to slack
Their pace from mile to mile,
Till they have crossed the quaking marsh,
And reached the lonely Isle.

The sun above the pine-trees showed
A bright and cheerful face;
And Ina looked for her abode,
The promised hiding-place;
She sought in vain, the Woodman smiled;
No threshold could be seen,
Nor roof, nor window;—all seemed wild
As it had ever been.

Advancing, you might guess an hour,
The front with such nice care
Is masked, 'if house it be or bower,'
But in they entered are;
As shaggy as were wall and roof
With branches intertwined,
So smooth was all within, air-proof,
And delicately lined:
And hearth was there, and maple dish,  
And cups in seemly rows,  
And couch—all ready to a wish  
For nurture or repose;  
And Heaven doth to her virtue grant  
That there she may abide  
In solitude, with every want  
By cautious love supplied.

No queen before a shouting crowd  
Led on in bridal state,  
E'er struggled with a heart so proud,  
Entering her palace gate;  
Rejoiced to bid the world farewell,  
No saintly anchoress  
E'er took possession of her cell  
With deeper thankfulness.

'Father of all, upon thy care  
And mercy am I thrown;  
Be thou my safeguard!'—such her prayer  
When she was left alone,  
Kneeling amid the wilderness  
When joy had passed away,  
And smiles, fond efforts of distress  
To hide what they betray!

The prayer is heard, the Saints have seen,  
Diffused through form and face,  
Resolves devotedly serene;  
That monumental grace  
Of Faith, which doth all passions tame  
That Reason should control;  
And shows in the untrembling frame  
A statue of the soul.

PART III

'Tis sung in ancient minstrelsy  
That Phæbus wont to wear  
The leaves of any pleasant tree  
Around his golden hair;  
Till Daphne, desperate with pursuit  
Of his imperious love,  
At her own prayer transformed, took root,  
A laurel in the grove.
Then did the Penitent adorn
His brow with laurel green;
And 'mid his bright locks never shorn
No meaner leaf was seen;
And poets sage, through every age,
About their temples wound
The bay; and conquerors thanked the Gods,
With laurel chaplets crowned.

Into the mists of fabling Time
So far runs back the praise
Of Beauty, that disdains to climb
Along forbidden ways;
That scorns temptation; power defies
Where mutual love is not;
And to the tomb for rescue flies
When life would be a blot.

To this fair Votaress a fate
More mild doth Heaven ordain
Upon her Island desolate;
And words, not breathed in vain,
Might tell what intercourse she found,
Her silence to endear;
What birds she tamed, what flowers the ground
Sent forth her peace to cheer.

To one mute Presence, above all,
Her soothed affections clung,
A picture on the cabin wall
By Russian usage hung—
The Mother-maid, whose countenance bright
With love abridged the day;
And, communed with by taper-light,
Chased spectral fears away.

And oft, as either Guardian came,
The joy in that retreat
Might any common friendship shame,
So high their hearts would beat;
And to the lone Recluse, whate'er
They brought, each visiting
Was like the crowding of the year
With a new burst of spring.
THE RUSSIAN FUGITIVE

But when she of her Parents thought,
    The pang was hard to bear;
And, if with all things not enwrought,
    That trouble still is near.
Before her flight she had not dared
    Their constancy to prove,
Too much the heroic Daughter feared
    The weakness of their love.

Dark is the past to them, and dark
    The future still must be,
Till pitying Saints conduct her bark
    Into a safer sea—
Or gentle Nature close her eyes,
    And set her Spirit free
From the altar of this sacrifice,
    In vestal purity.

Yet, when above the forest-glooms
    The white swans southward passed,
High as the pitch of their swift plumes
    Her fancy rode the blast;
And bore her toward the fields of France,
    Her Father's native land,
To mingle in the rustic dance,
    The happiest of the band!

Of those belovèd fields she oft
    Had heard her Father tell
In phrase that now with echoes soft
    Haunted her lonely cell;
She saw the hereditary bowers,
    She heard the ancestral stream;
The Kremlin and its haughty towers
    Forgotten like a dream!

PART IV

The ever-changing Moon had traced
    Twelve times her monthly round,
When through the unfrequented Waste
    Was heard a startling sound;
A shout thrice sent from one who chased
    At speed a wounded deer,
Bounding through branches interlaced,
    And where the wood was clear.
The fainting creature took the marsh,  
And toward the Island fled,  
While plovers screamed with tumult harsh  
Above his antlered head;  
This, Ina saw; and, pale with fear,  
Shrank to her citadel;  
The desperate deer rushed on, and near  
The tangled covert fell.

Across the marsh, the game in view,  
The Hunter followed fast,  
Nor paused, till o'er the stag he blew  
A death-proclaiming blast;  
Then, resting on her upright mind,  
Came forth the Maid—'In me  
Behold,' she said, 'a stricken Hind  
Pursued by destiny!

'From your deportment, Sir! I deem  
That you have worn a sword,  
And will not hold in light esteem  
A suffering woman's word;  
There is my covert, there perchance  
I might have lain concealed,  
My fortunes hid, my countenance  
Not even to you revealed.

'Tears might be shed, and I might pray,  
Crouching and terrified,  
That what has been unveiled to-day,  
You would in mystery hide;  
But I will not defile with dust  
The knee that bends to adore  
The God in heaven;—attend, be just;  
This ask I, and no more!

'I speak not of the winter's cold  
For summer's heat exchanged,  
While I have lodged in this rough hold,  
From social life estranged;  
Nor yet of trouble and alarms:  
High Heaven is my defence;  
And every season has soft arms  
For injured Innocence.
‘From Moscow to the Wilderness
It was my choice to come,
Lest virtue should be harbourless,
And honour want a home;
And happy were I, if the Czar
Retain his lawless will,
To end life here like this poor deer,
Or a lamb on a green hill.’

‘Are you the Maid,’ the Stranger cried,
‘From Gallic parents sprung,
Whose vanishing was rumoured wide,
Sad theme for every tongue;
Who foiled an Emperor’s eager quest?
You, Lady, forced to wear
These rude habiliments, and rest
Your head in this dark lair!’

But wonder, pity, soon were quelled;
And in her face and mien
The soul’s pure brightness he beheld
Without a veil between:
He loved, he hoped,—a holy flame
Kindled ’mid rapturous tears;
The passion of a moment came
As on the wings of years.

‘Such bounty is no gift of chance,’
Exclaimed he: ‘righteous Heaven,
Preparing your deliverance,
To me the charge hath given.
The Czar full oft in words and deeds
Is stormy and self-willed;
But, when the Lady Catherine pleads,
His violence is stilled.

‘Leave open to my wish the course,
And I to her will go;
From that humane and heavenly source
Good, only good, can flow.’
Faint sanction given, the Cavalier
Was eager to depart,
Though question followed question, dear
To the Maiden’s filial heart.
Light was his step,—his hopes, more light,
Kept pace with his desires;
And the fifth morning gave him sight
Of Moscow's glittering spires.
He sued:—heart-smitten by the wrong,
To the lorn Fugitive
The Emperor sent a pledge as strong
As sovereign power could give.

O more than mighty change! If e'er
Amazement rose to pain,
And joy's excess produced a fear
Of something void and vain;
'Twas when the Parents, who had mourned
So long the lost as dead,
Beheld their only Child returned
The household floor to tread.

Soon gratitude gave way to love
Within the Maiden's breast;
Delivered and Deliverer move
In bridal garments drest;
Meek Catherine had her own reward;
The Czar bestowed a dower;
And universal Moscow shared
The triumph of that hour.

Flowers strewed the ground; the nuptial feast
Was held with costly state;
And there, 'mid many a noble guest,
The Foster-parents sate;
Encouraged by the imperial eye,
They shrank not into shade;
Great was their bliss, the honour high
To them and nature paid!

1830
INSCRIPTIONS

I
IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON, THE SEAT OF SIR GEORGE
BEAUMONT, BART., LEICESTERSHIRE
1808

THE embowering rose, the acacia, and the pine,
Will not unwillingly their place resign;
If but the Cedar thrive that near them stands,
Planted by Beaumont's and by Wordsworth's hands.
One wooed the silent Art with studious pains:
These groves have heard the Other's pensive strains;
Devoted thus, their spirits did unite
By interchange of knowledge and delight.
May Nature's kindliest powers sustain the Tree,
And Love protect it from all injury!
And when its potent branches, wide out-thrown,
Darken the brow of this memorial Stone,
Here may some Painter sit in future days,
Some future Poet meditate his lays;
Not mindless of that distant age renowned
When Inspiration hovered o'er this ground,
The haunt of him who sang how spear and shield
In civil conflict met on Bosworth-field;
And of that famous Youth, full soon removed
From earth, perhaps by Shakespeare's self approved,
Fletcher's Associate, Jonson's Friend beloved.

II

IN A GARDEN OF THE SAME

OFT is the medal faithful to its trust
When temples, columns, towers, are laid in dust;
And 'tis a common ordinance of fate
That things obscure and small outlive the great:
Hence, when yon mansion and the flowery trim
Of this fair garden, and its alleys dim,
And all its stately trees, are passed away,
This little Niche, unconscious of decay,
Perchance may still survive. And be it known
That it was scooped within the living stone,—
Not by the sluggish and ungrateful pains
Of labourer plodding for his daily gains,
But by an industry that wrought in love;
With help from female hands, that proudly strove
To aid the work, what time these walks and bowers
Were shaped to cheer dark winter's lonely hours.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

III

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART., AND
IN HIS NAME, FOR AN URN, PLACED BY HIM AT THE TERMINA-
TION OF A NEWLY-PLANTED AVENUE, IN THE SAME GROUNDS

Y E Lime-trees, ranged before this hallowed Urn,
Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's return;
And be not slow a stately growth to rear
Of pillars, branching off from year to year,
Till they have learned to frame a darksome aisle;—
That may recall to mind that awful Pile
Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's noblest dead,
In the last sanctity of fame is laid.
—There, though by right the excelling Painter sleep
Where Death and Glory a joint sabbath keep,
Yet not the less his Spirit would hold dear
Self-hidden praise, and Friendship's private tear:
Hence, on my patrimonial grounds, have I
Raised this frail tribute to his memory;
From youth a zealous follower of the Art
That he professed; attached to him in heart;
Admiring, loving, and with grief and pride
Feeling what England lost when Reynolds died.

1811

IV

FOR A SEAT IN THE GROVES OF COLEORTON

B ENEATH you eastern ridge, the craggy bound,
Rugged and high, of Charnwood's forest ground,
Stand yet, but, Stranger! hidden from thy view,
The ivied Ruins of forlorn Grace Dieu;
Erst a religious House, which day and night
With hymns resounded, and the chanted rite:
And when those rites had ceased, the Spot gave birth
To honourable Men of various worth:
There, on the margin of a streamlet wild,
Did Francis Beaumont sport, an eager child;
There, under shadow of the neighbouring rocks,
Sang youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks;
Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,
Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy dreams
Of slighted love, and scorn, and jealous rage.
With which his genius shook the buskined stage.
Communities are lost, and Empires die,
And things of holy use unhallowed lie;
They perish;—but the Intellect can raise,
From airy words alone, a Pile that ne’er decays.

Nov. 19, 1811

V

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL UPON A STONE IN THE WALL OF THE HOUSE (AN OUT-HOUSE), ON THE ISLAND AT GRASMERE

Rude is this Edifice, and Thou hast seen
Buildings, albeit rude, that have maintained
Proportions more harmonious, and approached
To closer fellowship with ideal grace.
But take it in good part:—alas! the poor
Vitruvius of our village had no help
From the great City; never, upon leaves
Of red Morocco folio, saw displayed,
In long succession, pre-existing ghosts
Of Beauties yet unborn—the rustic Lodge
Antique, and Cottage with verandah graced,
Nor lacking, for fit company, alcove,
Green-house, shell-grot, and moss-lined hermitage.
Thou see’st a homely Pile, yet to these walls
The heifer comes in the snow-storm, and here
The new-dropped lamb finds shelter from the wind.
And hither does one Poet sometimes row
His pinnace, a small vagrant barge, up-piled
With plenteous store of heath and withered fern,
(A lading which he with his sickle cuts,
Among the mountains) and beneath this roof
He makes his summer couch, and here at noon
Spreads out his limbs, while, yet unshorn, the Sheep,
Panting beneath the burthen of their wool,
Lie round him, even as if they were a part
Of his own Household: nor, while from his bed
He looks, through the open door-place, toward the lake
And to the stirring breezes, does he want
Creations lovely as the work of sleep—
Fair sights, and visions of romantic joy!

VI
WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL ON A STONE, ON THE SIDE OF
THE MOUNTAIN OF BLACK COMB

STAY, bold Adventurer; rest awhile thy limbs
On this commodious Seat! for much remains
Of hard ascent before thou reach the top
Of this huge Eminence,—from blackness named,
And, to far-travelled storms of sea and land,
A favourite spot of tournament and war!
But thee may no such boisterous visitants
Molest; may gentle breezes fan thy brow;
And neither cloud conceal, nor misty air
Bedim, the grand terraqueous spectacle,
From centre to circumference, unveiled!
Know, if thou grudge not to prolong thy rest,
That on the summit whither thou art bound,
A geographic Labourer pitched his tent,
With books supplied and instruments of art,
To measure height and distance; lonely task,
Week after week pursued!—To him was given
Full many a glimpse (but sparingly bestowed
On timid man) of Nature's processes
Upon the exalted hills. He made report
That once, while there he plied his studious work
Within that canvass Dwelling, colours, lines,
And the whole surface of the out-spread map,
Became invisible: for all around
Had darkness fallen—unthreatened, unproclaimed—
As if the golden day itself had been
Extinguished in a moment; total gloom,
In which he sate alone, with unclosed eyes,
Upon the blinded mountain's silent top!

VII
WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL UPON A STONE, THE LARGEST OF A
HEAP LYING NEAR A DESERTED QUARRY, UPON ONE OF THE
ISLANDS AT RYDAL

STRANGER! this hillock of mis-shapen stones
Is not a Ruin spared or made by time,
Nor, as perchance thou rashly deem'st, the Cairn
INSCRIPTIONS

Of some old British Chief: 'tis nothing more
Than the rude embryo of a little Dome
Or Pleasure-house, once destined to be built
Among the birch-trees of this rocky isle.
But, as it chanced, Sir William having learned
That from the shore a full-grown man might wade,
And make himself a freeman of this spot
At any hour he chose, the prudent Knight
Desisted, and the quarry and the mound
Are monuments of his unfinished task.
The block on which these lines are traced, perhaps,
Was once selected as the corner-stone
Of that intended Pile, which would have been
Some quaint odd plaything of elaborate skill,
So that, I guess, the linnet and the thrush,
And other little builders who dwell here,
Had wondered at the work. But blame him not,
For old Sir William was a gentle Knight,
Bred in this vale, to which he appertained
With all his ancestry. Then peace to him,
And for the outrage which he had devised
Entire forgiveness!—But if thou art one
On fire with thy impatience to become
An inmate of these mountains,—if, disturbed
By beautiful conceptions, thou hast hewn
Out of the quiet rock the elements
Of thy trim Mansion destined soon to blaze
In snow-white splendour,—think again; and, taught
By old Sir William and his quarry, leave
Thy fragments to the bramble and the rose;
There let the vernal slow-worm sun himself,
And let the redbreast hop from stone to stone.

VIII

IN these fair vales hath many a Tree
At Wordsworth's suit been spared;
And from the builder's hand this Stone,
For some rude beauty of its own,
Was rescued by the Bard:
So let it rest; and time will come
When here the tender-hearted
May heave a gentle sigh for him,
As one of the departed.

1830
IX

THE massy Ways, carried across these heights
By Roman perseverance, are destroyed,
Or hidden under ground, like sleeping worms.
How venture then to hope that Time will spare
This humble Walk? Yet on the mountain's side
A Poet's hand first shaped it; and the steps
Of that same Bard—repeated to and fro
At morn, at noon, and under moonlight skies
Through the vicissitudes of many a year—
Forbade the weeds to creep o'er its grey line.
No longer, scattering to the heedless winds
The vocal raptures of fresh poesy,
Shall he frequent these precincts; locked no more
In earnest converse with beloved Friends,
Here will he gather stores of ready bliss,
As from the beds and borders of a garden
Choice flowers are gathered! But, if Power may spring
Out of a farewell yearning—favoured more
Than kindred wishes mated suitably
With vain regrets—the Exile would consign
This Walk, his loved possession, to the care
Of those pure Minds that reverence the Muse.

X

INSCRIPTIONS SUPPOSED TO BE FOUND IN AND NEAR A HERMIT'S CELL

1818

I

H O P E S what are they?—Beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass;
Or a spider's web adorning
In a strait and treacherous pass.

What are fears but voices airy?
Whispering harm where harm is not;
And deluding the unwary
Till the fatal bolt is shot!

What is glory?—in the socket
See how dying tapers fare!
What is pride?—a whizzing rocket
That would emulate a star.

1826
What is friendship?—do not trust her,
Nor the vows which she has made;
Diamonds dart their brightest lustre
From a palsy-shaken head.

What is truth?—a staff rejected;
Duty?—an unwelcome clog;
Joy?—a moon by fits reflected
In a swamp or watery bog;

Bright, as if through ether steering,
To the Traveller's eye it shone:
He hath hailed it re-appearing—
And as quickly it is gone;

Such is Joy—as quickly hidden,
Or mis-shapen to the sight,
And by sullen weeds forbidden
To resume its native light.

What is youth?—a dancing billow,
(Winds behind, and rocks before!)
Age?—a drooping, tottering willow
On a flat and lazy shore.

What is peace?—when pain is over,
And love ceases to rebel,
Let the last faint sigh discover
That precedes the passing-knell!

XI
INSCRIBED UPON A ROCK

PAUSE, Traveller! whosoe'er thou be
Whom chance may lead to this retreat,
Where silence yields reluctantly
Even to the fleecy straggler's bleat;

Give voice to what my hand shall trace,
And fear not lest an idle sound
Of words unsuited to the place
Disturb its solitude profound.

I saw this Rock, while vernal air
Blew softly o'er the russet heath,
Uphold a Monument as fair
As church or abbey furnisheth.
Unsullied did it meet the day,
Like marble, white, like ether, pure;
As if, beneath, some hero lay,
Honoured with costliest sepulture.

My fancy kindled as I gazed;
And, ever as the sun shone forth,
The flattered structure glistened, blazed,
And seemed the proudest thing on earth.

But frost had reared the gorgeous Pile
Unsound as those which Fortune builds—
To undermine with secret guile,
Sapped by the very beam that gilds.

And, while I gazed, with sudden shock
Fell the whole Fabric to the ground;
And naked left this dripping Rock,
With shapeless ruin spread around!

XII

III

HAST thou seen, with flash incessant,
Bubbles gliding under ice,
Bodied forth and evanescent,
No one knows by what device?

Such are thoughts!—A wind-swept meadow
Mimicking a troubled sea,
Such is life; and death a shadow
From the rock eternity!

XIII

NEAR THE SPRING OF THE HERMITAGE

IV

TROUBLED long with warring notions
Long impatient of thy rod,
I resign my soul's emotions
Unto Thee, mysterious God!

What avails the kindly shelter
Yielded by this craggy rent,
If my spirit toss and welter
On the waves of discontent?
Parching Summer hath no warrant
To consume this crystal Well;
Rains, that make each rill a torrent,
Neither sully it nor swell.

Thus, dishonouring not her station,
Would my Life present to Thee,
Gracious God, the pure oblation
Of divine tranquillity!

XIV

V

O T seldom, clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the Morn;
Not seldom Evening in the west
Sinks smilingly forsworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove,
To the confiding Bark, untrue;
And, if she trust the stars above,
They can be treacherous too.

The umbrageous Oak, in pomp outspread,
Full oft, when storms the welkin rend,
Draws lightning down upon the head
It promised to defend.

But Thou art true, incarnate Lord,
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die;
Thy smile is sure, thy plighted word
No change can falsify!

I bent before thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace on suppliant knee;
And peace was given,—nor peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstasy!

1818

XV

FOR THE SPOT WHERE THE HERMITAGE STOOD ON ST. HERBERT'S
ISLAND, DERWENT-WATER

If thou in the dear love of some one Friend
Hast been so happy that thou know'st what thoughts
Will sometimes in the happiness of love
Make the heart sink, then wilt thou reverence
This quiet spot; and, Stranger! not unmoved
Wilt thou behold this shapeless heap of stones,
The desolate ruins of St. Herbert's Cell.
Here stood his threshold; here was spread the roof
That sheltered him, a self-secluded Man,
After long exercise in social cares
And offices humane, intent to adore
The Deity, with undistracted mind,
And meditate on everlasting things,
In utter solitude.—But he had left
A Fellow-labourer, whom the good Man loved
As his own soul. And, when with eye upraised
To heaven he knelt before the crucifix,
While o'er the lake the cataract of Lodore
Pealed to his orisons, and when he paced
Along the beach of this small isle and thought
Of his Companion, he would pray that both
(Now that their earthly duties were fulfilled)
Might die in the same moment. Nor in vain
So prayed he:—as our chronicles report.
Though here the Hermit numbered his last day
Far from St. Cuthbert his beloved Friend,
Those holy Men both died in the same hour.

1800

XVI

ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY STREAM

Behold an emblem of our human mind
Crowded with thoughts that need a settled home,
Yet, like to eddying balls of foam
Within this whirlpool, they each other chase
Round and round, and neither find
An outlet nor a resting-place!
 Stranger, if such disquietude be thine,
Fall on thy knees and sue for help divine.

Published 1850
THE PRIORESS' TALE

SELECTIONS FROM CHAUCER
MODERNISED

I

THE PRIORESS' TALE

'Call up him who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold.'

In the following Poem no further deviation from the original has been made
than was necessary for the fluent reading and instant understanding of the
Author; so much, however, is the language altered since Chaucer's time,
especially in pronunciation, that much was to be removed, and its place
supplied with as little incongruity as possible. The ancient accent has been
retained in a few conjunctions, as also and alway, from a conviction that
such sprinklings of antiquity would be admitted, by persons of taste, to
have a graceful accordance with the subject. The fierce bigotry of the
Priorees forms a fine background for her tender-hearted sympathies with
the Mother and Child; and the mode in which the story is told amply
atones for the extravagance of the miracle.

I

'O LORD, our Lord! how wondrously,' (quoth she)
'Thy name in this large world is spread abroad!
For not alone by men of dignity
Thy worship is performed and precious laud;
But by the mouths of children, gracious God!
Thy goodness is set forth; they when they lie
Upon the breast thy name do glorify.

II

'Wherefore in praise, the worthiest that I may,
Jesu! of thee, and the white Lily-flower
Which did thee bear, and is a Maid for aye,
To tell a story I will use my power;
Not that I may increase her honour's dower,
For she herself is honour, and the root
Of goodness, next her Son, our soul's best boot.

III

'O Mother Maid! O Maid and Mother free!
O bush unburnt! burning in Moses' sight!
That down didst ravish from the Deity,
Through humbleness, the spirit that did alight
Upon thy heart, whence, through that glory's might,
Conceivèd was the Father's sapience,
Help me to tell it in thy reverence!

IV

'Lady! thy goodness, thy magnificence,
Thy virtue, and thy great humility,
Surpass all science and all utterance;
For sometimes, Lady! ere men pray to thee
Thou goest before in thy benignity,
The light to us vouchsafing of thy prayer,
To be our guide unto thy Son so dear.

V

'My knowledge is so weak, O blissful Queen!
To tell abroad thy mighty worthiness,
That I the weight of it may not sustain;
But as a child of twelvemonths old or less,
That laboureth his language to express,
Even so fare I; and therefore, I thee pray,
Guide thou my song which I of thee shall say.

VI

'There was in Asia, in a mighty town,
'Mong Christian folk, a street where Jews might be,
Assigned to them and given them for their own
By a great Lord, for gain and usury,
Hateful to Christ and to his company;
And through this street who list might ride and wend;
Free was it, and unbarred at either end.

VII

'A little school of Christian people stood
Down at the farther end, in which there were
A nest of children come of Christian blood,
That learned in that school from year to year
Such sort of doctrine as men used there,
That is to say, to sing and read also,
As little children in their childhood do.

VIII

'Among these children was a Widow's son,
A little scholar, scarcely seven years old,
Who day by day unto this school hath gone,
And eke, when he the image did behold
Of Jesu's Mother, as he had been told,
This Child was wont to kneel adown and say
Ave Marie, as he goeth by the way.
IX
‘This Widow thus her little Son hath taught
Our blissful Lady, Jesu’s Mother dear,
To worship aye, and he forgat it not;
For simple infant hath a ready ear.
Sweet is the holiness of youth: and hence,
Calling to mind this matter when I may,
Saint Nicholas in my presence standeth aye,
For he so young to Christ did reverence.

X
‘This little Child, while in the school he sate
His Primer conning with an earnest cheer,
The whilst the rest their anthem-book repeat
The Alma Redemptoris did he hear;
And as he durst he drew him near and near,
And hearkened to the words and to the note,
Till the first verse he learned it all by rote.

XI
‘This Latin knew he nothing what it said,
For he too tender was of age to know;
But to his comrade he repaired, and prayed
That he the meaning of this song would show,
And unto him declare why men sing so;
This oftentimes, that he might be at ease,
This child did him beseech on his bare knees.

XII
‘His Schoolfellow, who elder was than he,
Answered him thus:—“This song, I have heard say,
Was fashioned for our blissful Lady free;
Her to salute, and also her to pray
To be our help upon our dying day:
If there is more in this, I know it not;
Song do I learn,—small grammar I have got.”

XIII
“‘And is this song fashioned in reverence
Of Jesu’s Mother?’ said this Innocent;
“Now, certès, I will use my diligence
To con it all ere Christmas-tide be spent;
Although I for my Primer shall be shent,
And shall be beaten three times in an hour,
Our Lady I will praise with all my power.”
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

XIV

'His Schoolfellow, whom he had so besought,
As they went homeward taught him privily
And then he sang it well and fearlessly,
From word to word according to the note:
Twice in a day it passèd through his throat;
Homeward and schoolward whensoever he went,
On Jesu's Mother fixed was his intent.

XV

'Through all the Jewry (this before said I)
This little Child, as he came to and fro,
Full merrily then would he sing and cry,
O Alma Redemptoris! high and low:
The sweetness of Christ's Mother piercèd so
His heart, that her to praise, to her to pray,
He cannot stop his singing by the way.

XVI

'The Serpent, Satan, our first foe, that hath
His wasp's nest in Jew's heart, upswelled—"O woe,
O Hebrew people!" said he in his wrath,
"Is it an honest thing? Shall this be so?
That such a Boy where'er he lists shall go
In your despite, and sings his hymns and saws,
Which is against the reverence of our laws!"

XVII

'From that day forward have the Jews conspired
Out of the world this Innocent to chase;
And to this end a Homicide they hired,
That in an alley had a privy place,
And, as the Child 'gan to the school to pace,
This cruel Jew him seized, and held him fast
And cut his throat, and in a pit him cast.

XVIII

'I say that him into a pit they threw,
A loathsome pit, whence noisome scents exhale;
O cursed folk! away, ye Herods new!
What may your ill intentions you avail?
Murder will out; certèst it will not fail;
Know, that the honour of high God may spread,
The blood cries out on your accursèd deed.
XIX

'O Martyr 'stablished in virginity!
Now may'st thou sing for aye before the throne,
Following the Lamb celestial,' quoth she,
'Of which the great Evangelist, Saint John,
In Patmos wrote, who saith of them that go
Before the Lamb singing continually,
That never fleshly woman they did know.

XX

'Now this poor widow waiteth all that night
After her little Child, and he came not;
For which, by earliest glimpse of morning light,
With face all pale with dread and busy thought,
She at the School and elsewhere him hath sought,
Until thus far she learned, that he had been
In the Jew's street, and there he last was seen.

XXI

'With Mother's pity in her breast enclosed
She goeth, as she were half out of her mind,
To every place wherein she hath supposed
By likelihood her little Son to find;
And ever on Christ's Mother meek and kind
She cried, till to the Jewry she was brought,
And him among the accursed Jews she sought.

XXII

'She asketh, and she piteously doth pray
To every Jew that dwelleth in that place
To tell her if her child had passed that way;
They all said—Nay; but Jesu of his grace
Gave to her thought, that in a little space
She for her Son in that same spot did cry
Where he was cast into a pit hard by.

XXIII

'O thou great God that dost perform thy laud
By mouths of Innocents, lo! here thy might;
This gem of chastity, this emerald,
And eke of martyrdom this ruby bright,
There, where with mangled throat he lay upright,
The Alma Redemptoris 'gan to sing
So loud, that with his voice the place did ring.
'The Christian folk that through the Jewry went
Come to the spot in wonder at the thing;
And hastily they for the Provost sent;
Immediately he came, not tarrying,
And praiseth Christ that is our heavenly King,
And eke his Mother, honour of Mankind:
Which done, he bade that they the Jews should bind.

'This Child with piteous lamentation then
Was taken up, singing his song alway;
And with procession great and pomp of men
To the next Abbey him they bare away;
His Mother swooning by the body lay:
And scarcely could the people that were near
Remove this second Rachel from the bier.

'Torrent and shameful death to every one
This Provost doth for those bad Jews prepare
That of this murder wist, and that anon:
Such wickedness his judgments cannot spare;
Who will do evil, evil shall he bear;
Them therefore with wild horses did he draw,
And after that he hung them by the law.

'Upon his bier this Innocent doth lie
Before the altar while the Mass doth last:
The Abbot with his convent's company
Then sped themselves to bury him full fast;
And, when they holy water on him cast,
Yet spake this Child when sprinkled was the water;
And sang, O Alma Redemptoris Mater!

'This Abbot, for he was a holy man,
As all Monks are, or surely ought to be,
In supplication to the Child began
Thus saying, "O dear Child! I summon thee
In virtue of the holy Trinity
Tell me the cause why thou dost sing this hymn,
Since that thy throat is cut, as it doth seem."
“‘My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,’”
Said this young Child, “and by the law of kind
I should have died, yea many hours ago;
But Jesus Christ, as in the books ye find,
Will that his glory last, and be in mind;
And, for the worship of his Mother dear,
Yet may I sing, O Alma! loud and clear.

‘This well of mercy, Jesu’s Mother sweet,
After my knowledge I have loved alway;
And in the hour when I my death did meet
To me she came, and thus to me did say,
‘Thou in thy dying sing this holy lay,’
As ye have heard; and soon as I had sung
Methought she laid a grain upon my tongue.

‘Wherefore I sing, nor can from song refrain,
In honour of that blissful Maiden free,
Till from my tongue off-taken is the grain;
And after that thus said she unto me;
‘My little Child, then will I come for thee
Soon as the grain from off thy tongue they take:
Be not dismayed, I will not thee forsake!’”

‘This holy Monk, this Abbot—him mean I,
Touched then his tongue, and took away the grain;
And he gave up the ghost full peacefully;
And, when the Abbot had this wonder seen,
His salt tears trickled down like showers of rain;
And on his face he dropped upon the ground,
And still he lay as if he had been bound.

‘Eke the whole Convent on the pavement lay,
Weeping and praising Jesu’s Mother dear;
And after that they rose, and took their way,
And lifted up this Martyr from the bier,
And in a tomb of precious marble clear
Enclosed his uncorrupted body sweet.—
Where’er he be, God grant us him to meet!
'Young Hew of Lincoln! in like sort laid low
By cursed Jews—thing well and widely known,
For it was done a little while ago—
Pray also thou for us, while here we tarry
Weak sinful folk, that God, with pitying eye,
In mercy would his mercy multiply
On us, for reverence of his Mother Mary!' 1801

II

THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE

I

The God of Love—ah, benedicite!
How mighty and how great a Lord is he!
For he of low hearts can make high, of high
He can make low, and unto death bring nigh;
And hard hearts he can make them kind and free.

II

Within a little time, as hath been found,
He can make sick folk whole and fresh and sound:
Them who are whole in body and in mind,
He can make sick,—bind can he and unbind
All that he will have bound, or have unbound.

III

To tell his might my wit may not suffice;
Foolish men he can make them out of wise;—
For he may do all that he will devise;
Loose livers he can make abate their vice,
And proud hearts can make tremble in a trice.

IV

In brief, the whole of what he will, he may;
Against him dare not any wight say nay;
To humble or afflict whome'er he will,
To gladden or to grieve, he hath like skill;
But most his might he sheds on the eve of May.
For every true heart, gentle heart and free,
That with him is, or thinketh so to be,
Now against May shall have some stirring—whether
To joy, or be it to some mourning; never!
At other time, methinks, in like degree.

For now when they may hear the small birds' song,
And see the budding leaves the branches throng,
This unto their remembrance doth bring
All kinds of pleasure mix'd with sorrowing;
And longing of sweet thoughts that ever long.

And of that longing heaviness doth come,
Whence oft great sickness grows of heart and home;
Sick are they all for lack of their desire;
And thus in May their hearts are set on fire,
So that they burn forth in great martyrdom.

In sooth, I speak from feeling, what though now
Old am I, and to genial pleasure slow;
Yet have I felt of sickness through the May,
Both hot and cold, and heart-aches every day,—
How hard, alas! to bear, I only know.

Such shaking doth the fever in me keep
Through all this May that I have little sleep;
And also 'tis not likely unto me,
That any living heart should sleepy be
In which Love's dart its fiery point doth steep.

But tossing lately on a sleepless bed,
I of a token thought which Lovers heed;
How among them it was a common tale,
That it was good to hear the Nightingale,
Ere the vile Cuckoo's note be utter'd.
And then I thought anon as it was day,
I gladly would go somewhere to essay
If I perchance a Nightingale might hear,
For yet had I heard none, of all that year,
And it was then the third night of the May.

And soon as I a glimpse of day espied,
No longer would I in my bed abide,
But straightway to a wood that was hard by,
Forth did I go, alone and fearlessly,
And held the pathway down by a brook-side;

Till to a lawn I came all white and green,
I in so fair a one had never been.
The ground was green, with daisy powdered over;
Tall were the flowers, the grove a lofty cover,
All green and white; and nothing else was seen.

There sate I down among the fair fresh flowers,
And saw the birds come tripping from their bowers,
Where they had rested them all night; and they,
Who were so joyful at the light of day,
Began to honour May with all their powers.

Well did they know that service all by rote,
And there was many and many a lovely note,
Some, singing loud, as if they had complained;
Some with their notes another manner feigned;
And some did sing all out with the full throat.

They pruned themselves, and made themselves right gay,
Dancing and leaping light upon the spray;
And ever two and two together were,
The same as they had chosen for the year,
Upon Saint Valentine's returning day.
Meanwhile the stream, whose bank I sate upon,  
Was making such a noise as it ran on  
Accordant to the sweet Birds' harmony;  
Methought that it was the best melody  
Which ever to man's ear a passage won.

And for delight, but how I never wot,  
I in a slumber and a swoon was caught,  
Not all asleep and yet not waking wholly;  
And as I lay, the Cuckoo, bird unholy,  
Broke silence, or I heard him in my thought.

And that was right upon a tree fast by,  
And who was then ill satisfied but I?  
Now, God, quoth I, that died upon the rood,  
From thee and thy base throat, keep all that's good,  
Full little joy have I now of thy cry.

And, as I with the Cuckoo thus 'gan chide,  
In the next bush that was me fast beside,  
I heard the lusty Nightingale so sing,  
That her clear voice made a loud rioting,  
Echoing thorough all the green wood wide.

Ah! good sweet Nightingale! for my heart's cheer,  
Hence hast thou stayed a little while too long;  
For we have had the sorry Cuckoo here,  
And she hath been before thee with her song;  
Evil light on her! she hath done me wrong.

But hear you now a wondrous thing, I pray;  
As long as in that swooning-fit I lay,  
Methought I wist right well what these birds meant,  
And had good knowing both of their intent,  
And of their speech, and all that they would say.
xxiii

The Nightingale thus in my hearing spake:—
Good Cuckoo, seek some other bush or brake,
And, prithee, let us that can sing dwell here;
For every wight eschews thy song to hear,
Such uncouth singing verily dost thou make.

xxiv

What! quoth she then, what is 't that ails thee now?
It seems to me I sing as well as thou;
For mine's a song that is both true and plain,—
Although I cannot quaver so in vain
As thou dost in thy throat, I wot not how.

xxv

All men may understanding have of me,
But, Nightingale, so may they not of thee;
For thou hast many a foolish and quaint cry:—
Thou say'st Osee, Osee, then how may I
Have knowledge, I thee pray, what this may be?

xxvi

Ah, fool! quoth she, wist thou not what it is?
Oft as I say Osee, Osee, I wis,
Then mean I, that I should be wondrous fain
That shamefully they one and all were slain,
Whoever against Love mean aught amiss.

xxvii

And also would I that they all were dead,
Who do not think in love their life to lead;
For who is loth the God of Love to obey,
Is only fit to die, I dare well say,
And for that cause Osee I cry; take heed!

xxviii

Ay, quoth the Cuckoo, that is a quaint law,
That all must love or die; but I withdraw,
And take my leave of all such company,
For mine intent it neither is to die,
Nor ever while I live Love's yoke to draw.
For lovers, of all folk that be alive,
The most disquiet have and least do thrive;
Most feeling have of sorrow, woe and care,
And the least welfare cometh to their share;
What need is there against the truth to strive?

What! quoth she, thou art all out of thy mind,
That in thy churlishness a cause canst find
To speak of Love's true Servants in this mood;
For in this world no service is so good
To every wight that gentle is of kind.

For thereof comes all goodness and all worth;
All gentileless and honour thence come forth;
Thence worship comes, content and true heart's pleasure,
And full-assurèd trust, joy without measure,
And jollity, fresh cheerfulness, and mirth;

And bounty, lowliness, and courtesy,
And seemliness, and faithful company,
And dread of shame that will not do amiss;
For he that faithfully Love's servant is,
Rather than be disgraced, would chuse to die.

And that the very truth it is which I
Now say—in such belief I'll live and die;
And Cuckoo, do thou so, by my advice.
Then, quoth she, let me never hope for bliss,
If with that counsel I do e'er comply.

Good Nightingale! thou speakest wondrous fair,
Yet for all that, the truth is found elsewhere;
For Love in young folk is but rage, I wis;
And Love in old folk a great dotage is;
Who most it useth, him 'twill most impair.
XXXV
For thereof come all contraries to gladness;
Thence sickness comes, and overwhelming sadness,
Mistrust and jealousy, despite, debate,
Dishonour, shame, envy importunate,
Pride, anger, mischief, poverty, and madness.

XXXVI
Loving is aye an office of despair,
And one thing is therein which is not fair;
For whoso gets of love a little bliss,
Unless it alway stay with him, I wis
He may full soon go with an old man's hair.

XXXVII
And, therefore, Nightingale! do thou keep nigh,
For trust me well, in spite of thy quaint cry,
If long time from thy mate thou be, or far,
Thou 'lt be as others that forsaken are;
Then shalt thou raise a clamour as do I.

XXXVIII
Fie, quoth she, on thy name, Bird ill beseeen!
The God of Love afflict thee with all teen,
For thou art worse than mad a thousand fold;
For many a one hath virtues manifold,
Who had been nought, if Love had never been.

XXXIX
For evermore his servants Love amendeth,
And he from every blemish them defendeth;
And maketh them to burn, as in a fire,
In loyalty, and worshipful desire,
And, when it likes him, joy enough them sendeth.

XL
Thou Nightingale! the Cuckoo said, be still,
For Love no reason hath but his own will;—
For to th' untrue he oft gives ease and joy;
True lovers doth so bitterly annoy,
He lets them perish through that grievous ill.
XLI
With such a master would I never be; 1
For he, in sooth, is blind, and may not see,
And knows not when he hurts and when he heals;
Within this court full seldom Truth avails,
So diverse in his wilfulness is he.

XLII
Then of the Nightingale did I take note,
How from her inmost heart a sigh she brought,
And said, Alas! that ever I was born,
Not one word have I now, I am so forlorn,—
And with that word, she into tears burst out.

XLIII
Alas, alas! my very heart will break,
Quoth she, to hear this churlish bird thus speak
Of Love, and of his holy services;
Now, God of Love! thou help me in some wise,
That vengeance on this Cuckoo I may wreak.

XLIV
And so methought I started up anon,
And to the brook I ran and got a stone,
Which at the Cuckoo hardily I cast,
And he for dread did fly away full fast;
And glad, in sooth, was I when he was gone.

XLV
And as he flew, the Cuckoo, ever and aye,
Kept crying, 'Farewell!—farewell, Popinjay!'
As if in scornful mockery of me;
And on I hunted him from tree to tree,
Till he was far, all out of sight, away.

XLVI
Then straightway came the Nightingale to me,
And said, Forsooth, my friend, do I thank thee,
That thou wert near to rescue me; and now,
Unto the God of Love I make a vow,
That all this May I will thy songstress be.

1 From a manuscript in the Bodleian, as are also stanzas 44 and 45, which are necessary to complete the sense.

2—GG
XLVII

Well satisfied, I thanked her, and she said,
By this mishap no longer be dismayed,
Though thou the Cuckoo heard, ere thou heard'st me;
Yet if I live it shall amended be,
When next May comes, if I am not afraid.

XLVIII

And one thing will I counsel thee also,
The Cuckoo trust not thou, nor his Love's saw;
All that she said is an outrageous lie.
Nay, nothing shall me bring thereto, quoth I,
For Love, and it hath done me mighty woe.

XLIX

Yea, hath it? use, quoth she, this medicine;
This May-time, every day before thou dine,
Go look on the fresh daisy; then say I,
Although for pain thou may'st be like to die,
Thou wilt be eased, and less wilt droop and pine.

L

And mind always that thou be good and true,
And I will sing one song, of many new,
For love of thee, as loud as I may cry;
And then did she begin this song full high,
' Beshrew all them that are in love untrue.'

LI

And soon as she had sung it to the end,
Now farewell, quoth she, for I hence must wend;
And God of Love, that can right well and may,
Send unto thee as mickle joy this day,
As ever he to Lover yet did send.

LII

Thus takes the Nightingale her leave of me;
I pray to God with her always to be,
And joy of love to send her evermore;
And shield us from the Cuckoo and her lore,
For there is not so false a bird as she.
Forth then she flew, the gentle Nightingale,
To all the Birds that lodged within that dale,
And gathered each and all into one place;
And them besought to hear her doleful case,
And thus it was that she began her tale.

The Cuckoo—'tis not well that I should hide
How she and I did each the other chide,
And without ceasing, since it was daylight;
And now I pray you all to do me right
Of that false Bird whom Love can not abide.

Then spake one Bird, and full assent all gave;
This matter asketh counsel good as grave,
For birds we are—all here together brought;
And, in good sooth, the Cuckoo here is not;
And therefore we a Parliament will have.

And thereat shall the Eagle be our Lord,
And other Peers whose names are on record;
A summons to the Cuckoo shall be sent,
And judgment there be given; or that intent
Failing, we finally shall make accord.

And all this shall be done, without a nay,
The morrow after Saint Valentine's day,
Under a maple that is well beseen,
Before the chamber-window of the Queen,
At Woodstock, on the meadow green and gay.

She thankèd them; and then her leave she took,
And flew into a hawthorn by that brook;
And there she sate and sung—upon that tree—
'For term of life Love shall have hold of me'—
So loudly, that I with that song awoke.
Unlearned Book and rude, as well I know,  
For beauty thou hast none, nor eloquence,  
Who did on thee the hardiness bestow  
To appear before my Lady? but a sense  
Thou surely hast of her benevolence,  
Whereof her hourly bearing proof doth give;  
For of all good she is the best alive.

Alas, poor Book! for thy unworthiness,  
To show to her some pleasant meanings writ  
In winning words, since through her gentiless,  
Thee she accepts as for her service fit!  
Oh! it repents me I have neither wit  
Nor leisure unto thee more worth to give;  
For of all good she is the best alive.

Beseech her meekly with all lowliness,  
Though I be far from her I reverence,  
To think upon my truth and steadfastness,  
And to abridge my sorrow's violence,  
Caused by the wish, as knows your sapience,  
She of her liking proof to me would give;  
For of all good she is the best alive.

L'envoy

Pleasure's Aurora, Day of gladsomeness!  
Luna by night, with heavenly influence  
Illumined! root of beauty and goodnesse,  
Write, and allay, by your beneficence,  
My sighs breathed forth in silence,—comfort give!  
Since of all good you are the best alive.

Explicit

III

Troilus and Cresida

Next morning Troilus began to clear  
His eyes from sleep, at the first break of day,  
And unto Pandarus, his own Brother dear,  
For love of God, full piteously did say,  
We must the Palace see of Cresida;  
For since we yet may have no other feast,  
Let us behold her Palace at the least!
And therewithal to cover his intent
A cause he found into the Town to go,
And they right forth to Cresid's Palace went;
But, Lord, this simple Troilus was woe,
Him thought his sorrowful heart would break in two;
For when he saw her doors fast bolted all,
Well nigh for sorrow down he 'gan to fall.

Therewith when this true Lover 'gan behold,
How shut was every window of the place,
Like frost he thought his heart was icy cold;
For which, with changed, pale, and deadly face,
Without word uttered, forth he 'gan to pace;
And on his purpose bent so fast to ride,
That no wight his continuance espied.

Then said he thus,—O Palace desolate!
O house of houses, once so richly dight!
O Palace empty and disconsolate!
Thou lamp of which extinguished is the light;
O Palace, whilom day, that now art night,
Thou ought'st to fall and I to die; since she
Is gone who held us both in sovereignty.

O, of all houses once the crowned boast!
Palace illumined with the sun of bliss;
O ring of which the ruby now is lost,
O cause of woe, that cause has been of bliss:
Yet, since I may no better, would I kiss
Thy cold doors; but I dare not for this rout;
Farewell, thou shrine of which the Saint is out!

Therewith he cast on Pandarus an eye,
With changed face, and piteous to behold;
And when he might his time aright espy,
Aye as he rode, to Pandarus he told
Both his new sorrow and his joys of old,
So piteously, and with so dead a hue,
That every wight might on his sorrow rue.

Forth from the spot he rideth up and down,
And everything to his rememberance
Came as he rode by places of the town
Where he had felt such perfect pleasure once.
Lo, yonder saw I mine own Lady dance,
And in that Temple she with her bright eyes,
My Lady dear, first bound me captive-wise.
And yonder with joy-smitten heart have I
Heard my own Cresid’s laugh; and once at play
I yonder saw her eke full blissfully;
And yonder once she unto me ’gan say—
Now, my sweet Troilus, love me well, I pray!
And there so graciously did me behold,
That hers unto the death my heart I hold.

And at the corner of that self-same house
Heard I my most belovèd Lady dear,
So womanly, with voice melodious
Singing so well, so goodly, and so clear,
That in my soul methinks I yet do hear
The blissful sound; and in that very place
My Lady first me took unto her grace.

O blissful God of Love! then thus he cried,
When I the process have in memory,
How thou hast wearied me on every side,
Men thence a book might make, a history;
What need to seek a conquest over me,
Since I am wholly at thy will? what joy
Hast thou thy own liege subjects to destroy?

Dread Lord! so fearful when provoked, thine ire
Well hast thou wreaked on me by pain and grief;
Now mercy, Lord! thou know’st well I desire
Thy grace above all pleasures first and chief;
And live and die I will in thy belief;
For which I ask for guerdon but one boon,
That Cresida again thou send me soon.

Constrain her heart as quickly to return,
As thou dost mine with longing her to see,
Then know I well that she would not sojourn.
Now, blissful Lord, so cruel do not be
Unto the blood of Troy, I pray of thee,
As Juno was unto the Theban blood,
From whence to Thebes came griefs in multitude.

And after this he to the gate did go
Whence Cresid rode, as if in haste she was;
And up and down there went, and to and fro,
And to himself full oft he said, alas!
From hence my hope and solace forth did pass.
O would the blissful God now for his joy,
I might her see again coming to Troy!
And up to yonder hill was I her guide;
Alas, and there I took of her my leave;
Yonder I saw her to her Father ride,
For very grief of which my heart shall cleave;—
And hither home I came when it was eve;
And here I dwell an outcast from all joy,
And shall, unless I see her soon in Troy.

And of himself did he imagine oft,
That he was blighted, pale, and waxen less
Than he was wont; and that in whispers soft
Men said, what may it be, can no one guess
Why Troilus hath all this heaviness?
All which he of himself conceited wholly
Out of his weakness and his melancholy.

Another time he took into his head,
That every wight, who in the way passed by,
Had of him ruth, and fancied that they said,
I am right sorry Troilus will die:
And thus a day or two drove wearily;
As ye have heard; such life 'gan he to lead
As one that standeth betwixt hope and dread.

For which it pleased him in his songs to show
The occasion of his woe, as best he might;
And made a fitting song, of words but few,
Somewhat his woeful heart to make more light;
And when he was removed from all men's sight,
With a soft voice, he of his Lady dear,
That absent was, 'gan sing as ye may hear.

O star, of which I lost have all the light,
With a sore heart well ought I to bewail,
That ever dark in torment, night by night,
Toward my death with wind I steer and sail;
For which upon the tenth night if thou fail
With thy bright beams to guide me but one hour,
My ship and me Charybdis will devour.

As soon as he this song had thus sung through,
He fell again into his sorrows old;
And every night, as was his wont to do,
Troilus stood the bright moon to behold;
And all his trouble to the moon he told,
And said: I wis, when thou art horn'd anew,
I shall be glad if all the world be true.
Thy horns were old as now upon that morrow,
When hence did journey my bright Lady dear,
That cause is of my torment and my sorrow;
For which, oh, gentle Luna, bright and clear,
For love of God, run fast above thy sphere;
For when thy horns begin once more to spring,
Then shall she come, that with her bliss may bring. 140

The day is more, and longer every night
Than they were wont to be—for he thought so;
And that the sun did take his course not right,
By longer way than he was wont to go;
And said, I am in constant dread I trow,
That Phaeton his son is yet alive,
His too fond father's car amiss to drive.

Upon the walls fast also would he walk,
To the end that he the Grecian host might see;
And ever thus he to himself would talk:—
Lo! yonder is my own bright Lady free;
Or yonder is it that the tents must be;
And thence does come this air which is so sweet,
That in my soul I feel the joy of it.

And certainly this wind, that more and more
By moments thus increaseth in my face,
Is of my Lady's sighs heavy and sore;
I prove it thus; for in no other space
Of all this town, save only in this place,
Feel I a wind, that soundeth so like pain;
It saith, Alas, why severed are we twain?

A weary while in pain he tosseth thus,
Till fully passed and gone was the ninth night;
And ever at his side stood Pandarus,
Who busily made use of all his might
To comfort him, and make his heart more light;
Giving him always hope, that she the morrow
Of the tenth day will come, and end his sorrow.

1801
POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF OLD AGE

I

THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGER

The class of Beggars, to which the Old Man here described belongs, will probably soon be extinct. It consisted of poor, and, mostly, old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighbourhood, and had certain fixed days, on which, at different houses, they regularly received alms, sometimes in money, but mostly in provisions.

I saw an aged Beggar in my walk;
And he was seated, by the highway side,
On a low structure of rude masonry
Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
May thence remount at ease. The aged Man
Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone
That overlays the pile; and, from a bag
All white with flour, the dole of village dames,
He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one;
And scanned them with a fixed and serious look
Of idle computation. In the sun,
Upon the second step of that small pile,
Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
He sat, and ate his food in solitude:
And ever, scattered from his palsied hand,
That, still attempting to prevent the waste,
Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
Fell on the ground; and the small mountain birds,
Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal,
Approached within the length of half his staff.

Him from my childhood have I known; and then
He was so old, he seems not older now;
He travels on, a solitary Man,
So helpless in appearance, that for him
The sauntering Horseman throws not with a slack
And careless hand his alms upon the ground,
But stops,—that he may safely lodge the coin
Within the old Man’s hat; nor quits him so,
But still, when he has given his horse the rein,
Watches the aged Beggar with a look
Sidelong, and half-reverted. She who tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
The aged Beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
The post-boy, when his rattling wheels o'ertake
The aged Beggar in the woody lane,
Shouts to him from behind; and, if thus warned
The old man does not change his course, the boy
Turns with less noisy wheels to the roadside,
And passes gently by, without a curse
Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.

He travels on, a solitary Man;
His age has no companion. On the ground
His eyes are turned, and, as he moves along,
_They_ move along the ground; and, evermore,
Instead of common and habitual sight
Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
And the blue sky, one little span of earth
Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
Bow-bent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
He plies his weary journey; seeing still,
And seldom knowing that he sees, some straw,
Some scattered leaf, or marks which, in one track,
The nails of cart or chariot-wheel have left
Impressed on the white road,—in the same line,
At distance still the same. Poor Traveller!
His staff trails with him; scarcely do his feet
Disturb the summer dust; he is so still
In look and motion, that the cottage curs,
Ere he has passed the door, will turn away,
Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,
And urchins newly breeched—all pass him by:
Him even the slow-paced waggon leaves behind.

But deem not this Man useless.—Statesmen! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate
Your talents, power, or wisdom, deem him not
A burthen of the earth! 'Tis nature's law
That none, the meanest of created things,
Of forms created the most vile and brute,
The duldest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good,
A life and soul, to every mode of being
Inseparably linked. Then be assured
That least of all can aught—that ever owned
The heaven-regarding eye and front sublime
Which man is born to—sink, howe'er depressed,
So low as to be scorned without a sin;
Without offence to God cast out of view;
Like the dry remnant of a garden-flower
Whose seeds are shed, or as an implement
Worn out and worthless. While from door to door,
This old Man creeps, the villagers in him
Behold a record which together binds
Past deeds and offices of charity,
Else unremembered, and so keeps alive
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,
And that half-wisdom half-experience gives,
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
Among the farms and solitary huts,
Hamlets and thinly-scattered villages,
Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love; and habit does the work
Of reason; yet prepares that after-joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,
Doth find herself insensibly disposed
To virtue and true goodness.

Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle: even such minds
In childhood, from this solitary Being,
Or from like wanderer, haply have received
(A thing more precious far than all that books
Or the solicitudes of love can do!)
That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
Who sits at his own door,—and, like the pear
That overhangs his head from the green wall,
Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
Sheltered, and flourish in a little grove
Of their own kindred;—all behold in him
A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transitory thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart
Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions; and, perchance,
Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season, he, at least,
And 'tis no vulgar service, makes them felt.

Yet further.—Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
No self-reproach; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide
Are strict observers; and not negligent
In acts of love to those with whom they dwell,
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace!
—But of the poor man ask, the abject poor;
Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul?
No—man is dear to man; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been,
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers-out
Of some small blessings; have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
—Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,
My neighbour, when with punctual care, each week,
Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself
By her own wants, she from her store of meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,
Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in heaven.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And while in that vast solitude to which
The tide of things has borne him, he appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone,
Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of Heaven
Has hung around him: and, while life is his,
Still let him prompt the unlettered villagers
To tender offices and pensive thoughts.
—Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
The freshness of the valleys; let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows;
And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his grey locks against his withered face.
Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never House, misnamed of Industry,
Make him a captive! —for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
Be his the natural silence of old age!
Let him be free of mountain solitudes;
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
Few are his pleasures: if his eyes have now
Been doomed so long to settle upon earth
That not without some effort they behold
The countenance of the horizontal sun,
Rising or setting, let the light at least
Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.
And let him, where and when he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or on a grassy bank
Of highway side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gathered meal; and, finally,
As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
So in the eye of Nature let him die!

II

THE FARMER OF TILSBURY VALE

'TIS not for the unfeeling, the falsely refined,
The squeamish in taste, and the narrow of mind,
And the small critic wielding his delicate pen,
That I sing of old Adam, the pride of old men.

He dwells in the centre of London's wide Town;
His staff is a sceptre—his grey hairs a crown;
And his bright eyes look brighter, set off by the streak
Of the unfaded rose that still blooms on his cheek.
'Mid the dews, in the sunshine of morn,—'mid the joy
Of the fields, he collected that bloom, when a boy;
That countenance there fashioned, which, spite of a stain
That his life hath received, to the last will remain.

A Farmer he was; and his house far and near
Was the boast of the country for excellent cheer;
How oft have I heard in sweet Tilsbury Vale
Of the silver-rimmed horn whence he dealt his mild ale!

Yet Adam was far as the farthest from ruin,
His fields seemed to know what their Master was doing;
And turnips, and corn-land, and meadow, and lea,
All caught the infection—as generous as he. 20

Yet Adam prized little the feast and the bowl,—
The fields better suited the ease of his soul:
He strayed through the fields like an indolent wight,
The quiet of nature was Adam's delight.

For Adam was simple in thought; and the poor,
Familiar with him, made an inn of his door:
He gave them the best that he had; or, to say
What less may mislead you, they took it away.

Thus thirty smooth years did he thrive on his farm:
The Genius of plenty preserved him from harm: 30
At length, what to most is a season of sorrow,
His means are run out,—he must beg, or must borrow.

To the neighbours he went,—all were free with their money;
For his hive had so long been replenished with honey,
That they dreamt not of dearth;—He continued his rounds,
Knocked here—and knocked there, pounds still adding to pounds.

He paid what he could with his ill-gotten pelf,
And something, it might be, reserved for himself:
Then (what is too true) without hinting a word,
Turned his back on the country—and off like a bird. 40

You lift up your eyes!—but I guess that you frame
A judgment too harsh of the sin and the shame;
In him it was scarcely a business of art,
For this he did all in the ease of his heart.
To London—a sad emigration I ween—
With his grey hairs he went from the brook and the green;
And there, with small wealth but his legs and his hands,
As lonely he stood as a crow on the sands.

All trades, as need was, did old Adam assume,—
Served as stable-boy, errand-boy, porter, and groom; 50
But nature is gracious, necessity kind,
And, in spite of the shame that may lurk in his mind,

He seems ten birthdays younger, is green and is stout;
Twice as fast as before does his blood run about;
You would say that each hair of his beard was alive,
And his fingers as busy as bees in a hive.

For he’s not like an Old Man that leisurely goes
About work that he knows, in a track that he knows;
But often his mind is compelled to demur,
And you guess that the more then his body must stir.

In the throng of the town like a stranger is he, 61
Like one whose own country’s far over the sea;
And Nature, while through the great city he hies,
Full ten times a day takes his heart by surprise.

This gives him the fancy of one that is young,
More of soul in his face than of words on his tongue,
Like a maiden of twenty he trembles and sighs,
And tears of fifteen will come into his eyes.

What’s a tempest to him, or the dry parching heats?
Yet he watches the clouds that pass over the streets;
With a look of such earnestness often will stand, 71
You might think he’d twelve reapers at work in the Strand.

Where proud Covent-garden, in desolate hours
Of snow and hoar-frost, spreads her fruits and her flowers,
Old Adam will smile at the pains that have made
Poor winter look fine in such strange masquerade.

’Mid coaches and chariots, a waggon of straw,
Like a magnet, the heart of old Adam can draw;
With a thousand soft pictures his memory will teem,
And his hearing is touched with the sounds of a dream.
Up the Haymarket hill he oft whistles his way, 81
Thrysts his hands in a waggon, and smells at the hay;
He thinks of the fields he so often hath mown,
And is happy as if the rich freight were his own.

But chiefly to Smithfield he loves to repair,—
If you pass by at morning, you'll meet with him there,
The breath of the cows you may see him inhale,
And his heart all the while is in Tilsbury Vale.

Now farewell, old Adam! when low thou art laid,
May one blade of grass spring up over thy head; 90
And I hope that thy grave, wheresoever 'tis be,
Will hear the wind sigh through the leaves of a tree.

III

THE SMALL CELANDINE

There is a flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and rain;
And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again!

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distrest,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter, like a Thing at rest.

But lately, one rough day, this Flower I passed
And recognised it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
'IT doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold:
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old.

'The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay;
Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue.'
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey.
To be a Prodigal’s Favourite—then, worse truth,
A Miser’s Pensioner— behold our lot!
O Man, that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not!

IV
THE TWO THIEVES
OR, THE LAST STAGE OF AVARICE

O

NOW that the genius of Bewick were mine,
And the skill which he learned on the banks of
the Tyne,
Then the Muses might deal with me just as they chose,
For I’d take my last leave both of verse and of prose.

What feats would I work with my magical hand!
Book-learning and books should be banished the land:
And, for hunger and thirst and such troublesome calls,
Every ale-house should then have a feast on its walls.

The traveller would hang his wet clothes on a chair;
Let them smoke, let them burn, not a straw would he
care!
For the Prodigal Son, Joseph’s Dream and his sheaves,
Oh, what would they be to my tale of two Thieves?

The One, yet unbreeched, is not three birthdays old,
His Grandsire that age more than thirty times told;
There are ninety good seasons of fair and foul weather
Between them, and both go a-pilfering together.

With chips is the carpenter strewing his floor?
Is a cart-load of turf at an old woman’s door?
Old Daniel his hand to the treasure will slide!
And his Grandson’s as busy at work by his side.

Old Daniel begins; he stops short—and his eye,
Through the lost look of dotage, is cunning and sly:
’Tis a look which at this time is hardly his own,
But tells a plain tale of the days that are flown.

He once had a heart which was moved by the wires
Of manifold pleasures and many desires:
And what if he cherished his purse? ’Twas no more
Than treading a path trod by thousands before.
'Twas a path trod by thousands; but Daniel is one
Who went something farther than others have gone;
And now with old Daniel you see how it fares;
You see to what end he has brought his grey hairs.

The pair sally forth hand in hand: ere the sun
Has peered o'er the beeches, their work is begun:
And yet, into whatever sin they may fall,
This child but half knows it, and that not at all.

They hunt through the streets with deliberate tread,
And each, in his turn, becomes leader or led;
And, wherever they carry their plots and their wiles,
Every face in the village is dimpled with smiles.

Neither checked by the rich nor the needy they roam;
For the grey-headed Sire has a daughter at home,
Who will gladly repair all the damage that's done;
And three, were it asked, would be rendered for one.

Old Man! whom so oft I with pity have eyed,
I love thee, and love the sweet Boy at thy side:
Long yet may'st thou live! for a teacher we see
That lifts up the veil of our nature in thee.

Published 1800

V

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY

The little hedgerow birds,
That peck along the road, regard him not.
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression: every limb,
His look and bending figure, all bespeak
A man who does not move with pain, but moves
With thought.—He is insensibly subdued
To settled quiet: he is one by whom
All effort seems forgotten; one to whom
Long patience hath such mild composure given,
That patience now doth seem a thing of which
He hath no need. He is by nature led
To peace so perfect that the young behold
With envy, what the Old Man hardly feels.
NOTES
MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803

P. 1. I. DEPARTURE. From the Vale of Grasmere. August, 1803. 1811.—The verses that stand foremost among these memorials were not actually written for the occasion, but transplanted from my Epistle to Sir George Beaumont.—I. F.

P. 2. II. AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS, 1803 :—At Dumfries.
L. 20. 'Glinted':—Cp. Burns, To a Mountain Daisy, l. 15:
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth!
P. 39, l. 3. Criffel:—In Kirkcudbright. Dorothy Wordsworth in her account of this visit to Dumfries (Journal, Thursday, Aug. 18, 1803) says: 'Drayton has prettily described the connection which this neighbourhood has with ours when he makes Skiddaw say:
Scarfell [Criffel] from the sky,
That Anadale [Annandale] doth crown with a most amorous eye,
Salutes me every day, or at my pride looks grim,
Oft threatening me with clouds, as I oft threatening him!'
[The quotation has been corrected by Prof. Knight.]
The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know.
P. 4. Published 1842:—Written according to Wordsworth in 1803, but probably not completed then.

P. 5. III. THOUGHTS. Suggested the day following, on the banks of Nith, near the poet's residence. Finished 1839:—Wordsworth told Miss Fenwick this poem was felt at the time of his visit to the grave of Burns, but not composed till many years after. In 1839, in a letter to Henry Reed, he said that he had lately added the concluding stanza.

P. 7. IV. TO THE SONS OF BURNS, after visiting the grave of their father, l. 31. 'Lonely heights and hows':—Burns, Epistle to James Smith, stanza ix.
Ll. 41-42. 'Light which leads astray, is light from Heaven':—Burns, The Vision, Duaun Second, stanza xviii.
L. 48. Written partly in 1803. Stanzas 2, 3, 4, 8 were published in 1807; 1, 5, 6, 7 in 1827. In 1820 stanza 3 was omitted; it was replaced in 1827.
P. 3. V. ELLEN IRWIN: or, the Braes of Kirtle. Published 1800:—Written probably after the first edition of Lyrical Ballads (1798).


P. 13. IX. THE SOLITARY REAPER, l. 32. The last line of this poem was taken verbatim (as Wordsworth stated in a note to the edition of 1807) from a MS. Tour in Scotland by his friend Wilkinson, the whole poem being suggested by a description in that MS. (published 1824). The variants in different editions of the poem are interesting. L. 10 was originally ‘So sweetly to reposing bands’; l. 13, ‘No sweeter voice was ever heard.’ Wordsworth altered these lines—the second for the better, the former surely for the worse—from a consciousness of the too great frequency of his use of the epithet ‘sweet.’ ‘Anyhow,’ says Mr. Hutchinson (in his edition [1897] of the Poems in Two Volumes of 1807) ‘in 1827 Wordsworth removed this word from ten places in his poems; in 1832 he removed it from one place; in 1836-37 from ten; in 1840 from one; and in 1845 from three.’ L. 29 was altered, in an access of false elegance, from the expressive line, ‘I listen’d till I had my fill.’

P. 14. X. ADDRESS TO KILCHURN CASTLE, UPON LOCH AWE. Published 1827:—The first three lines were thrown off at the moment I first caught sight of the Ruin, from a small eminence by the wayside; the rest was added many years after.—I. F.

P. 14. XI. ROB ROY’S GRAVE. INTRODUCTORY NOTE. Loch Ketterine:—I have since been told that I was misinformed as to the burial-place of Rob Roy.—I. F. It is in the Kirkton of Balquwhidder, at the lower end of Loch Voil, in Perthshire.

P. 17. l. 95. ‘Her present Boast’:—Napoleon.

L. 119. A good example of ‘second thoughts are best.’ In edition 1807 the line is, ‘And kindle, like a fire new stirr’d.’

P. 17. XII. SONNET. Composed at —— Castle:—Neidpath, near Peebles. The ‘degenerate Douglas’ was the 4th Duke of Queensberry. He ‘stripped the wooded demesnes of Neidpath and Drumlanrig (Scott’s Journal, Aug. 24, 1826; Letters, i. pp. 304, 434; ii. 24) in order to furnish a dowry for Maria Fagniani (whom he supposed to be his daughter) on her marriage with the Earl of Yarmouth. Cp. the Verses on the Destruction of the Woods near Drumlanrig of Burns, and his Stanzas on the Duke of Queensberry. . . . Wordsworth sent to Sir G. Beaumont and Walter Scott respectively copies of this sonnet, beginning:

Now, as I live, I pity that great Lord
Whom pure despite . . .

‘In this original shape Scott always recited it, and few lines in the language were more frequently in his mouth (Lockhart, Life of Sir
NOTES

Walter Scott, xii.).'—From Mr. Hutchinson’s note in his ed. of Poems in Two Volumes, vol. ii. p. 179.

P. 18. XIII. Yarrow Unvisited. See Yarrow Visited, above, p. 37, and Yarrow Revisited, p. 166. Wordsworth’s companion was really his sister.


P. 19, l. 35. Cp. in William Hamilton of Bangour’s ballad, referred to in the headnote to the poem:

  Sweet smells the birk, green grows, green grows the grass,
  Yellow on Yarrow’s bank the gowan,
  Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
  Sweet the wave of Yarrow flowan.

  Flows Yarrow sweet? As sweet, as sweet flows Tweed,
  As green its grass, its gowan yellow,
  As sweet smells on its braes the birk,
  The apple frae the rock as mellow.

L. 42. Burn-mill meadow was an imaginary name. Cp. Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott, vol. i. pp. 23-29.—Prof. Knight.

P. 24. XVII. The Blind Highland Boy, l. 59. Pretty:—Prof. Knight suggests that Wordsworth ‘may have written or meant to write “petty” (a much better word).’ But ‘petty’ would be less appropriate to the style of this narrative, addressed, as it is supposed to be, to a little boy.


P. 25, l. 91. Loch Leven:—The sea-loch of this name, between Argyllshire and Inverness, opening into Loch Linnhe.

Ll. 106-110. This and the next eight stanzas replaced (in 1815) the following:

  Strong is the current; but be mild,
  Ye waves, and spare the helpless Child!
  If ye in anger fret or chafe,
  A bee-hive would be ship as safe
  As that in which he sails.

  But say what was it? Thought of fear!
  Well may ye tremble when ye hear!
  —A Household Tub, like one of those,
  Which women use to wash their clothes,
  This carried the blind Boy.

  Close to the water he had found
  This Vessel, push’d it from dry ground,
  Went into it; and, without dread,
  Following the fancies in his head,
  He paddled up and down.
The washing-tub drove the critics to desperation. On Coleridge’s suggestion Wordsworth substituted the turtle-shell. (See note at the end of the poem.) Charles Lamb objected to the change. *Letters*, ed. Ainger, i. 283.

P. 26, l. 119. *Amphitrite*:—Wife of Poseidon and goddess of the sea.

L. 122. *Vaga*:—The Latin name for the Wye, the ‘wandering’ (i.e. winding) river. Cp. Drayton’s *Polyolbion*, song vii. :

Meander, who is said so intricate to bee,
Hath not so many turnses and cranking nookes as shee.

P. 29. *Probably 1806*:—From a letter of Wordsworth to Scott of Jan. 20, 1807, we find that Wordsworth was at that time finishing this poem for publication in the *Poems in Two Volumes*. He asks Scott: ‘Could you furnish me, by application to any of your Gaelic friends, a phrase in that language which would take its place in the following verse of eight syllables, and have the following meaning?—

Lega, lega, thus did he cry,
Lega, lega, most eagerly
Thus did he cry, and thus did pray;
And what he meant was, “Keep away,
And leave me to myself.” . . .’

(Quoted in Knight’s *Life*, ii. (x) p. 107). ‘The poem is not given by Dorothy in her *Recollections of a Tour made in Scotland*, so that it probably belongs to some date later than 1804.’—Mr. Hutchinson.

**MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1814**

P. 31, l. 30. *The Brownie’s Cell*, l. 31. *Proud Remnant was he of a fearless Race*:— *I.e.* as in a MS. version of this line, ‘Last of an else extinguished Highland clan,’—the clan of Macfarlane, as Wordsworth mentions in a note to *The Brownie*, a sequel to this poem. Cp. above, p. 177.

P. 32, l. 92. *Nysa’s isle*:—Cp. Diodorus Siculus iii. 68 (not Bk. iii. ch. 4 as Prof. Knight) where, in the course of a long disquisition on the different accounts of the myth of the infancy of Dionysus, this story is given at length. So far as I know, that passage is the only place where Nysa is spoken of as an island, or rather a city lying on an island surrounded by the river Triton.’ Nysa is usually spoken of as a mountain, as in this same book of Diodorus. The passage in *Diod.* describes the ‘bud and bloom and fruitage’ of the place at length; and Wordsworth’s description is probably founded on it.

Published 1820:—This and the three following poems were probably composed at about the time of the tour in Scotland in 1814, but only the *Yarrow Visited*, apparently, was ripe for publication in ed. 1815.
The Brownie's Cell and Composed at Cora Linn were included in the vol. of 1820; the Effusion in ed. 1827. A slight difficulty is connected with the dating of the latter. In the Fenwick note, in which Wordsworth says that he 'had seen this celebrated waterfall twice before,' whereas he had only visited Scotland once before 1814. However, as he did not visit Scotland again till long after the poem in question was published, the date of its composition is not affected.

P. 37. III. Effusion in the pleasure-ground on the banks of the Bran, near Dunkeld, l. 113. 'The everlasting youth':—Originally 'the eternal youth'; altered in ed. 1837.


P. 39, ll. 55-56. 'Newark's Towers' are the scene of Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel.

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

P. 41. Part I. III. Composed near Calais on the road leading to Ardres, August 7, 1802, l. 1. Jones:—This excellent Person, one of my earliest and dearest friends, died in the year 1835. We were undergraduates together of the same year, at the same college; and companions in many a delightful ramble through his own romantic country of North Wales. Much of the latter part of his life he passed in comparative solitude; which I know was often cheered by remembrance of our youthful adventures, and of the beautiful regions which, at home and abroad, we had visited together. Our long friendship was never subject to a moment's interruption—and while reviewing these volumes for the last time, I have been so often reminded of my loss, with a not unpleasing sadness, that I trust the Reader will excuse this passing mention of a man who well deserves from me something more than so brief a notice. Let me only add, that during the middle part of his life he resided many years (as Incumbent of the Living) at a Parsonage in Oxfordshire, which is the subject of the 7th of the Miscellaneous Sonnets, part III.—W.

Footnote to l. 3:—The first anniversary of the capture of the Bastille, and the day of the great meeting in the Champ-de-Mars, at which Louis xvi. and the National Assembly swore fidelity to the constitution.

Ll. 12-14. The sonnet originally ended:

Yet despair
I feel not: happy am I as a Bird:
Fair Seasons yet will come, and hopes as fair.
In ed. 1820, in l. 13, Wordsworth, substituted 'jocund as a warbling bird.' The final reading appeared in ed. 1827, and while being poetically
an improvement, is an indication of Wordsworth's decreasing faith in political progress.

P. 41. IV. 1801. l. 3:—Mr. Hutchinson notes that 'Irregular octaves rarely occur in Wordsworth's earlier sonnets; out of 296 sonnets (1801-1821) there are but eleven instances. After 1821 degenerate forms of octave crowd in'—Poems in Two Volumes (ed. 1897, vol. i. p. 202).

P. 42. VI. On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic. Napoleon entered Venice, unresisted, on May 16, 1797, and proclaimed the end of the Republic. In October, by the Treaty of Campo Formio, he handed Venice over to Austria.

P. 42. VII. The King of Sweden:—Gustavus IV. Cp. p. 60, No. xx. of the Second Part of these Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty.

P. 43. VIII. To Toussaint L'Ouverture:—Toussaint L'Ouverture (1746-1803) was a well-educated negro, son of a slave in Hayti. He took a prominent part in the insurrection of the slaves and the free mulattos against the whites, which arose out of the French Revolution and particularly out of the decree of the National Convention (1791), which gave the mulattos the rights of French citizens. This decree was opposed by the whites, who had previously been the ruling class. In 1793 the French Government went further, and enfranchised the slaves. In 1796 Toussaint became commander-in-chief of the army in Hayti, which had in the previous year been entirely ceded to France by Spain, the name St. Domingue being extended from the French colony to the whole island. In 1798 he repelled an English invasion. In 1801 he framed a constitution, intending to govern the island on the model and more or less under the authority of the Napoleonic government; but Napoleon resolved to reduce the island in order to have a free hand in settling both the French and the Spanish parts of it on the conclusion of a general peace. General Leclerc with 25,000 men landed, and after some guerilla warfare captured Toussaint by treachery. He was sent to France and died in prison in April 1803, in the Jura mountains, being allowed neither fire nor doctor.

Ll. 2-4. The changes made in these lines are interesting. Originally:

Whether the rural Milk-maid by her Cow
Sing in thy hearing, or thou liest now
Alone in some deep dungeon's earless den.

The 'rural Milk-maid by her Cow' was no doubt felt to lie open to the scoffs of the critics; for in 1815 Wordsworth published:

Whether the all-cheering Sun be free to shed
His beams around thee, or thou rest thy head
Pillowed in some dark dungeon's noisome den.
In 1820 he returns to the less hackneyed image, with a difference, which substitutes life for something like sentimentality:

Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thou liest now
Buried in some deep dungeon's earless den.

The final text dates from 1827.

P. 44. XII. Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland. Prof. Dowden quotes from a letter of Wordsworth of Sept. 27, 1808: 'The sonnet beginning "Two voices are there," you will remember, is the one which I mentioned to you as being the best I had written.'

P. 45. XIII. Written in London, September, 1802, l. 1. O Friend! —Coleridge, whose name bears the place of O Friend in various MSS.

P. 45. XV. l. 3. i.e. Algernon Sidney (cp. Eccl. Sonnets, Part iii., No. x. above, p. 268), Andrew Marvell the poet, Harrington the author of The Commonwealth of Oceana, etc., Sir Henry Vane the younger, to whom Milton addressed the sonnet 'Vane, young in yeares,' etc.

P. 46. Published 1807:—Very probably written about the same time as the preceding—a note which applies to the two following sonnets also.

P. 46. XVI. l. 4. 'With pomp of waters, unwithstood':—Daniel, The Civile Wars, bk. ii. stanza 7:

And looke, how Thames, inricht with many a Flood,
And goodly Rivers (that have made their Graves,
And buried both their names and all their good
Within his greatnes, to augment his waves)
Glides on with pompe of Waters, unwithstood,
Unto the Ocean (which his tribute craves)
And lays up all his wealth, within that powre,
Which in it selfe all greatnes doth devoure.

In the original ed. ll. 5-6 ran:

Road by which all might come and go that would,
And bear out freights of worth to foreign lands.

The alteration, far from being an improvement, was made in ed. 1827, and probably was due to Wordsworth's growing timidity of political reform.

P. 47. XIX. Published 1807:—Written probably in Oct. 1803, and probably intended to be covered by the date of the preceding sonnet, which in the original ed. of 1807 was on the opposite page to it, so that both were visible at one glance. The same remarks apply to the two following sonnets.

P. 48. XXIII. To the Men of Kent. October, 1803, l. 11. The 'men of Kent,' i.e. the inhabitants of Kent east of the Medway, were
not conquered by the Normans, but, on capitulation, received the confirmation of their charters from the invader. Such at least is the legend; brushed aside, however, by modern scepticism. See Freeman's Norman Conquest, vol. iii. p. 538.

P. 50. XXVII. NOVEMBER, 1806, I. 2. Prussia was overthrown by the battle of Jena, Oct. 14, 1806.

Ll. 13-14. Wordsworth refers us to Lord Brooke (Fulke Greville), Life of Sir Philip Sidney; cp. ch. viii. ad init.: 'The stirring spirits sent abroad as fewel, to keep the flame far off: and the effeminate made judges of danger which they fear, and honor which they understand not.' Cp. note on Ode, p. 80, l. 122.

P. 52. XXVIII. Ode, I. 62. The creed is apparently that which is summed up in the saying that God helps those who help themselves.

P. 52. Part II. I. On a Celebrated Event in Ancient History. T. Quinctius Flamininus defeated Philip v. of Macedon at Cynoscephalæ in Thessaly in b.c. 197; and at the Isthmian Games in 196 proclaimed the independence of Greece.

P. 53. IV. A Prophecy. February, 1807, I. 4. The German hero (b.c. 18-A.D. 19) who overthrew the Roman army under Varus in A.D. 9, and successfully resisted the efforts of Germanicus (A.D. 14-17) to subdue Germany between the Rhine and the Elbe.

P. 54, I. 10. Those new-born Kings:—Twelve German sovereigns who in 1806, by treaty with Napoleon, formed the Confederation of the Rhine under the Protectorate of the Emperor of the French. The Bavarian was Frederick Augustus, Elector of Saxony.

P. 55. IX. Hofer. In Wordsworth's text erroneously spelt Hoffer. Andreas Hofer was an Innkeeper, who led a company of Tyrolese mountaineers against the French in the war of 1796. In 1809 Austria went to war with France and Bavaria, and Hofer's mountaineers did good service. In July the Austrians evacuated the Tyrol. Hofer for a time succeeded in keeping the enemy off, but the Archduke John having ordered the Tyrolese to submit, Hofer's force melted away. He offered his submission, but then, misled by false news of a change in the situation, took up arms again, without success. A price was set on his head, and after a time his hiding-place in the mountains was betrayed. He was taken to Mantua and executed in Jan. 1810. This and the following sonnets (ix.-xv.) were first published in Coleridge's periodical The Friend.

P. 57. XIII. I. 8. For the reference to Saragossa and Palafox cp. Sonnets xvi. and xxiii. below.
NOTES

P. 57. XIV. ll. 1-4. Wordsworth was thinking, as a note in The Friend informs us, of Milton [Paradise Lost, iv. 266]:

Universal Pan,
Knit with the graces and the hours in dance,
Led on the eternal spring.

P. 58. XVI. In this sonnet I am under some obligations to one of an Italian author, to which I cannot refer.—W.

Zaragoza (in English usually Saragossa) was invested by the French on June 15, 1808, and heroically defended under Palafox (cp. Sonnet xxiii. below). After raising the siege on Aug. 14, the French again invested the town on Dec. 20. It capitulated on Feb. 20, 1809.

P. 59. XVIII. 1810:—This sonnet was presumably written after the death of Andreas Hofer. The reference in ll. 5 foll. is to the battle of the Marchfeld (or of Essling), in which Napoleon was, with great slaughter, prevented by the Archduke Charles from crossing the Danube (May 21-22, 1809). This check was, however, soon removed by the battle of Wagram (July); and Austria accepted ignominious terms by the Treaty of Schönbrunn (Oct. 20). Napoleon married the Arch-Duchess Marie Louise, by proxy, on March 11, 1810.

P. 59. XIX. 1. 1. Brave Schill:—Ferdinand von Schill (1773-1809), after distinguished service in the Prussian Army before the peace of Tilsit, came forward on the outbreak of the war between Austria and France in 1809 and attempted to raise the Germans against Napoleon. His attempt was a failure, and he was overpowered and killed at Stralsund in trying to retreat with a small force to the Baltic in order to embark for England. (May 31, 1809.)

P. 60. XX. 1. 1. The royal Swede:—Gustavus iv., who abdicated the throne in 1809. Cp. above, p. 42, No. vii. of Part i. of these Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty.

P. 61. XXII. Probably 1809:—Prof. Knight thinks, and it seems very probable, that this sonnet refers to the captivity of Palafox, though apparently from the next sonnet Wordsworth did not know in 1810 that Palafox was still in prison. Cp. Sonnet xvi. above, and next note.

P. 61. XXIII. 1810. 1. 1. Palafox:—‘Don Joseph Palafox-y-Melzi (1780-1847), famed for his stubborn defence of Saragossa, on the surrender of that fortress by the general to whom, owing to illness, he had been compelled to resign the command, was taken prisoner (February 1809) and sent to Vincennes, where he was detained for nearly five years. On the restoration of Ferdinand vii. he was sent back to Madrid, and in 1814 was appointed Captain-General of Arragon; but soon after retired into private life, from which he never again emerged.’—Mr. Hutchinson.
P. 64. XXXI. Spanish Guerillas. 1811, l. 4. Paradise Lost, vi. 233-36: expert

When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
Of battle, open when, and when to close
The ridges of grim war.

The expression is derived from the Homeric ἀνά πτολέμου γέφυρας, a phrase of much-disputed meaning.

P. 65, l. 10. Viriathus:—The celebrated leader of the Lusitanians who waged a guerilla warfare with many successive Roman generals (circa 150-140 B.C.) until he was murdered by some of his own followers for the sake of a reward.

L. 11. Mina:—Don Esprey y Mina, leader of the Guerillas of Navarre, had been educated as an ecclesiastic.

Footnote to l. 12. Cp. The Prelude, i. 190 foll.

P. 65. XXXII. 1811, l. 7. 'To a fatal place':—I.e. to a place appointed for its doom or annihilation. Unlike the power of an army, which is 'circumscribed in time and place,' the spirit of a nation is limited by no such bounds. The artificiality of the diction 'a fatal place' is well indicated by the fact that from ed. 1815 to ed. 1843 Wordsworth thought it advisable to make the meaning clearer by italicising the word 'fatal.' Similarly, though for a less unfortunate reason, the word 'accursed' in the next sonnet, l. 8, was italicised in edd. 1815-1843.

P. 67. XXXVI. Perhaps 1822:—The first that we hear of this sonnet is in a letter of Dorothy Wordsworth to Crabb Robinson (Dec. 21, 1822), quoted in Knight's Edinburgh ed., vol. vi. p. 366. By a strange oversight the sonnet is omitted from Knight's Eversley edition.

P. 67. XXXVII. The Germans on the Heights of Hochheim. The event is thus recorded in the journals of the day. 'When the Austrians took Hochheim, in one part of the engagement they got to the brow of the hill, whence they had their first view of the Rhine. They instantly halted—not a gun was fired—not a voice heard; they stood gazing on the river with those feelings which the events of the last fifteen years at once called up. Prince Schwartzberg rode up to know the cause of this sudden stop; they then gave three cheers, rushed after the enemy, and drove them into the water.'—W.

P. 68. XXXVIII. November, 1813, l. 5. Twofold night:—George III. was blind as well as out of his mind.

L. 14. The triumphs of this hour:—Napoleon was defeated by the allies at Leipzig, Oct. 16-19, 1813.

P. 68. XXXIX. Ode. 1814:—Originally entitled Ode, composed in January, 1816. 1814 is a mistake of the edition of 1845: it cannot even be the 'dramatic' date, since the Ode implies the battle of Waterloo.

P. 71, l. 111. Pierian sisters:—The muses were fabled (among other
accounts) to be daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory), born in Pieria, by which name was usually meant a district at the foot of Mt. Olympus, north of Thessaly, but sometimes a district on the Thracian coast. Their worship, like that connected with Orpheus, was especially connected with Thrace.

Ll. 120-122. This passage was obscured by alteration in ed. 1845. Formerly it stood:

Ye live and move,
And exercise unblamed a generous [ed. 1837 god-like] sway.
Mr. Hutchinson is probably right in adding a comma at 'love.' The sense will then be, 'Spared in order to be worshipped by men's perpetual love, and redeemed to exercise the privilege of godlike sway.'

P. 72. XL. Feelings of a French Royalist, on the Disinterment of the Remains of the Duke d'Enghien. The Duc d'Enghien, son of the Duc de Bourbon, was kidnapped by the orders of Napoleon at Ettenheim in Baden, and taken to Vincennes near Paris. Here he was illegally tried on the charge of complicity in a plot to overthrow Napoleon, and was shot and buried in the fosse of the Castle, March 21st, 1804. In 1814 Louis xviii. had his remains transferred to the chapel of the Castle.

P. 73. XLII. Siege of Vienna raised by John Sobieski. February, 1816. John Sobieski, King of Poland, joined the Austrians and the German troops and drove the Turks from the siege of Vienna in complete rout, Sept. 12th, 1683. The deed was celebrated in six odes by the Italian poet Filicaja, which, according to Wordsworth (1816 ed.) 'are superior perhaps to any lyrical pieces that contemporary events have ever given birth to, those of the Hebrew Scriptures only excepted.'

P. 74. XLIV. Probably Feb. 1816:—Both the title and the date assigned to the previous sonnet were probably intended by Wordsworth to cover this one.

P. 74. XLV. Ode. 1815. This ode was originally published as part of the Thanksgiving Ode which follows. It was detached in ed. 1845. It is not impossible, however, that it was originally composed before the Thanksgiving Ode.

P. 77, ll. 106-107. Originally:

But Thy most dreaded instrument,
In working out a pure intent,
Is Man—arrayed for mutual slaughter,
—Yea, carnage is thy daughter!

The last statement, 'at which,' says Mr. Hutchinson, 'many had stumbled' was cancelled in ed. 1845.

The first six lines of stanza v. were added in 1837: as the events of the war became more remote, the poet's feelings became more quiet.

Ll. 125-128. The last four lines first appeared in ed. 1845.
P. 78. XLVI. Ode. The morning of the day appointed for a general thanksgiving. January 18, 1816, l. 22. Yon ethereal summits:—Wansfell and Loughrigg. 'The first stanza of this Ode was composed almost extempore in front of Rydal Mount, before church-time, and on such a morning and precisely with such objects before my eyes as are here described.'—I. F.

P. 79, l. 70. One:—Not surely, as Prof. Knight would have it, 'Wellington,' but 'Britain.' Stanzas iv. and v. show that the praises bestowed by the poet 'in concert with an earthly string' are regarded as exaggerated or one-sided.

P. 30, l. 122.

Discipline the rule whereof is passion.—Lord Brooke. W.

See A Treatie [i.e. Treatise] of Warres, stanza 7. Coleridge adapted another stanza of this poem as a motto for his Lay Sermon of 1817. Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, was a favourite author with Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Lamb; and in spite of his crabbed obscurity he has some of the best qualities of the Elizabethans. Cf. above, note on p. 50, November 1806, ll. 13-14.

P. 31. Stanza viii. Some lines were cancelled at the beginning of this stanza, which in ed. 1837 stood:

Land of our fathers! loved by me
Since the first joys of thinking infancy;
Loved with a passion since I caught thy praise
A Listener, at or on some patient knee,
With an ear fastened to rude ballad lays—
Or of thy gallant chivalry I read,
And hugged the volume on a sleepless bed!


MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

Wordsworth wrote most of these Memorials in 1821, after his return home (the tour lasted from July to Nov. 1820), using, as his custom was, the Journals of his sister and of his wife to revive his impressions, and often borrowing their actual words. The Memorials were originally published separately in 1822, Nos. iv., xvi., and xxxvii. being added subsequently.

P. 34. Dedication, l. 1. Wordsworth's fellow-travellers on this tour were Mrs. Wordsworth, Dorothy Wordsworth, Mr. and Mrs. Monkhouse, Miss Horrocks, and Henry Crabb Robinson. Accounts of the tour are contained in Dorothy Wordsworth's and Mrs. Wordsworth's Journals and H. C. Robinson's Diary, Correspondence, etc., vol. ii. pp. 167-191 (the latter passage printed in Knight's Eversley ed. vol. vi.).

L. 14. 'Meeting soul to pierce':—L'Allegro, l. 138.
P. 35. II. BRUGÉS. Wordsworth in a note refers to Southey’s lines on Brugés in The Poet’s Pilgrimage to Waterloo, stanzas xvi.-xviii.

P. 36. IV. INCIDENT AT BRUGÉS, l. 36. The Maiden at my side:—Dora, the poet’s daughter, who accompanied her father and Coleridge on a tour in 1828.

P. 37. VII. AIX-la-CHAPELLE, l. 11. The Pyrenean Breach:—‘Let a wall of rocks be imagined from three to six hundred feet in height, and rising between France and Spain, so as physically to separate the two kingdoms—let us fancy this wall curved like a crescent, with its convexity towards France. Lastly, let us suppose, that in the very middle of the wall, a breach of three hundred feet wide has been beaten down by the famous Roland, and we may have a good idea of what the mountaineers call the “Breche de Roland.”’—Raymond’s Pyrenees. W. The reference is to the notes of L. F. E. Ramond de Carbonnières, appended to his translation of Coxe’s well-known Travels in Switzerland. These notes, translated into English, were added to the ed. of Coxe published in 1802.


P. 33. IX. IN A CARRIAGE, UPON THE BANKS OF THE RHINE, l. 3. Thespian:—Thespis of Icaria in Attica, in the latter part of the sixth century B.C., was the person who developed the tragic chorus or dance in honour of Dionysus into a real, though primitive, form of drama.

P. 39. X. HYMN, for the boatmen, as they approach the rapids under the Castle of Heidelberg, l. 24. Wordsworth refers to ‘the beautiful song’ in Coleridge’s tragedy Remorse, Act III. Sc. i., ‘Hear, sweet spirit, hear the spell,’ etc.

P. 39. XI. THE SOURCE OF THE DANUBE, ll. 1-2. . . . The spring appears in a capacious stone Basin in front of a Ducal palace, with a pleasure-ground opposite; then, passing under the pavement, takes the form of a little, clear, bright, black, vigorous rill, barely wide enough to tempt the agility of a child five years old to leap over it. . . . W.

L. 8. That gloomy sea:—The Black Sea, traversed by the Argonauts on their voyage to Colchis, Orpheus being one of them.

P. 91. XV. COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE CATHOLIC CANTONS. Probably 1820:—These three stanzas (the 1st and 3rd very different in detail) were originally published as the 5th, 4th, and 9th stanzas of The Church of San Salvador (cp. p. 97). It is probable enough, however, that the three stanzas, in some form or other, were originally composed, in Switzerland, before the composition of the longer poem; were fitted into that poem; and subsequently, to the advantage of both, removed from it.
P. 92. XVI. After-thought. Published 1837:—The first stanza was first published in 1832 as the 1st stanza of the poem Composed in one of the Catholic Cantons. The 2nd stanza was first published in 1837 as in the text.

P. 92. XVII. Scene on the Lake of Brienz, ll. 1-2. Waller, song, While I listen to thy voice:

For all we know
Of what the Blessed do above
Is, that they sing, and that they love.

P. 95. XXI. The Town of Schwytz, l. 13. As so often Wordsworth borrows material from his sister, in whose diary this comparison occurs. Cp. Prof. Knight, Eversley ed., vi. 325. Prof. Knight does not print the passage in his edition of Dorothy Wordsworth's Journals.

P. 96. XXIII. Fort Fuentes. Introductory Note:—A compilation from the Journals of his wife and sister, first prefixed to the poem in 1827.

P. 97. XXIV. The Church of San Salvador, seen from the Lake of Lugano, ll. 20-21. 'Spot which men call Earth':—Milton's Comus, l. 5.

Ll. 19-24. This somewhat tortured sentence appears to mean,—'Glory, etc., have yearned to seek, in company with the meek, religion in the sainted grove,' etc.

P. 98. XXV. The Italian Itinerant, and the Swiss Goatherd, l. 3. Images:—Originally 'plaster-craft.' Altered 1827.

L. 10. Bird that soared with Ganymede:—Ganymede was borne to heaven by the eagle of Zeus to be his cup-bearer.


Ll. 22-24. Scale, whose sentient tube, etc.:—I.e. the weather-glass.

P. 100. ll. 67-68. 'Prepared the treasures they enjoy to guard':—Smollett, Ode to Leven Water. See Descriptive Sketches, l. 448, above, vol. i. p. 24 and note.

L. 78. Astraea, the 'starry one,' daughter of Zeus and Themis, the last divine relic of the golden age, who was at last forced to leave the earth owing to the degeneracy of the human race. She was regarded as the goddess of justice.

P. 100. XXVI. The Last Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci, in the Refectory of the Convent of Maria Della Grazia—Milan. This picture of the Last Supper has not only been grievously injured by time, but the greatest part of it, if not the whole, is said to have been retouched, or painted over again. These niceties may be left to connoisseurs,—I speak of it as I felt. The copy exhibited in London some years ago, and the engraving by Morghen, are both admirable;
but in the original is a power which neither of those works has attained, or even approached.—W.

P. 101. ll. 11-12.

The hand
Sang with the voice, and this the argument.
Milton.—W. [Paradise Regained, i. 171.]

P. 101. XXVII. The Eclipse of the Sun, 1820. Sept. 7, 1820.

P. 102, l. 40. The Statues ranged round the spire and along the roof of the Cathedral of Milan have been found fault with by persons whose exclusive taste is unfortunate for themselves. It is true that the same expense and labour, judiciously directed to purposes more strictly architectural, might have much heightened the general effect of the building; for, seen from the ground, the Statues appear diminutive. But the coup d'œil, from the best point of view, which is half way up the spire, must strike an unprejudiced person with admiration; and surely the selection and arrangement of the Figures is exquisitely fitted to support the religion of the country in the imaginations and feelings of the spectator. It was with great pleasure that I saw, during the two ascents which we made, several children, of different ages, tripping up and down the slender spire, and pausing to look around them, with feelings much more animated than could have been derived from these or the finest works of art, if placed within easy reach. Remember also that you have the Alps on one side, and on the other the Apennines, with the plain of Lombardy between!—W. There are 3000 statues on the roof and spire of Milan Cathedral.


P. 107. XXXI. Echo, upon the Gemmi, l. 5. Her sleeping Lover:—Endymion.

L. 7. The moon-goddess (Cynthia, Artemis, Diana) was also the huntress.

P. 108. XXXII. Processions, l. 26. Paradise Lost, xi. 745:
The floating vessel swam
Uplifted, and secure with beaked prow
Rode tilting o'er the waves; all dwellings else
Flood overwhelmed. . . .

Prof. Knight shows that Wordsworth followed the account of the rites of Jupiter Ammon given by Quintus Curtius, de Gestis Alexandri, iv. 31. The book was in the Royal Mount Library.

L. 30. The Cereal Games:—I.e. The Feast of Ceres, goddess of grain.

L. 32. Salii:—A Roman College of Priests. The 'shields of Mars' were the sacred ancilia, supposed to have fallen from heaven in the time of Numa.

2—II
L. 36. Cybele, the Great Mother, was represented with a crown of towers on her head: the epithet turrita is applied to her by Virgil, Aeneid vi. 786.

Ll. 48-49. This Procession is a part of the sacramental service performed once a month. In the valley of Engelberg we had the good fortune to be present at the Grand Festival of the Virgin—but the Procession on that day, though consisting of upwards of 1000 persons, assembled from all the branches of the sequestered valley, was much less striking (notwithstanding the sublimity of the surrounding scenery): it wanted both the simplicity of the other and the accompaniment of the Glacier-columns, whose sisterly resemblance to the moving Figures gave it a most beautiful and solemn peculiarity.—W.

P. 111. XXIII. Elegiac Stanzas, ll. 67-72. This stanza was added in ed. 1827.

P. 112. XXXV. On being stranded near the Harbour of Boulogne, ll. 5-6. Near the town of Boulogne, and overhanging the beach, are the remains of a tower which bears the name of Caligula, who here terminated his western expedition, of which these sea-shells were the boasted spoils. And at no great distance from these ruins, Buonaparte, standing upon a mound of earth, harangued his "Army of England," reminding them of the exploits of Cæsar, and pointing towards the white cliffs, upon which their standards were to float. He recommended also a subscription to be raised among the Soldiery to erect on that ground, in memory of the foundation of the 'Legion of Honour,' a Column—which was not completed at the time we were there.—W.

P. 112. XXXVI. After landing—the valley of Dover. November, 1829, ll. 5-7. This is a most grateful sight for an Englishman returning to his native land. Everywhere one misses in the cultivated grounds abroad, the animated and soothing accompaniment of animals ranging and selecting their own food at will.—W.

P. 113. XXXVII. At Dover. Probably 1837:—Prof. Dowden suggests with probability that this sonnet, which first appeared in the volume of Sonnets (1838), was written after Wordsworth's return from his tour of 1837. It was doubtless placed here (ed. 1845) as more suitably linked to No. XXXVI. of this series than to the Memorials of the later tour. In the Eversley Wordsworth the sonnet is erroneously stated to have been first published in 1850.

P. 114. XXXVIII. Desultory Stanzas, l. 37:—Les Fourches, the point at which the two chains of mountains part, that inclose the Valais, which terminates at St. Maurice.—W.

Ll. 49-51. Sarnen's Mount:—Sarnen, one of the two capitals of the Canton of Underwalden; the spot here alluded to is close to the town, and is called the Landenberg, from the tyrant of that name, whose
château formerly stood there. On the first of January 1308, the great day which the confederated Heroes had chosen for the deliverance of their country, all the castles of the Governors were taken by force or stratagem; and the Tyrants themselves conducted, with their creatures, to the frontiers, after having witnessed the destruction of their strongholds. From that time the Landenberg has been the place where the Legislators of this division of the Canton assemble. The site, which is well described by Ebel, is one of the most beautiful in Switzerland.—W.

L. 56. The bridges of Lucerne are roofed, and open at the sides, so that the passenger has, at the same time, the benefit of shade and a view of the magnificent country. The pictures are attached to the rafters; those from Scripture History, on the Cathedral Bridge, amount, according to my notes, to 240. Subjects from the Old Testament face the passenger as he goes towards the Cathedral, and those from the New as he returns. The pictures on these bridges, as well as those in most other parts of Switzerland, are not to be spoken of as works of art; but they are instruments admirably answering the purpose for which they were designed.—W.

**MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY**

P. 116. 1837:—From March 19th to Aug. 7th.

P. 117. I. Musings near Aquapendente. April, 1837, ll. 19-20. *That cone-shaped hill with fractured summit* :—Monte Amiata.—K.

L. 22. *Bleak Radicofani* :—On the old high road from Siena to Rome.—K.

L. 57. *The Wizard of the North* :—Sir Walter Scott, who died in 1832. For the visit to Helvellyn referred to in the following lines, cp. below, p. 527, note on p. 347, *Fidelity*.

P. 118, ll. 76-77. These words were quoted to me from *Yarrow Unvisited*, by Sir Walter Scott, when I visited him at Abbotsford, a day or two before his departure for Italy: and the affecting condition in which he was when he looked upon Rome from the Janiculan Mount, was reported to me by a lady who had the honour of conducting him thither.—W.


P. 119, l. 126. *Him* :—Christopher Columbus.

P. 120, ll. 158-159. Archbishop Ubaldo (1188-1200) founded the Campo Santo of Pisa, bringing fifty-three shiploads of earth from Mount Calvary, in order that the dead might repose in holy ground.—K.

P. 121, l. 207. *Savona* :—On the gulf of Genoa.


P. 122, l. 254. *Philosophic Tusculum* :—Wordsworth gives Tusculum this epithet because Cicero wrote his *Disputationes Tusculanae* at his villa there.
L. 262. *Post fanum putre Vacuna*; Horace, *Epistles*, i. x. 49. Vacuna was a Sabine deity.

L. 264. That delicious Bay;—The Bay of Naples, of which town the old name was Parthenope. Virgil spent much of his life at Naples, was buried there, and in later times held in awe as a magician.

Ll. 275-276. Wordsworth was familiar with Niebuhr’s theory that the legendary history of Rome, as given in Livy and elsewhere, was mainly the work of forgotten poets or bards. The theory, which has been at least very much modified by subsequent criticism, was popularised a few years later than this poem by Macaulay’s *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842). For Wordsworth’s knowledge of Niebuhr, cp. poems iv. v. vi. of this series.

P. 123, l. 305. Mamertine prison;—The *Carcer Mamertinus* or *Tullianum*, the Roman dungeon under the Capitoline Hill.

P. 124, 1837;—In a note, actually written by Frederick Faber, but based upon Wordsworth’s expressed intention, this poem is incidentally spoken of as composed in 1837. That it was not written at Aquapendente, which the travellers only visited for a few hours, we know from the Fenwick note. It was first published with the other Memorialis of this tour in the *Poems chiefly of early and late Years* (1842).

P. 125. II. The Pine of Monte Mario at Rome. Within a couple of hours of my arrival at Rome, I saw from Monte Pincio the Pine-tree as described in the sonnet; and, while expressing admiration at the beauty of its appearance, I was told by an acquaintance of my fellow-traveller, who happened to join us at the moment, that a price had been paid for it by the late Sir G. Beaumont, upon condition that the proprietor should not act upon his known intention of cutting it down.—W.

1841;—All the sonnets of this series, except No. xxvii., were apparently written in 1841, as we learn from a letter of Wordsworth to Moxon of Dec. 24th of that year. Knight’s *Life*, iii. (xi.) 405.

P. 126. VI. Plea for the Historian, i. 7. Clio;—The Muse of History.

Footnote to l. 14. The words are from Horace, *Odes*, i. xii.

P. 128. XI. From the Alban Hills, looking towards Rome, i. 10. Thy fortunes, twice exalted;—The ancient Classic period, and that of the Renaissance.—K.

L. 12. Thy double yoke;—Wordsworth refers no doubt to the Papal and the Neapolitan powers, both at this date maintained by Austrian support against the growing forces of national revolt.

P. 129. XII. Near the Lake of Trasimenum. At the battle of Lake Trasimenum in Etruria, in B.C. 217, Hannibal inflicted his first great defeat on the Romans.
P. 129. XIII. Near the same Lake, I. 9. Vanquished Chief:—
C. Flamininus, the consul.

L. 14. After the Second Punic War Hannibal’s administration of Carthage was so successful that the Romans took fright and demanded that he should be given up to them. He left Carthage, and, after being hunted by the Romans from one foreign state to another, finally took the poison which he was said to have carried about with him in a ring.

P. 129. XIV. The Cuckoo at Laverna. On the Monte Alverno or della Vernia in the Apennines, where St. Francis of Assissi spent the last part of his life.

P. 132. XV. At the Convent of Camaldoli. Near Naples. This and the following sonnet were based mainly on the meeting of Wordsworth’s companion, Henry Crabb Robinson, with one of the monks of Camaldoli who had been a painter.

P. 133. XVIII. At Vallombrosa, ll. 6-8. The name of Milton is pleasingly connected with Vallombrosa in many ways. The pride with which the Monk, without any previous question from me, pointed out his residence, I shall not readily forget. It may be proper here to defend the poet from a charge which has been brought against him, in respect to the passage in Paradise Lost, where this place is mentioned. It is said that he has erred in speaking of the trees there being deciduous, whereas they are, in fact, pines. The fault-finders are themselves mistaken; the natural woods of the region of Vallombrosa are deciduous, and spread to a great extent; those near the convent are, indeed, mostly pines; but they are avenues of trees planted within a few steps of each other, and thus composing large tracts of wood; plots of which are periodically cut down. The appearance of those narrow avenues, upon steep slopes open to the sky, on account of the height which the trees attain by being forced to grow upwards, is often very impressive. My guide, a boy of about fourteen years old, pointed this out to me in several places.—W.

P. 134, l. 22. Cf. Paradise Lost, iii. 29-32.

P. 135. XX. Before the Picture of the Baptist, by Raphael, in the Gallery at Florence. In the Tribuna at the Uffizzi Palace.

P. 135. XXI. At Florence—from Michael Angelo. The sonnet, here translated, beginning:

La forza d’un bel volto al Ciel mi sprona . . .

was constructed by Michael Angelo’s nephew and first editor from a fragment, No. lxxxii. of the Sonetti, in Guasti’s ed. Cp. Miscellaneous Sonnets, Part i. xxiv.-xxvi., above, vol. i. p. 441.

P. 136, 1841:—Mr. Hutchinson suggests that this and the following sonnet may have been two of the fifteen sonnets which Wordsworth
attempted to translate from Michael Angelo in 1805. But, if so, they were probably not finished until 1841.

P. 136. XXII. At Florence—from Michael Angelo. Sonnetti, ed. Guasti, lxxiii :

Scarcio d'un' importuna e grave salma.

P. 133. XXVIII. The Pillar of Trajan. This was the subject of the Newdigate Prize Poem for 1826. Wordsworth's son, John, then at New College, Oxford, declined to follow his father's suggestion that he should write for the prize. Wordsworth accordingly wrote these verses 'as a proof of what might, without difficulty, be done on such a subject.'—I. F. Several of the phrases used in describing the figures on the column are drawn from Forsyth's Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters during an Excursion in Italy in 1802-3, to which Wordsworth refers in ed. of 1827. Cp. Prof. Knight's notes.

THE RIVER DUDDON

A Series of Sonnets

A Poet [John Dyer] whose works are not yet known as they deserve to be, thus enters upon his description of the Ruins of Rome:

The rising Sun
Flames on the ruins in the purer air
Towering aloft;

and ends thus—

The setting Sun displays
His visible great round, between yon towers,
As through two shady cliffs.

Mr. Crowe, in his excellent loco-descriptive poem, Lewesdon Hill, is still more expeditious, finishing the whole on a May morning, before breakfast.

To-morrow for severer thought, but now
To breakfast, and keep festival to-day.

No one believes, or is desired to believe, that those Poems were actually composed within such limits of time; nor was there any reason why a prose statement should acquaint the Reader with the plain fact, to the disturbance of poetic credibility. But, in the present case, I am compelled to mention that the above series of Sonnets was the growth of many years; the one which stands the fourteenth was the first produced [in 1807]; and others were added upon occasional visits to the stream, or as recollections of the scenes upon its banks awakened a wish to describe
them. In this manner I had proceeded insensibly, without perceiving that I was trespassing upon ground preoccupied, at least as far as intention went, by Mr. Coleridge; who, more than twenty years ago, used to speak of writing a rural Poem, to be entitled The Brook, of which he has given a sketch in a recent publication. But a particular subject cannot, I think, much interfere with a general one; and I have been further kept from encroaching upon any right Mr. C. may still wish to exercise, by the restriction which the frame of the Sonnet imposed upon me, narrowing unavoidably the range of thought, and precluding, though not without its advantages, many graces to which a freer movement of verse would naturally have led.

May I not venture, then, to hope that, instead of being a hindrance, by anticipation of any part of the subject, these Sonnets may remind Mr. Coleridge of his own more comprehensive design, and induce him to fulfil it? There is a sympathy in streams—'one calleth to another'; and I would gladly believe that The Brook will ere long murmur in concert with The Duddon. But, asking pardon for this fancy, I need not scruple to say that those verses must indeed be ill-fated which can enter upon such pleasant walks of nature, without receiving and giving inspiration. The power of waters over the minds of Poets has been acknowledged from the earliest ages;—through the Flumina amem sylvasque inglorius of Virgil down to the sublime apostrophe to the great rivers of the earth by Armstrong, and the simple ejaculation of Burns (chosen, if I recollect right, by Mr. Coleridge as a motto for his embryo Brook):

The Muse nae Poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel' he learned to wander,
Adown some trotting burn's meander,
And na' think lang.—W. [Postscript to the Duddon]

P. 152. To the Rev. Dr. Wordsworth, ll. 51-52. The reference is to the magic girdle of Aphrodite, which Hera borrowed in order to beguile Zeus with love (cp. Iliad, xiv. 214 foll.). Aphrodite is called Cytherea from the legend that she first landed in the island Cythera when she was born of the foam of the sea.

L. 65. Christopher Wordsworth was Rector of St. Mary's, Lambeth, from 1816 to 1820.

P. 152. I. 1. 3. Bandusia:—Blandusia, ed. 1837, etc. The word was correctly printed in the orig. ed. of 1820. The reference is to Horace, Odes, iii. xiii., in the text of which there is some MS. authority for the spelling Blandusia.

P. 155. VI. Flowers, ll. 9-10:

There bloomed the strawberry of the wilderness;
The trembling eyebright showed her sapphire blue.

These two lines are in a great measure taken from The Beauties of Spring, a Juvenile Poem, by the Rev. Joseph Symson. He was a native of
Cumberland, and was educated in the vale of Grasmere, and at Hawkshead school; his poems are little known, but they contain passages of splendid description; and the versification of his Vision of Alfred is harmonious and animated. In describing the motions of the Sylphs, that constitute the strange machinery of his Poem, he uses the following illustrative simile—

Glancing from their plumes  
A changeful light the azure vault illumes.  
Less varying hues beneath the Pole adorn  
The streamy glories of the Boreal morn,  
That wavering to and fro their radiance shed  
On Bothnia’s gulf with glassy ice o’erspread,  
Where the lone native, as he homeward glides,  
On polished sandals o’er the imprisoned tides,  
And still the balance of his frame preserves,  
Wheeled on alternate foot in lengthening curves,  
Sees at a glance, above him and below,  
Two rival heavens with equal splendour glow.  
Sphered in the centre of the world he seems;  
For all around with soft effulgence gleams;  
Stars, moons, and meteors, ray opposed to ray,  
And solemn midnight pours the blaze of day.

He was a man of ardent feeling, and his faculties of mind, particularly his memory, were extraordinary. Brief notices of his life ought to find a place in the history of Westmoreland.—W.

P. 157. XIII. Open Prospect, l. 14. Donnerdale:—The district on the east bank of the Duddon between Broughton and Ulpha Bridge. ‘Hall Dunnerdale, sometimes shortened into Dunnerdale, is a hamlet on the highroad between Seathwaite and Ulpha.’—From Green’s Comprehensive Guide to the Lakes, here quoted from Prof. Knight.

P. 158. XVI. American Tradition, l. 14. ‘When the natives are asked how those figures could have been sculptured, they answer with a smile, as if relating a fact of which only a white man could be ignorant, that “at the period of the great waters, their fathers went to that height in boats.”’—Humboldt’s Travels, vol. ii. p. 183 (Bohn), quoted at greater length by Prof. Knight.

P. 159. XVII. Return, l. 2. Danish Raven:—The Raven was the ancient flag of the Danes, captured on one occasion by King Alfred, and often mentioned in the Danish and Anglo-Saxon chronicles. Cp. Langebek, Scriptores Rerum Danicarum, vol. ii. p. 435 note (n.).

L. 3. Bird of Rome:—The Eagle requires a large domain for its support: but several pairs, not many years ago, were constantly resident in this country, building their nests in the steeps of Borrowdale, Wast-
dale, Ennerdale, and on the eastern side of Helvellyn. Often have
I heard anglers speak of the grandeur of their appearance, as they
hovered over Red Tarn, in one of the coves of this mountain. The bird
frequently returns, but is always destroyed. Not long since, one visited
Rydal lake, and remained some hours near its banks: the consternation
which it occasioned among the different species of fowl, particularly the
herons, was expressed by loud screams. The horse also is naturally
afraid of the eagle.—W.

L. 10. The Roman Fort here alluded to, called by the country people
Hardknot Castle, is most impressively situated half-way down the hill on
the right of the road that descends from Hardknot into Eskdale. . . .
The Druidical Circle is about half a mile to the left of the road ascending
Stoneside from the vale of Duddon: the country people call it Sunken
Church.—W.

P. 159. XVIII. Seathwaite Chapel, l. 1. ‘Sacred Religion! mother of
form and fear’—Daniel, Musophilus, l. 295.

L. 12. A Pastor such as Chaucer’s verse portrays:—Canterbury Tales,
Prologue, 477-523.

L. 13. Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew:—In the Priest to
the Temple.

L. 14. And tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless praise:—In The
Deserted Village. The clergyman referred to in this sonnet was the
Rev. Robert Walker, curate of Seathwaite from 1735 to 1802, when he
died in his 93rd year. The memoir which Wordsworth appended to The
River Duddon is one of the most interesting of Wordsworth’s writings,
and one of the most beautiful biographical sketches in the language. It
will be found below, p. 539.

P. 161. XXIV. The Resting-place, l. 4. The ‘vagrant reed’ is of course
the composition of these sonnets by the wandering poet. The last line
of the sonnet is rather obscure. The ‘wily mask’ of Idless is apparently
the pretence of meditation and necessary rest put forward to excuse the
poet’s siesta. The ‘stealthy prospect’ of the beauties outside his retreat
will incite the poet to activity.

P. 163. XXVII. ll. 3-4. This ‘embattled House’ is supposed to be an
almost obliterated ruin at the head of Holehouse Ghyll, near a farmhouse
called the Old Hall. There is some difficulty about the identification;
and it does not appear that Wordsworth was aiming at topographical
accuracy, especially as he says in the Fenwick note that the subject of
the sonnet was ‘taken from a tradition belonging to Rydal Hall.’
Moreover, this sonnet was first published, in the volume containing
The Waggoner, in 1819, and was not included in the original series of
Duddon sonnets.

P. 164. XXXI. l. 7. Indian tree:—The banyan-tree.
P. 165. XXXIV. After-thought, I. 14. We feel that we are greater than we know:—'And feel that I am happier than I know.'—Milton [Paradise Lost, viii. 282]. The allusion to the Greek poet will be obvious to the classical reader.—W. Wordsworth refers to the lines of Moschus in the Epitaph of Bion on the contrast of human mortality with the yearly revival of the flowers. Bion. Epitaph. 103-108. Cp. Prof. Jebb's note contributed to Prof. Knight's ed., vol. vi. p. 264.

For the date of composition of this series of sonnets (1807-1820) see the note at the beginning of the series.

YARROW REVISITED, AND OTHER POEMS

P. 166. Composed (two excepted) during a tour in Scotland, and on the English Border, in the Autumn of 1831:—This sub-title was carried on by Wordsworth from the first ed. of the series (1835), though No. xxiii., which originally appeared in the series of Sonnets composed or suggested during a tour in Scotland in the summer of 1833, was presumably not one of the ‘two excepted’ here. There is no direct evidence to show which the two exceptions are, though it is not unlikely that they are The Apology (No. xxvi.) and The Highland Broach (No. xv.), which were printed in the original ed., in this order, at the end of the series.

P. 166. I. 1. 2. 'Winsome Marrow' :—Cp. Yarrow Unvisited, above, p. 18.

P. 169. III. A Place of Burial in the South of Scotland. On the banks of a small stream near the Wauchope that flows into the Esk near Langholme.—I. F.


P. 171. VII. 1. 4. Target :—The small shield of the Highlander.

P. 172. VIII. Composed in the Glen of Loch Etive, I. 14. It was mortifying to have frequent occasions to observe the bitter hatred of the lower orders of the Highlanders to their superiors; love of country seemed to have passed into its opposite. Emigration was the only relief looked to with hope.—I. F.

P. 173. XII. The Earl of Breadalbane’s Ruined Mansion, and Family Burial-place, near Killin, I. 2. ‘Narrow house’ :—Cp. Burns, Lament of Mary Queen of Scots, ii. 53-54:

And in the narrow house of death
Let winter round me rave.

The expression is common in Macpherson’s Ossian.
P. 175. XIII. ‘Rest and be Thankful.’ At the head of Glencoe:—Glencoe is in Argyllshire, on the road from Loch Lomond to Inverary by way of Arrochar and Glenkinglas. The road was made by General Wade immediately after the 1745 Rebellion. Cp. Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland.

P. 175. XV. The Highland Broach, l. 35. Malvina, in Macpherson’s Ossian, is the daughter of a chief named Toscar, betrothed to Oscar, Ossian’s son, and, after Oscar’s death, living with Ossian, and addressed by him as his audience and his inspiration. Cp. the Ossianic poems Ca-lodin, and Fingal, Duan iv.

P. 178. XIX. Picture of Daniel in the Lions’ Den, at Hamilton Palace. This picture, painted entirely by Rubens, belonged at one time to King Charles I. It was bought of the Duke of Hamilton in 1832 by Mr. Becket Denison for 4900 guineas, and on his death was bought back by the Duke for 2000 guineas. This information was kindly given me by Mr. Hawse Turner, the keeper of the National Gallery.

P. 179. XXII. Hart’s-horn Tree, near Penrith. In the time of the first Robert de Clifford, in the year 1333 or 1334, Edward Baliol, king of Scotland, came into Westmoreland, and stayed some time with the said Robert at his castles of Appleby, Brougham, and Pendragon. And during that time they ran a stag by a single greyhound out of Whinfell Park to Redkirk, in Scotland, and back again to this place; where, being both spent, the stag leaped over the pales, but died on the other side; and the greyhound, attempting to leap, fell, and died on the contrary side. In memory of this fact the stag’s horns were nailed upon a tree just by, and (the dog being named Hercules) this rhythm was made upon them:

Hercules kill’d Hart a greese,
And Hart a greese kill’d Hercules.

The tree to this day bears the name of Hart’s-horn Tree. The horns in process of time were almost grown over by the growth of the tree, and another pair was put up in their place.—Nicholson’s and Burns’s History of Westmoreland and Cumberland. The tree has now disappeared, but I well remember its imposing appearance as it stood, in a decayed state, by the side of the high road leading from Penrith to Appleby. This whole neighbourhood abounds in interesting traditions and vestiges of antiquity, viz. Julian’s Bower, Brougham and Penrith Castles, Penrith Beacon, and the curious remains in Penrith Churchyard, Arthur’s Round Table, and, close by, Maybrough; the excavation called the Giant’s Cave, on the banks of the Emont, Long Meg and her Daughters, near Eden, etc. etc.—W. ‘Hart a greese’ means a fat hart, in condition to be hunted.

P. 180. XXIII. Fancy and Tradition. 1833:—Originally No. xxxvi. of the Sonnets composed or suggested during a Tour in Scotland, in the
William Wordsworth

*Summer of 1833.* But as that series was first published in the same volume (1835) with *Yarrow Revisited,* etc., it is possible that it originally belonged to the latter and should be dated 1831.

P. 180. XXIV. Countess' Pillar. *Introductory Note:*—I have given Prof. Knight's corrected transcript of this inscription—Wordsworth's containing some, purely verbal, omissions and alterations.

P. 182. XXVI. Apology, for the foregoing Poems, l. 21. *That sorrow-stricken door:*—The home of Sir Walter Scott. See *Yarrow Revisited,* and the sonnet following that poem, above, pp. 166, 169.

**THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE**

Or, The Fate of the Nortons

The Poem of the White Doe of Rylstone is founded on a local tradition, and on the Ballad in Percy's *Collection,* entitled *The Rising of the North.* The tradition is as follows: 'About this time,' not long after the Dissolution, 'a White Doe,' say the aged people of the neighbourhood, 'long continued to make a weekly pilgrimage from Rylstone over the fells of Bolton, and was constantly found in the Abbey Church-yard during divine service; after the close of which she returned home as regularly as the rest of the congregation.—Dr. Whitaker's *History of the Deanery of Craven.*—Rylstone was the property and residence of the Nortons, distinguished in that ill-advised and unfortunate Insurrection; which led me to connect with this tradition the principal circumstances of their fate, as recorded in the Ballad.—W.

P. 183. Advertisement. Much of the poem was composed at the time here stated, but Wordsworth was still at work on it not only in 1808, when it was shown, as complete, to Southey, Lamb, and Coleridge, but in 1810. It was first published in 1815, when the Dedication was written, and was very much revised for the edition of 1837. Wordsworth spoke of it as 'in conception, the highest work he had ever produced. The mere physical action was all unsuccessful; but the true action of the poem was spiritual—the subduing of the will, and all inferior fancies, to the perfect purifying and spiritualising of the intellectual nature.'—Christopher Wordsworth's *Memoirs of W. Wordsworth,* vol. ii. p. 311.

Dedication, l. 23. *Bliss with mortal Man may not abide*':—The *Faeir Queene,* bk. i. canto viii. stanza 44.

P. 184, ll. 1-6. These six lines were taken from *The Borderers* (Act iii. Sc. v., ll. 1539-1544) and placed here, with the addition of the following lines, in the ed. of 1837, at which time *The Borderers* had not yet been published.

*Quotation from Lord Bacon:*—*Essays:* Of Atheism.
P. 185, l. 1. It is to be regretted that at the present day Bolton Abbey wants this ornament: but the Poem, according to the imagination of the Poet, is composed in Queen Elizabeth's time. 'Formerly,' says Dr. Whitaker, 'over the Transept was a tower. This is proved not only from the mention of bells at the Dissolution, when they could have had no other place, but from the pointed roof of the choir, which must have terminated westward, in some building of superior height to the ridge.'—W.

P. 189, ll. 209-210. Cp. lines 316 foll. The 'remembrances' are those of the incidents to be narrated in the following cantos.


P. 196, footnote to l. 515. It is in the Percy Collection, and was quoted in full by Wordsworth in a note to the original ed. of The White Doe (1815).

P. 198, l. 595. Brancepeth Castle stands near the river Were, a few miles from the city of Durham. It formerly belonged to the Nevilles, Earls of Westmoreland. See Dr. Percy's account.—W.

P. 200, l. 687. Towers of Saint Cuthbert.—Durham Cathedral.

L. 696. Raby Hall.—Raby Castle, about six miles N.E. of Barnard Castle, was founded in 1379 by John de Neville; it is described by Leland as 'the largest castle of logginesses in all the north country.' Cp. Brabner's Comprehensive Gazetteer of England and Wales.


L. 828. At the battle of Durham or Neville's Cross, Oct. 17, 1346, the Scots, led by their king, David Bruce, were defeated by the English under Henry Percy, Ralph Neville, and William de la Zouche, Archbishop of York.

P. 209, l. 1069. Her duty is to stand and wait.—Cp. Milton, On his blindness, l. 14: 'They also serve who only stand and wait.' Wordsworth first italicised this line, and printed the words following in capitals, in 1820, no doubt by way of bringing out the motive of the whole poem.

P. 211, l. 1175. Pendle-hill or Pennygent.—Both hills of the same part of the country as Rylstone Fell.

P. 220. Motto to Canto Seventh. From the Address to Kilchurn Castle, ll. 6-9 above, p. 13.

Ll. 1158-1159. 'After the attainder of Richard Norton, his estates were forfeited to the crown, where they remained till the 2nd or 3rd of James; they were then granted to Francis Earl of Cumberland.'—W. From Whitaker's History of the Deanery of Craven.
P. 221, l. 1622. By 'thoroughly forlorn,' Wordsworth must here mean the condition of one who has reached the very bottom of the pit of desolation, and so is past the worst: the use seems not to be found elsewhere.

P. 223, l. 1707. Amerdale:—Otherwise called Littondale, a fork of the valley of the Wharf.

L. 1711. 'Dernbrook, which runs along an obscure valley from the N.W., is derived from a Teutonic word, signifying concealment.' Dr. Whitaker [History of the Deanery of Craven].—W.

P. 224, l. 1733. Wandered:—We might well expect the word to be 'wandering': the word at any rate is a participle (having wandered) parallel to 'browsing,' and not a verb parallel to 'espied.'

P. 225, l. 1774. On one of the bells of Rylstone Church, which seems coeval with the building of the tower, is this cypher 'F. N.' for John Norton, and the motto 'God us aye.'—W.

P. 226, l. 1828. The connected thought of the passage demands that this word 'beamed' should be used in a sense elsewhere, so far as I know, unparalleled, though derived from a legitimate, if rare, use of the verb. 'How happy in its turn was the Doe to meet the recognition!—to meet the mild glance which was beamed (i.e. was shed as a beam) from the maiden's countenance, and was a communication like the ray of a new morning to the nature and outlook of the Doe.' The use is not noticed in N.E.D., where, however, there are examples of the verb in the transitive sense: e.g. Shenstone, Love and Honour, 187: 'the genial sun . . . Beams forth ungentle influences.'

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

In Series

During the month of December 1820 I accompanied a much-beloved and honoured Friend in a walk through different parts of his estate, with a view to fix upon the site of a new Church which he intended to erect. It was one of the most beautiful mornings of a mild season—our feelings were in harmony with the cherishing influences of the scene; and such being our purpose, we were naturally led to look back upon past events with wonder and gratitude, and on the future with hope. Not long afterwards, some of the Sonnets which will be found towards the close of this series were produced as a private memorial of that morning’s occupation.

The Catholic Question, which was agitated in Parliament about that time, kept my thoughts in the same course; and it struck me that certain points in the Ecclesiastical History of our Country might advantageously be presented to view in verse. Accordingly, I took up the subject, and what I now offer to the reader was the result.
When this work was far advanced, I was agreeably surprised to find
that my friend Mr. Southey had been engaged with similar views in
writing a concise History of the Church in England. If our Productions,
thus unintentionally coinciding, shall be found to illustrate each other,
it will prove a high gratification to me, which I am sure my friend will
participate.—W. Wordsworth. Rydal Mount, January 24, 1822.

For the convenience of passing from one point of the subject to
another without shocks of abruptness, this work has taken the shape of
a series of Sonnets: but the Reader, it is to be hoped, will find that the
pictures are often so closely connected as to have jointly the effect of
passages of a poem in a form of stanza to which there is no objection but
one that bears upon the Poet only—its difficulty.—W.

Most of the Ecclesiastical Sonnets were written in 1821, and published
as Ecclesiastical Sketches in 1822. I follow Prof. Dowden and Mr.
Hutchinson in appending the date only to those sonnets to which this
remark does not apply.

Part I

P. 229. Motto:—Cp. George Herbert's The Temple: The Church Porch,
1. i. :

A verse may find him, who a Sermon flies,
And turn delight into a Sacrifice.

P. 230. II. Conjectures, 1. 6. Did holy Paul a while in 'Britain dwell:
—Stillingfleet adduces many arguments in support of this opinion, but
they are unconvincing. The latter part of this sonnet refers to a
favourite notion of Roman Catholic writers, that Joseph of Arimathea
and his companions brought Christianity into Britain, and built a rude
church at Glastonbury; alluded to hereafter, in a passage upon the
dissolution of monasteries.—W.

P. 231. V. Uncertainty, 1. 2. Brigantian:—The Brigantes at the time
of the Roman occupation of Britain inhabited Yorkshire, Cumberland,
and Durham.


L. 10. Taliesin is the name of an ancient British bard, first mentioned
in the Saxon genealogies appended to the Historia Britonum (seventh or
eighth century a.d.). The poems attributed to him are found in a MS.
of the fourteenth century. None of them, in all probability, go back to
the supposed date of the bard; but in Wordsworth's time they were
accepted as genuine, and the legends that had grown up round the
name of Taliesin were 'worked up into one consistent tale, which also
embodied a good deal of the 'Taliesin' poetry,' and were published in
the Cambrian Quarterly Magazine in 1833.' (From T. E. Lloyd's article,
'Taliesin' in Dict. of Nat. Biog.).

P. 231. VI. Persecution, ll. 13-14. This hill at St. Albans must have
been an object of great interest to the imagination of the Venerable Bede, who thus describes it, with a delicate feeling, delightful to meet with in that rude age, traces of which are frequent in his works: ‘Variis herbarum floribus depictus, immo usque quaque vestitus, in quo nihil repente arduum, nihil preceps, nihil abruptum, quem lateribus longe lateque deductum in modum aequoris natura complanat, dignum videlicet eum pro insita sibi specie venustatis iam olim reddens, qui beati martyris cruore dicaretur.’—W. The account of the martyrdom of St. Alban, from which Wordsworth quotes, is given in Bede’s Ecclesiasticae historiae gentis Anglorum Libri Quinque, bk. i. vii.

P. 233. X. Struggle of the Britons against the Barbarians, i. 1. Aneurin, bard and priest of the Godolin, a British tribe of the sea coast south of the Firth of Forth, described the defeat of the Britons by the Saxons at the battle of Cattraeth (probably about 600 A.D.) in the poem called Godolin, which in an imperfect and interpolated form is still extant. His personality is hardly less legendary than that of Taliesin, or that of Urien, the British king and ally of Arthur, who struggled against the Angles of Northumbria, or that of Arthur himself.

P. 233. XI. Saxon Conquest, i. 2. Hallelujahs:—Alluding to the victory gained under Germanus. See Bede.—W. The Bishop Germanus, being asked for aid by the Britons against the Saxons and Picts, routed the latter by instructing his followers at a given signal to wake the echoes of the hills with a universal shout of ‘Hallelujah’ (Bede, Eccl. Hist., bk i. xx.).

L. 10. The last six lines of this sonnet are chiefly from the prose of Daniel.—W. Cp. Daniel’s Collection of the History of England (Works, ed. Grosart, vol. iv. p. 101): ‘They [the Saxons] being a people of a rough breeding that would not be taken with these delicacies of life, seemed to care for no other monuments but of earth, and as borne in the field would build their fortunes onely there. Witness so many Intrenchments, Mounts, and Borroughs raised for tombs, and defences upon all the wide champions, and eminent Hills of this Isle, remaining yet as characters of the deepe scratches made on the whole face of our Country, to shew the hard labour our Progenitors endured to get it for us.’ Wordsworth also refers to his frequent obligations to other prose writers, particularly Fuller.

P. 234. XII. Monastery of Old Bangor. ‘Ethelforth reached the Convent of Bangor, he perceived the Monks, twelve hundred in number, offering prayers for the success of their Countrymen: “if they are praying against us,” he exclaimed, “they are fighting against us”; and he ordered them to be first attacked: they were destroyed; and appalled by their fate, the courage of Brocmall wavered, and he fled from the field in dismay. Thus abandoned by their leader, his army soon gave way, and Ethelforth obtained a decisive conquest. Ancient Bangor
itself soon fell into his hands and was demolished; the noble monastery was levelled to the ground; its library, which is mentioned as a large one, the collection of ages, the repository of the most precious monuments of the ancient Britons, was consumed; half-ruined walls, gates, and rubbish were all that remained of the magnificent edifice.'—See Turner's valuable History of the Anglo-Saxons. The account Bede gives of this remarkable event suggests a most striking warning against National and Religious prejudices.—W. See Bede, Eccl. Hist., bk. ii. ii.

P. 235. XV. Paulinus, II. 5-9. The person of Paulinus is thus described by Bede, from the memory of an eye-witness: 'Longae staturae, paululum incurvus, nigro capillo, facie macilenta, naso adunco, pertenui, venerabilis simul et terribilis aspectu.'—W. 'Of tall stature, slightly bent, black-haired, of lean face, with a very thin and hooked nose, his appearance inspired at the same time veneration and fear.'

P. 235. XVI. Persuasion, I. 1. See the original of this speech in Bede.—W. Bede, Eccl. Hist., bk. ii. xiii., from which the incident of Sonnet xvii. is also taken.

P. 236. XVII. Conversion, I. 12. Heard near fresh streams:—The early propagators of Christianity were accustomed to preach near rivers for the convenience of baptism.—W.

P. 237. XIX. Primitive Saxon Clergy. Having spoken of the zeal, disinterestedness, and temperance of the clergy of those times, Bede thus proceeds: 'Unde et in magna erat veneratione tempore religiosis habitus, ita ut ubicunque clericus aliquid aut monachus adveniret gaudenter ab omnibus tanquam Dei famulus acciperetur. Etiam si in itinere pergens inveniretur, accurrebant, et flexa cervice, vel manu signari, vel ore illius se benefici, gaudebant. Verbis quoque horum exhortatoriiis diligenter auditum praebebant' (lib. iii. xxvi.).—W.

P. 238. XXII. Seclusion—continued, I. 13. Thorp or vill:—Homestead or small house. Cp. The Excursion, viii. 100: 'Among the tenantry of thorpe and vill.' The expression looks like a quotation, but I cannot trace it.

P. 240. XXVI. Alfred, I. 10. Through the whole of his life, Alfred was subject to grievous maladies.—W.

P. 241. XXIX. Danish Conquests, I. 1. The violent measures carried on under the influence of Dunstan, for strengthening the Benedictine Order, were a leading cause of the second series of Danish invasions.—See Turner [History of the Anglo-Saxons].—W.

P. 242. XXXIII. The Council of Clermont. Wordsworth refers to that Council of Clermont which was held by Pope Urban II. in 1095, at which the First Crusade was proclaimed.

P. 243. *footnote to l. 14:*—For the statement, and for the expression ‘Nature’s hollow arch,’ marked by Wordsworth as a quotation, cp. Fuller’s *Historie of the Holy Warre*, bk. i. viii.: ‘If fame, which hath told many a lie of others, be not herein belyed herself, the things concluded in this Council, were the same night reported at impossible distance in the utmost parts of Christendome. What spirituall intelligencers there should be, or what echoes in the hollow arch of this world should so quickly resound news from the one side thereof to the other belongeth not to us to dispute.’

P. 244. XXXVIII. Scene in Venice. The legendary character of this scene became known to Wordsworth in later years, these sonnets having been written ‘long before ecclesiastical history and points of doctrine had excited the interest with which they have been recently enquired into and discussed’ (from Fenwick note). As Wordsworth says in the same note, the penance inflicted by Gregory vii. upon the Emperor Henry iv. would equally well illustrate his point.

**Part II**

P. 246. II. l. 5. I have added a comma after ‘tower,’ as necessary to the sense. In a MS. version of the sonnet, quoted by Prof. Knight, ll. 5-6 run:

Behold how thundering from her spiritual tower
She daunts brute rapine, cruelty she tames.

P. 246. III. Cistercian Monastery, ll. 1-5. ‘Bonum est nos hic esse, quia homo vivit purius, cadit rarius, surgit velocius, incedit cautius, quiescit securius, moritur felicius, purgatur citius, praemiatur copiosius’ (Bernard). ‘This sentence,’ says Dr. Whitaker, ‘is usually inscribed in some conspicuous part of the Cistercian houses.’—W.

P. 248. VII. Other Benefits—continued, l. 9. Prof. Knight is doubtless right in referring this passage to Edward iii., whose knightly person, magnificence, and ostentation, as well as his institution of the Order of the Garter, his tournaments, and his naval and military achievements, are well known. At the same time it is curious that Wordsworth, who was not at all given to missing the true proportions of things, should have been misled into so unqualified a panegyric. Moreover, in Edward iii.’s day both chivalry and crusades were rapidly becoming mere empty survivals.

P. 250. XI. Transubstantiation, l. 9. Valdo:—Peter Waldo, a rich merchant of Lyons, was the founder of the sect of the Waldenses (about
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1170). He sold his goods and gave them to the poor, and had the New Testament translated into Provençal. This action, and the unauthorised preaching of his followers, led to a struggle with the Church, and the Waldenses were, with other heretics, the object of frequent and cruel persecution. The majority of them gradually settled in the valleys of Piedmont, and gave the name of the Vaudois to that district. In 1487 Pope Innocent viii. made a desperate attempt to exterminate them, but they continued to exist, and were gradually absorbed in the manifold body of Protestants, suffering persecutions similar to those of the Huguenots. Sonnet xii., in which the Vaudois is represented as a refuge for the spiritual progenitors of the Waldenses, 'Age sere Valdo,' etc., rests upon historical views which have been revised since Wordsworth's day.

P. 251. XIV. W Aldenses, l. 8. The list of foul names bestowed upon those poor creatures is long and curious; and, as is, alas! too natural, most of the opprobrious appellations are drawn from circumstances into which they were forced by their persecutors, who even consolidated their miseries into one reproachful term, calling them Patarenians or Paturins, from pati, to suffer.

Dwellers with wolves she names them, for the pine
And green oak are their covert; as the gloom
Of night oft foils their enemy's design,
She calls them Riders on the flying broom;
Sorcerers, whose frame and aspect have become
One and the same through practices malign.—W.

These six lines were apparently an alternative sextet for the sonnet, following naturally after the line:

Whom Obloquy pursues with hideous bark.

P. 252. XVII. Wicliffe. Cp. Fuller, The Church-History of Britain, bk. iv. p. 170 (orig. ed. 1655), where we are told that 'about one and forty years' after Wicliffe's death, in obedience to the Council of Constance, the Bishop of Lincoln had his remains taken from his grave at Lutterworth, burnt to ashes, and cast into a neighbouring brook called the Swift. 'Thus this Brook hath convey'd his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow Seas; they, into the main Ocean. And thus the Ashes of Wickliffe are the Emblem of his Doctrine, which now is dispersed all the World over.'

P. 253. XIX. Abuse of Monastic Power, l. 6. The Secular is the priest who lives in the secular world, as opposed to the Regular, who is under the rule of a religious order.

P. 254. XXI. Dissolution of the Monasteries. These two lines (7-8) are adopted from a MS., written about the year 1770, which accidentally fell into my possession. The close of the preceding Sonnet
on monastic voluptuousness is taken from the same source, as is the
verse, 'Where Venus sits,' etc., and the line, 'Once ye were holy, ye
are holy still,' in a subsequent Sonnet.—W.

P. 255. XXIV. SAINTS, l. 9. Valiant Margaret:—St. Margaret, Virgin
and Martyr, died at Antioch in Pisidia in the latter half of the third
century. She is generally represented as piercing a dragon with a long
cross, or as emerging from the dragon's rent body while her robe is still
passing through its mouth. She was a very popular Saint in the north
of England, being, no doubt, often confused with St. Margaret, Queen
of Scotland (d. 1093).

P. 256. XXVI. Apology, ll. 9-10. 'Lightly for both the bosom's lord did
sit upon his throne':—Romeo and Juliet, v. i. 3. 'My bosom's lord sits
lightly on his throne.'

Li. 8-14. Both John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Thomas More
disapproved of Henry viii.'s divorce, and refused to take the oath recog-
nising the King as 'supreme head' of the Church. They were beheaded
in 1535.

P. 256. XXVIII. Reflections, l. 6. 'Trumpery':—Prof. Knight com-
parets Paradise Lost, iii. 474:

Eremites and Friars,
White, black, and grey, with all their trumperie.

P. 257. XXXI. Edward VI., l. 1. 'Sweet is the holiness of Youth':—
Cp. Wordsworth's version of The Prioress's Tale, l. 61, and note: below,
p. 535.)

P. 258. XXXII. Edward signing the Warrant for the Execution
of Joan of Kent. Joan Bocher (Butcher) was twice charged with
heresy, in 1543 and 1548. Many efforts were made to induce her to
recant her views, which were equally opposed to Roman Catholic and
English orthodoxy; and she was finally burnt in 1550. The story of
Cranmer forcing Edward vi. to sign the warrant for her execution has
been popularised by Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

P. 259. XXXIV. Latimer and Ridley, l. 5. Transfigured:—
'M. Latimer suffered his keeper very quietly to pull off his hose, and his
other array, which to looke unto was very simple: and being stripped
into his shrowd, he seemed as comely a person to them that were present,
as one should lightly see: and whereas in his clothes he appeared a
withered and crooked sillie (weak) olde man, he now stood bolt upright,
as comely a father as one might lightly behold. . . . Then they brought
a faggotte, kindled with fire, and laid the same downe at doctor Ridley's
feete. To whome M. Latimer spake in this manner: 'Bee of good
comfort, master Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such
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a candle by God's grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out."—Foxe's Acts, etc. Similar alterations in the outward figure and deportment of persons brought to like trial were not uncommon. See note to the above passage in Dr. Wordsworth's Eclesiastical Biography, for an example in an humble Welsh fisherman.—W.

I have not been able to trace the quotation in l. 11-12 of this sonnet.

P. 260. XXXVIII. Elizabeth, l. 12. Wordsworth refers to the re-crudescence of religious intolerance after 1570, in which year Pope Pius v. published his bull of deposition against Elizabeth, and the English Government began to retaliate by increased persecution of Roman Catholics.

P. 261. XXXIX. Eminent Reformers, l. 5. 'On foot they went, and took Salisbury in their way, purposely to see the good Bishop, who made Mr. Hooker sit at his own table; which Mr. Hooker boasted of with much joy and gratitude when he saw his mother and friends; and at the Bishop's parting with him, the Bishop gave him good counsel and his benediction, but forgot to give him money; which when the Bishop had considered, he sent a servant in all haste to call Richard back to him, and at Richard's return, the Bishop said to him, "Richard, I sent for you back to lend you a horse which hath carried me many a mile, and I thank God with much ease," and presently delivered into his hand a walking-staff, with which he professed he had travelled through many parts of Germany; and he said, "Richard, I do not give, but lend you my horse; be sure you be honest, and bring my horse back to me, at your return this way to Oxford. And I do now give you ten groats to bear your charges to Exeter; and here is ten groats more, which I charge you to deliver to your mother, and tell her I send her a Bishop's benediction with it, and beg the continuance of her prayers for me. And if you bring my horse back to me, I will give you ten groats more to carry you on foot to the college; and so God bless you, good Richard."—See Walton's Life of Richard Hooker.—W.

P. 262. XLI. Distractions, l. 11. Personates the mad:—A common device in religious and political conflicts. See Strype in support of this instance.—W. Prof. Knight refers to Strype's Life and Acts of Matthew Parker, bk. iii. [for which Prof. Knight gives vol. i.] xiii. and xvi., where the case of a Dominican Friar, who preached under the guise of a Puritan dissenter, one Faithful Cummin, is related. A better instance is the case of Elizeus Hall, the pretended Messenger from Heaven. Strype, Annals of the Reformation, vol. i. (3rd ed.) xxv. Cp. ibid., liii., the case of the Jesuit, Thomas Heth, who for about six years preached 'up and down the country,' pretending to be a Puritan. There are many similar cases in Strype.

P. 263. XLV. Laud. In this age a word cannot be said in praise of Laud, or even in compassion for his fate, without incurring a charge of bigotry; but fearless of such imputation, I concur with Hume, 'that it is sufficient for his vindication to observe that his errors were the most excusable of all those which prevailed during that zealous period.' A key to the right understanding of those parts of his conduct that brought the most odium upon him in his own time, may be found in the following passage of his speech before the bar of the House of Peers: 'Ever since I came in place, I have laboured nothing more than the external publick worship of God, so much slighted in divers parts of this kingdom, might be preserved, and that with as much decency and uniformity as might be. For I evidently saw that the public neglect of God's service in the outward face of it, and the nasty lying of many places dedicated to that service, had almost cast a damp upon the true and inward worship of God, which while we live in the body, needs external helps, and all little enough to keep it in any vigour.'—W.

L. 3. 'In the painful art of dying':—I have not been able to trace this quotation.

P. 264. I. l. 1. A lovely Maid:—When I came to this part of the series I had the dream described in this Sonnet. The figure was that of my daughter, and the whole passed exactly as here represented.—I. F.

P. 265. III. Charles the Second, l. 10. England soon must sink:—I.e. on the accession of James II.

P. 265. IV. Latitudinarianism. Latitudinarianism is not here, as so often, employed as a term of disapproval, but expresses the religious attitude of men like Jeremy Taylor, Chillingworth, and the Cambridge Platonists, who did not believe in the exclusive efficacy of particular forms of Church government, etc.

Ll. 13-14. 'That he may see and tell of things invisible to mortal sight':—Paradise Lost, bk. iii. 54.

P. 266. VI. Clerical Integrity, l. 2. One rigorous day:—Wordsworth refers to Black Bartholomew's day, Aug. 24, 1662, on which the Act of Uniformity came into force, causing upwards of two thousand ministers to leave their cures.

P. 266. VII. Persecution of the Scottish Covenanters, l. 2. The majesty of England interposed:—The massacre of the Vaudois in April 1655 excited great indignation in England, and especially moved Cromwell and Milton. The latter wrote his famous sonnet Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughter'd saints, while Cromwell tried to stir up the Protestant powers and France to a war with Spain and Savoy. He succeeded in getting the Duke of Savoy forced to drop the persecution of the Vaudois.
P. 267. VIII. Acquittal of the Bishops. In a note on Part i. Sonnet xi. Wordsworth says: 'Upon the acquittal of the Seven Bishops I have done little more than versify a lively description of that event in the MS. Memoirs of the first Lord Lonsdale.' The Seven Bishops were sent to the Tower by James ii. in 1683 for protesting against the second Declaration of Indulgence. They were tried and acquitted June 29-30 of the same year.

P. 268. X. Obligations of Civil to Religious Liberty, I. 3. Algernon Sidney, second surviving son of the Earl of Leicester, and brother of Waller's 'Saccharissa,' was born in 1622, fought for the Parliament against Charles i., sat in the Long Parliament, refused to sit as one of the judges at the trial of the King, and held aloof from internal politics during the Protectorate. His main interest was in foreign politics, and he was engaged on a mission to Denmark at the time of the Restoration. After that event he lived in exile till 1677, when he returned to England. In 1683 he was tried before Jeffreys for participation in the Rye House Plot, condemned, and beheaded. Lord William Russell, who had suffered on the same charge earlier in the year, was third son of the Duke of Bedford, born in 1639, for many years a member of Parliament, and strongly opposed to the Papists.

P. 268. XI. Sacheverel, I. 5. Who loudest rang his pulpit 'larum bell': —Henry Sacheverell (1674?-1724) was a High-Church Tory with a very violent, abusive style in preaching. A great vogue was foolishly given him by the Whig Government in 1709, when he was impeached for a sermon preached at St. Paul's. He was tried by the House of Lords, found guilty by 69 to 52, and suspended from preaching for three years. Popular feeling ran so high in his favour, that in the general election which soon followed his trial the Whigs were completely defeated. His preaching and his presence were especially attractive to ladies, including the Queen, who presented him to the living of St. Andrew's, Holborn, in 1713. Cp. Dict. Nat. Biog.

P. 270. XV. III. The Pilgrim Fathers—Concluded.—American Episcopacy. American episcopacy, in union with the church in England, strictly belongs to the general subject; and I here make my acknowledgments to my American friends, Bishop Doane, and Mr. Henry Reed of Philadelphia, for having suggested to me the propriety of advertsing to it, and pointed out the virtues and intellectual qualities of Bishop White, which so eminently fitted him for the great work he undertook. Bishop White was consecrated at Lambeth, Feb. 4, 1787, by Archbishop Moore, and before his long life was closed, twenty-six bishops had been consecrated in America, by himself. For his character and opinions, see his own numerous Works, and a 'Sermon in commemoration of him, by George Washington Doane, Bishop of New Jersey.'—W.
P. 272. XXII. Catechising. Cp. the Autobiographical Memoranda in Christopher Wordsworth’s Memoirs of William Wordsworth, vol. i. p. 8. ‘I remember my mother only in some few situations, one of which was her pinning a nosegay to my breast when I was going to say the catechism in the church, as was customary before Easter.’

P. 274. XXVI. The Marriage Ceremony, l. 10. ‘The which would endless matrimony make’:—From Spenser’s Epithalamion, stanza xl.

P. 277. XXXII. Rural Ceremony. This is still continued in many churches in Westmoreland. It takes place in the month of July, when the floor of the stalls is strewn with fresh rushes; and hence it is called the ‘Rush-bearing.’—W.

P. 278. XXXV. Old Abbeys, l. 10. This is borrowed from an affecting passage in Mr. George Dyer’s History of Cambridge.—W. Wordsworth apparently refers to a passage near the end of the account of Trinity College, vol. ii. p. 837.

P. 279. XXXVII. Congratulation, l. 2. Them:—i.e. the party which called in William of Orange to turn out James II.

P. 280. XL. Church to be Erected—Continued, l. 9-10. The Lutherans have retained the Cross within their churches: it is to be regretted that we have not done the same.—W.

P. 281. XLIII. Inside of King’s College Chapel, Cambridge, l. 1. The royal Saint:—Henry VI.

P. 282. XLVI. Ejaculation, l. 5-6. Some say that Monte Rosa takes its name from a belt of rock at its summit—a very unpoetical and scarcely a probable supposition.—W.
EVENING VOLUNTARIES

P. 234. The Evening Voluntaries appeared as a separate class of poems in the volume Yarrow Revisited and other Poems (1835). They consisted of the first eight here printed, though in a different order, together with a piece composed of a 'fine stanza of Akenside, connected with a still finer from Beattie by a couplet of Thomson.'—W. This piece was not reprinted in Wordsworth's collected poems: it will be found below, vol. iii. p. 439.

P. 236. III. (By the Sea-side), l. 39. 'Our thoughts are heard in heaven':—Young's Night Thoughts, ii. 95.

P. 236. IV. l. 7. The lines following 'nor do words' were written with Lord Byron's character as a poet before me, and that of others his contemporaries who wrote under like influences.—I. F.

P. 290. VIII. Introductory Note:—Composed June 3, 1802; the 'Friend' being the poet's sister.

L. 11. 'And masquerading':—Burns, The Twa Dogs, ll. 153-154:
At operas and plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading.

P. 291. IX. l. 49. In these lines I am under obligation to the exquisite picture of 'Jacob's Dream,' by Mr. Alstone, now in America. It is pleasant to make this public acknowledgment to a man of genius, whom I have the honour to rank among my friends.—W.

P. 294. XII. To the Moon. Composed by the Seaside,—on the Coast of Cumberland, l. 51. Plains:—This word is italicised in all edd. It is very difficult to see why, unless it be merely to point a contrast between the 'billows' and the 'depths' of the sea on the one hand, and the smooth surface of a calm sea on the other, on which the moon shines 'with especial grace.' The mere fact that the plains (Campi) of the sea is a common metaphor with the ancients would hardly account for the italics.


P. 296. XIII. To the Moon. (Rydal), l. 50. 'To look on tempests, and be never shaken':—Shakespeare, Sonnets, cxvi. l. 6.

P. 296. XIV. To Lucca Giordano. Born at Naples in 1629, but his work was mostly done at Venice. 'The picture referred to in this sonnet was brought from Italy by the poet's eldest son.'—Prof. Knight.
POEMS

COMPOSED OR SUGGESTED DURING A TOUR, IN THE SUMMER OF 1833

P. 298. Introductory Note:—My companions were H. C. Robinson and my son John.—I. F. Most of the poems were published in *Yarrow Revisited and other Poems* (1835).

P. 299. IV. To the River Greta, near Keswick, 15. Cocytus, the Greek word for 'wailing,' was the name of one of the rivers of the lower world.

P. 300. V. To the River Derwent, II. 9-10. The crown of victory at the Nemean games, one of the four great contests of Greece, was a wreath of parsley. In Wordsworth's text the word is mis-spelt Nemean. *Published 1819:—First published with The Waggoner. This date is, by an oversight, omitted in Mr. Hutchinson's Oxford ed.*


P. 301. IX. To a Friend. (On the banks of the Derwent.) John Wordsworth, the poet's son (who accompanied him on this tour of 1833), was building a parsonage on his small living of Brigham, to which he had been lately presented by the Earl of Lonsdale.

P. 301. X. Mary Queen of Scots. (Landing at the mouth of the Derwent, Workington):—'The fears and impatience of Mary were so great,' says Robertson, 'that she got into a fisher-boat, and with about twenty attendants landed at Workington in Cumberland; and thence she was conducted with many marks of respect to Carlisle.'—W.

P. 302, I. 9. Time is called Saturnian, partly perhaps because the sickle is an emblem of both, partly from the association of Saturn with the remotest antiquity in Roman mythology.

P. 302. XI. Stanzas. Suggested in a Steamboat off Saint Bees' Heads, on the coast of Cumberland:—St. Bees' Heads, anciently called the Cliff of Baruth, are a conspicuous sea-mark for all vessels sailing in the N.E. parts of the Irish Sea. In a bay, one side of which is formed by the southern headland, stands the village of St. Bees; a place distinguished, from very early times, for its religious and scholastic foundations.  .  .  .

The form of stanza in this Poem, and something in the style of versification, are adopted from the 'St. Monica,' a poem of much beauty upon a monastic subject, by Charlotte Smith: a lady to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be either acknowledged or remembered. She wrote little, and that little unambitiously, but with true feeling for rural nature, at a time when nature was not much
regarded by English Poets; for in point of time her earlier writings preceded, I believe, those of Cowper and Burns.—W.

P. 303, l. 32. St. Bega came from Ireland and founded a small monastery about A.D. 650. l. 37 Mr. R. A. Potts suggests as the source of this

P. 304, l. 73. I am aware that I am here treading upon tender ground; but to the intelligent reader I feel that no apology is due. The prayers of survivors, during passionate grief for the recent loss of relatives and friends, as the object of those prayers could no longer be the suffering body of the dying, would naturally be ejaculated for the souls of the departed; the barriers between the two worlds dissolving before the power of love and faith. The ministers of religion, from their habitual attendance upon sick-beds, would be daily witnesses of these benignant results, and hence would be strongly tempted to aim at giving to them permanence, by embodying them in rites and ceremonies, recurring at stated periods. All this, as it was in course of nature, so was it blameless, and even praiseworthy; since some of its effects, in that rude state of society, could not but be salutary. No reflecting person, however, can view without sorrow the abuses which rose out of thus formalising sublime instincts, and disinterested movements of passion, and perverting them into means of gratifying the ambition and rapacity of the priesthood. But, while we deplore and are indignant at these abuses, it would be a great mistake if we imputed the origin of the offices to prospective selfishness on the part of the monks and clergy: they were at first sincere in their sympathy, and in their degree dupes rather of their own creed, than artful and designing men. Charity is, upon the whole, the safest guide that we can take in judging our fellow-men, whether of past ages, or of the present time.—W.

L. 94. Staff and cockle hat and sandal shoon:—Wordsworth is practically quoting from The Friar of Orders Gray, in Bp. Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry:

O by his cockle-hat, and staff,
And by his sandal shoon.

Cp. the Oxford New English Dictionary: 'cockle-hat, a hat with a cockle or scallop-shell stuck in it, worn by pilgrims, as a sign of their having been at the shrine of St. James of Compostella in Spain.'

P. 305, l. 114. Prof. Knight refers to Ecclesiastical Sonnets, Part ii. No. xxv. The Virgin.

L. 127. This and the following stanza first appeared in ed. 1845.

P. 306, l. 162. Wordsworth refers us to bk. vii. of The Excursion (see ll. 1008-1057), and Ecclesiastical Sonnets, Part ii. Early Sonnets.


L. 1. The bastions of Coehorn:—i.e. the castles of feudal times and the later fortifications built by such military engineers as the Dutch, van Coehorn (1641-1704), or his still more celebrated French contemporary, Vauban.
L. 14. Noble Hillary:—The Tower of Refuge, an ornament to Douglas Bay, was erected chiefly through the humanity and zeal of Sir William Hillary; and he also was the founder of the lifeboat establishment at that place; by which, under his superintendence, and often by his exertions at the imminent hazard of his own life, many seamen and passengers have been saved.—W.

P. 308. XVII. Isle of Man. My son William is here the person alluded to as saving the life of the youth.—I. F.

P. 309. XIX. By a Retired Mariner. (A Friend of the Author):—This unpretending sonnet is by a gentleman nearly connected with me, and I hope, as it falls so easily into its place, that both the writer and the reader will excuse its appearance here.—W. The author was Henry Hutchinson, Mrs. Wordsworth’s brother, ‘a person of great originality and vigour of mind, a very enterprising sailor, and a writer of verses distinguished by no ordinary merit.’ Bp. Wordsworth’s Memoirs of William Wordsworth, vol. ii. p. 246, quoted by Prof. Knight.

P. 309. XX. At Bala-sala, Isle of Man. (Supposed to be written by a Friend), footnote to l. 3:—The friend was a Mr. Cookson, a relative of Wordsworth’s mother.

P. 310. XXI. Tynwald Hill, l. 9. Snafell:—The summit of this mountain is well chosen by Cowley as the scene of the ‘Vision,’ in which the spectral angel discourses with him concerning the government of Oliver Cromwell. ‘I found myself,’ says he, ‘on the top of that famous hill in the Island Mona, which has the prospect of three great, and not long since most happy, kingdoms. As soon as ever I looked upon them, they called forth the sad representation of all the sin and all the miseries that overwhelmed them these twenty years.’ It is not to be denied that the changes now in progress, and the passions, and the way in which they work, strikingly resemble those which led to the disasters the philosophic writer so feelingly bails. God grant that the resemblance may not become still more striking as months and years advance!—W.


P. 313, ll. 39-40. Cp. Virgil, Aeneid, vi. 667:

Musèum ante omnes (medium nam plurima turba
Hunc habet atque humeris extantem suscipit altis).

P. 314, l. 80. Mceonides:—Homer.

P. 315. XXX. Cave of Staffa, l. 8. The reference is doubtless to Ossian, though I know of no particular passage in Macpherson’s Ossian of which these lines are a definite reminiscence. The rhythm of l. 8 is noticeable. Wordsworth experiments to a certain extent in slurred syllables, and in particular is fond of using the word ‘spiritual’ as a dissyllable: but this line is exceptional.
P. 315. XXXI. Flowers on the top of the Pillars at the Entrance of the Cave. Flowers:—Ox-eyed daisies, as Wordsworth tells us.

P. 316. XXXIII. Iona. (Upon Landing), ll. 11-14. The four last lines of this sonnet are adopted from a well-known sonnet of Russell, as conveying my feeling better than any words of my own could do.—W. Cp. Sonnets and Miscellaneous Poems (No. x.), by the Rev. Thomas Russell, Fellow of New College, Oxford, who died in 1783 in the twenty-sixth year of his age.

P. 316. XXXIV. The Black Stones of Iona. [See Martin’s ‘Voyage among the Western Isles’]:—Description of the Western Islands of Scotland by M. Martin (1703), p. 259.

P. 317. XXXV. 1. 1. Isle of Columba’s Cell:—St. Columba settled in Iona in 563.

P. 317. XXXVI. Greenock. Per me si va nella Città dolente:—‘By me is the way into the sorrowful city.’—Dante, Inferno, iii. i.

P. 318. XXXVII. 1. 4. Cp. Burns, To a Mountain Daisy, from which (stanza iv.) comes the quotation in l. 9.

P. 318. XXXVIII. The River Eden, Cumberland, ll. 3-4. Wordsworth probably refers to the Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, ll. 46, 47:

And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden’s course to guard.

See vol. i. p. 344.

L. 5. Fetched from Paradise:—It is to be feared that there is more of the poet than the sound etymologist in this derivation of the name Eden. On the western coast of Cumberland is a rivulet which enters the sea at Moresby, known also in the neighbourhood by the name of Eden. May not the latter syllable come from Dean, a valley? Langdale, near Ambleside, is by the inhabitants called Langden. The former syllable occurs in the name Emont, a principal feeder of the Eden; and the stream which flows, when the tide is out, over Cartmel sands, is called the Ea—French, eau—Latin, aqua.—W.

P. 319. XLI. Nunnery, 1. 14. At Corby, a few miles below Nunnery, the Eden is crossed by a magnificent viaduct; and another of these works is thrown over a deep glen or ravine, at a very short distance from the main stream.—W.

P. 320. XLIII. The Monument commonly called Long Meg and her Daughters, near the River Eden. The Daughters of Long Meg, placed in a perfect circle eighty yards in diameter, are seventy-two in number above ground; a little way out of the circle stands Long Meg herself, a single stone eighteen feet high. When I first saw this
monument as I came upon it by surprise, I might over-rate its importance as an object; but though it will not bear comparison with Stonehenge, I must say, I have not seen any other relic of those dark ages, which can pretend to rival it in singularity and dignity of appearance.—W.

P. 321. XLV. To the Earl of Lonsdale. This sonnet was written immediately after certain trials which took place at the Cumberland Assizes, when the Earl of Lonsdale, in consequence of repeated and long-continued attacks upon his character, through the local press, had thought it right to prosecute the conductors and proprietors of three several journals. A verdict of libel was given in one case; and, in the others the prosecutions were withdrawn, upon the individuals retracting and disavowing the charges, expressing regret that they had been made, and promising to abstain from the like in future.—W.

P. 321. XLVI. The Somnambulist. The story told in this poem is purely imaginary, and not founded upon any local tradition. Cp. the Fenwick note.

P. 323, ll. 34-35. Lady Macbeth.

P. 325. Probably before 1833:—This poem was dated 1833 in Ed. 1849-50: but the Fenwick note informs us that it arose from an excursion made by Wordsworth with Sir George Beaumont, and 'the story here told was constructed and soon after put into verse by me as it now stands.' Sir George Beaumont died in 1827.

P. 325. XLVII. To Cordelia M,—. Marshall.

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

P. 329. III. Lines Written in Early Spring. Actually composed while I was sitting by the side of the brook that runs down from the Comb, in which stands the village of Alford, through the grounds of Alfoxden. It was a chosen resort of mine.—I. F., where the scene is further described: cp. too Coleridge, This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison.


P. 331. VI. Simon Lee, The Old Huntsman. This old man had been huntsman to the Squires of Alfoxden.—I. F. The first seven stanzas of the poem, representing eight in the original ed., were subjected to a great many changes and transpositions, especially in edd. 1820 and 1827.

P. 332, l. 25. Milton, Lycidas, l. 37.

P. 335. VIII. A Poet's Epitaph, l. 11. The Doctor is of course a Doctor of Divinity, and his cushion that of the pulpit.
NOTES

P. 337. IX. To the Daisy. 1802:—Dated 1803 in edd. from 1836, but in a note of 1807 to the poem To the Daisy (‘In youth from rock to rock I went’), Wordsworth states that that poem and this were written in 1802.

P. 337. X. Matthew. This, and other poems connected with Matthew, would not gain by a literal detail of facts. Like the Wanderer in The Excursion this Schoolmaster was made up of several, both of his class and of men of other occupations.—I. F. The School was that of Hawkshead, cp. Introd., p. xxv.

P. 342. XIII. Personal Talk, i. 6. Maidens withering on the stalk:—This somewhat contemptuous expression is rather softened if one remembers the passage of Shakespeare which suggested it (Midsummer’s Night’s Dream, i. i. 76):

But earthlier happy is the rose distill’d
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

It met, however, with a deserved rebuke from Wordsworth’s friend and amanuensis, Miss Fenwick, as the Fenwick note testifies. ‘By the bye, I have a spite at one of this series of Sonnets (I will leave the reader to discover which) as having been the means of nearly putting off for ever our acquaintance with dear Miss Fenwick, who has always stigmatised one line of it as vulgar, and worthy only of having been composed by a country squire.’

Ll. 7-8. Like Forms, with chalk painted on rich men’s floors:—‘To guide the dancers.’—Prof. Dowden.

L. 12. In the loved presence of my cottage-fire:—This line stood in the original edition of 1807 ‘better and more characteristically’ (as Wordsworth says in the Fenwick note) thus:

By my half-kitchen my half-parlour fire.

Ll. 25-26. This quotation from Collins, Ode to the Passions, l. 60, also occurs in An Evening Walk, l. 237, above, vol. i. p. 8.

P. 343, ll. 41-42. The references are to Shakespeare’s Othello and Spenser’s Færie Queene.

Published 1807:—Written at Town-End [i.e. Dove Cottage], Grasmere.—I. F.

P. 343. XIV. Illustrated Books and Newspapers. ‘The Illustrated London News—the pioneer of illustrated newspapers—was first issued on 14th May 1842.’—Prof. Knight.

P. 345. XVII. Incident Characteristic of a Favourite Dog. The dog belonged to Mrs. Wordsworth’s brother, Thomas Hutchinson, and died, aged and blind, by falling into a draw-well (from Fenwick notes).

P. 347. XIX. Fidelity. Cp. Sir Walter Scott’s poem Helvellyn, which deals with the same incident. Wordsworth and Scott climbed Helvellyn
together in the same year as the death of the young angler here recorded, and each wrote his poem without knowing that the other was engaged upon the same subject.

P. 349. XX. Ode to Duty. This Ode is on the model of Gray’s Ode to Adversity, which is copied from Horace’s Ode to Fortune [Odes, i. xxxv.] (from Fenwick note). Prof. Knight adds a note from ‘the MS.’: ‘But is not the first stanza of Gray’s from a chorus of Æschylus? And is not Horace’s Ode also modelled on the Greek?’ Horace’s Ode is certainly modelled, like most of his Odes, on the Greek, though not on any single original. Gray’s first stanza is not a translation from Æschylus, but he prefixed to his Ode, or Hymn as he called it, lines from the first chorus of Æschylus’ Agamemnon.

L. 16. In ed. 1827 these two lines were:
Long may the kindly impulse last!
But thou, if they should totter, teach them to stand fast!

P. 350, l. 40. The following stanza was printed only in the original ed. of 1807:
Yet not the less would I throughout
Still act according to the voice
Of my own wish; and feel past doubt
That my submissiveness was choice:
Not seeking in the school of pride
For ‘precepts over dignified’,
Denial and restraint I prize
No farther than they breed a second Will more wise.

P. 351. XXI. Character of the Happy Warrior. Written soon after tidings had been received of the death of Lord Nelson, which event directed the Author’s thoughts to the subject.—W. . . . Many elements of the character here pourtrayed were found in my brother John, who perished by shipwreck.—I. F.

P. 352, ll. 75-76. Wordsworth refers us to The Floure and the Leafe (usually, though probably wrongly, attributed to Chaucer), l. 548:
For knightes ever should be persévering,
To seeke honour without feintyse or slouth,
Fro wele to better, in al maner thing.

1806:—Perhaps written at the end of 1805; at any rate ‘soon after tidings had been received of the death of Lord Nelson’ (W. 1807). Nelson was killed on Oct. 21, 1805.

P. 353. XXII. The Force of Prayer; or, The Founding of Bolton Priory, l. 1. Bene:—Old English ben = prayer.—Prof. Dowden.

P. 354. 1807:—Dated by Wordsworth 1808, but found by Prof. Knight, in an earlier form, in a letter of Dorothy Wordsworth of Oct. 13, 1807.
NOTES

L. 31. *Abrupt abyss* :—The phrase is marked as a quotation by Wordsworth, and Prof. Knight compares Paradise Lost, ii. 409: *‘Over the vast Abrupt.’* L. 405, *ibid.* runs: *‘The dark, unbottomed infinite Abyss.’*

P. 357. XXV. Ode to Lycoris. May 1817. Lycoris was the pseudonym under which Virgil’s friend Gallus wrote of his mistress Cytheris. The name was popularised by Virgil’s Tenth Eclogue, and is used by Wordsworth in a purely fanciful manner.

P. 359. XXVI. To the Same, l. 46. In editions 1845 and 1849-50 *‘too’* is substituted for *‘two’* of previous editions. No doubt *‘too’* was a misprint. Mr. Hutchinson corrects it in the Oxford Wordsworth: neither Prof. Knight nor Prof. Dowden notices the variation, both printing *‘too.’*

P. 363. XXX. l. 6. Strenuous idleness:—This expression is borrowed from Horace, Epistles, i. ii. 28; Strenua nos exercet inertia. Wordsworth had used it earlier, in Prelude, iv. 378; and, in its original Latin, in a letter to his friend Mathews (1791) given in Knight’s Life, i. (ix.) p. 58.

P. 364. XXXI. Humanity, l. 32. I am indebted, here, to a passage in one of Mr. Digby’s valuable works.—W. Prof. Knight says: *‘See his Of bodies, and of Man’s Soul’*—referring us to the works of Sir Kenelm Digby (1603-1665): but Wordsworth obviously refers to Mr. Kenelm Henry Digby (1800-1880), the author of The Broadstone of Honour, of which a presentation copy (ed. 1823) was in Wordsworth’s library. I have not, on a superficial glancing through that work, discovered the passage to which he refers.

P. 367. XXXIV. To ——. Upon the Birth of her First-born Child, March 1833. Isabella, wife of John Wordsworth, the poet’s eldest son, at this time Rector of Moresby, near Whitehaven.
Lucretius:—[v. 222 foll.]

P. 369. XXXV. The Warning. A Sequel to the Foregoing. These lines were composed during the fever spread through the Nation by the Reform Bill. As the motives which led to this measure, and the good or evil which has attended or has risen from it, will be duly appreciated
by future historians, there is no call for dwelling on the subject in this place. I will content myself with saying that the then condition of the people's mind is not, in these verses, exaggerated.—I. F. Such verses as these can hardly be fairly judged now, except by studying the history of politics contemporary with them, and particularly the letters of Wordsworth of this period. See the Memoirs by Bp. Wordsworth, vol. ii. ch. xlix.

P. 370, l. 23. I expect that there should be only a comma at 'Lay': if the couplet is exclamatory Wordsworth would probably have used a note of exclamation.

P. 377. XXXIX. To May, l. 59. 'The rathe primrose as it dies':—Milton, Lycidas, l. 142.

P. 378. 1826-1834:—Wordsworth informs us that this and the preceding poem were originally intended to be one, but were broken into two, and that he made additions to each part, so as to produce a consistent and appropriate whole. (From I. F.) Hence this date.


SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY AND ORDER

P. 385. II. Upon the Late General Fast. 'March 1832:—Appointed because of an outbreak of cholera.—Prof. Knight.

P. 386. III., l. 14. Hurrah for:—George Grote, the celebrated historian of Greece.

P. 386. IV., l. 14. Perilous is sweeping change, all chance unsound: 'All change is perilous and all change unsound.'—Spenser [Færie Queene, bk. v. canto xii. stanza 36.].—W.

P. 388. VIII. These lines were written several years ago, when reports prevailed of cruelties committed in many parts of America, by men making a law of their own passions. A far more formidable, as being a more deliberate mischief, has appeared among those States, which have lately broken faith with the public creditor in a manner so infamous. I cannot, however, but look at both evils under a similar relation to inherent good, and hope that the time is not distant when our brethren of the West will wipe off this stain from their name and nation.—W. In the last year of his life Wordsworth added the following note: 'I am happy to add that this anticipation is already partly realised; and that the reproach addressed to the Pennsylvanians in the next sonnet, is no longer applicable to them. I think that those other states to which it may yet apply will soon follow the example now set them by Philadelphia and redeem their credit with the world.'
SONNETS UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH

P. 391. This series of sonnets was written in or about the year 1839-40, in consequence of the question of capital punishment being much agitated at that time. In 1837 the number of offences liable to capital punishment had been very greatly diminished by Parliament. See Sir Henry Taylor's article in the Quarterly Review (Dec. 1841) on The Sonnets of William Wordsworth, in which this series was published for the first time.

P. 392. III., ll. 1-2. Lucius Junius Brutus condemned his own sons to death for conspiring with the banished Tarquins.


MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

P. 397. I. Epistle. To Sir George Howland Beaumont, Bart. :—Sir George Beaumont died in 1827. This Epistle was first published in 1842. '...I am loth to add, that it was never seen by the person to whom it is addressed. So sensible am I of the deficiencies in all that I write, and so far does everything that I attempt fall short of what I wish it to be, that even private publication, if such a term may be allowed, requires more resolution than I can command. I have written to give vent to my own mind, and not without hope that, some time or other, kindred minds might benefit by my labours: but I am inclined to believe I should never have ventured to send forth any verses of mine to the world if it had not been done on the pressure of personal occasions. Had I been a rich man, my productions, like this Epistle, the tragedy of The Borderers, etc., would most likely have been confined to manuscript.—I. F.

P. 398, l. 41. Attendant on Thessalian flocks:—Apollo, in the Greek story, tended the flocks of Admetus at Pherae in Thessaly, either out of friendship to him, or as a punishment for having slain the Cyclops.

P. 399, l. 111. The only Gowdar Crag, of which I can find mention, is in Borrowdale.

L. 119. This visit to Bootle in 1811 was undertaken for the health of the poet's children, Catherine and Thomas, who, however, both died the next year. See next poem and Introd., p. xlv.

P. 401, ll. 139-190. Sir George Beaumont had bought Loughrigg Tarn 'with a view to build, near it, such a residence as is alluded to in this Epistle.' The project was given up owing to the opposition of Sir Michael le Fleming, who 'claimed a sort of Lordship over the territory' (from I. F.).
P. 404. II. Gold and Silver Fishes in a Vase, ll. 7-8. Cp. 'Something less than joy, but more than dull content.' Quoted from the Countess of Winchelsea's poems by Wordsworth in a note to Miscellaneous Sonnets, vol. i. p. 535.

P. 406. III. Liberty (Sequel to the Preceding), l. 2. Anna:—See note at the end of the poem.

Men loven of propre kinde newfangelnesse,
As briddles doon that men in cages fede.
For though thou night and day take of hem hede,
And strawe hir cage faire and softe as silk,
And yeve hem sugre, homy, breed and milk,
Yet right anon, as that his dore is uppe,
He with his feet wil spurne adoun his cuppe,
And to the wode he wol and wormes ete;
So newfangel been theye of hir mete,
And loven novelnyes of propre kinde;
No gentillesse of blood ne may hem binde.

P. 408, l. 91. Horace, Epistles, i. xviii. 103.
An secretum iter et fallentis semita vitae.


L. 113. The melancholy Cowley:—In The Complaint, l. 7, Cowley calls himself 'the melancholy Cowley,' being, like so many Royalists, neglected at the Restoration.

L. 111. In a deep vision's intellectual scene:—This is actually the first line of Cowley's poem The Complaint (1663).

P. 410. IV. l. 22. Spite of names, to show:—I.e. to show, in spite of names, bright colours, etc.

P. 410. V. The Gleaner (Suggested by a Picture). By T. Holmes, engraved by C. Heath.—Prof. Knight.

P. 411. VI. To a Redbreast (In Sickness). S. H.:—Almost the only verses by our lamented sister, Sara Hutchinson.—I. F.

P. 414. IX. Floating Island. D. W.—Published 1842:—My poor sister takes a pleasure in repeating these verses, which she composed not long before the beginning of her sad illness.—I. F. Dorothy Wordsworth had a severe illness in 1829, from which she never really recovered; but her brain was not seriously affected until 1835.

P. 417. XII. To the Lady Fleming, on seeing the foundation preparing for the erection of Rydal Chapel, Westmoreland, l. 81. 'Bold bad':—Spenser, Faerie Queene, bk. i. canto i. stanza xxxvii.

L. 33. 'Dark opprobrious den':—Milton, Paradise Lost, ii. 53.
NOTES

P. 418. XIII. ON THE SAME OCCASION, l. 4. The Mother Church in yon sequestered vale:—The church at Grasmere, dedicated to St. Oswald.

P. 419. XIV. THE HORN OF EGREMONT CASTLE. A tradition transferred from the ancient mansion of Hutton John, the seat of the Hudlestones, to Egremont Castle.—I. F.

P. 422. XV. GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL, a true Story. The incident from Dr. Darwin’s Zoonomia (I. F.), vol. iv. pp. 68-69, ed. 1801.—Prof. Knight.

L. 6. Duffle:—Duffel is a coarse, thick cloth, so called from the town of that name between Antwerp and Mechlin.


P. 426. XVII. TO A CHILD. Rotha Quillinan, the poet’s god-daughter.

P. 429. XIX. GRACE DARLING. Grace Darling (1815-1842) was the daughter of William Darling, keeper of the lighthouse on one of the Farne Islands, off Northumberland. On September 7, 1838, the Forfarshire steamboat was wrecked on one of the rocks, and most of the persons on board were lost. Darling and his daughter rowed in a small boat to a rock on which the few survivors had found refuge; they brought off four men and a woman. Two of these four returned with Darling and rescued the remaining four men (see Dict. Nat. Biog.).

L. 27. Holy Cuthbert’s Cell:—On one of the Farne Islands. St. Cuthbert was for a time a monk, and afterwards Bishop of Lindisfarne; but he preferred his anchorite’s hut.

P. 431. 1842:—So dated by Wordsworth. In a letter of March 27, 1843, he speaks of the poem as written ‘two or three weeks ago.’

P. 431. XX. THE RUSSIAN FUGITIVE. Peter Henry Bruce, having given in his entertaining memoirs the substance of this tale, affirms that, besides the concurring reports of others, he had the story from the lady’s own mouth.

The Lady Catherine, mentioned towards the close, is the famous Catherine, then bearing that name as the acknowledged wife of Peter the Great.—W. The book referred to above is Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, containing an account of his travels in Germany, Russia, Tartary, Turkey, and the West Indies; as also several anecdotes of the Czar Peter I. of Russia (1782).

P. 435. In ed. 1835 ll. 179-180 were enclosed in quotation-marks, with this note: ‘From Golding’s translation of Ovid’s Metamorphoses. See also his Dedicatory Epistle prefixed to the same work.’ The lines referred to are:

There was not any wheare
As yet a Bay; by meanes whereof was Phebus faine to weare
The leaves of every pleasant tree about his goolden heare.
(From the First Book, pp. 10, 11, ed. 1575). And:
As for example, in the tale of Daphnee turned to Bay
A myrrore of virginitie appeere unto us may,
Which yeelding neither unto feare, nor force, nor flatterye,
Doth purchase everlasting fame and immortalitye.
(From *The Epistle to the Earl of Leycester*, ibid. p. 2.)
P. 437, l. 255. *The Kremlin* :—The royal palace at Moscow.

**INSCRIPTIONS**


L. 19. *That famous Youth*:—Francis Beaumont, the dramatist, brother of Sir John, was born in 1584 and died in 1616.

1808-1811 :—Dated by Wordsworth 1808: but Prof. Dowden is probably right in supposing that while the original idea or perhaps the original draft of the poem dates from that year, it was only finished in 1811, the year in which the fourth of these inscriptions (also dated by Wordsworth 1808) was certainly composed.

P. 443. IV. For a Seat in the Groves of Coleorton. Nov. 19, 1811 :—Dated by Wordsworth 1808; but in a letter of Nov. 20, 1811, he writes that he composed these verses ‘yesterday morning.’ There is no doubt that this and the three preceding inscriptions were the result of Wordsworth’s residence at Coleorton in 1806-1807.

P. 443. V. Written with a Pencil upon a Stone in the Wall of the House (an Out-House), on the Island at Grasmere, l. 6. *Vitruvius*:—The famous Roman architect M. Vitruvius Pollio, author of the *De Architectura Libri X.*, lived in the time of Julius Cæsar and Augustus.

P. 444. VI. Written with a Slate Pencil on a Stone, on the Side of the Mountain of Black Comb. Black Comb stands at the southern extremity of Cumberland; its space covers a much greater extent of ground than any other mountain in these parts, and from its situation, the summit commands a more extensive view than any other point in Britain. See [*View from the top of Black Comb*, vol. i. p. 370].—W.

P. 445. VIII. 1830 :—So dated by Wordsworth. Sent in MS. to John Kenyon on Sept. 9, 1831.—Prof. Dowden.

P. 446. ll. 21-22. The walk is what we call *Far-terrace*, beyond the summer-house at Rydal Mount. The lines were written when we were afraid of being obliged to quit the place to which we were so much attached.—I. F.
SELECTIONS FROM CHAUCER

Modernised


P. 452, l. 51. A little scholar:—In Chaucer 'clergeon,' i.e. a little clerk, a child being brought up as a clerk or member of one of the clerical orders. Such a child would naturally be a chorister, and clergeon therefore often means a chorister, but there seems no sufficient reason to quarrel with Wordsworth's 'scholar.'

P. 453, l. 60. Simple:—In Chaucer (l. 60), 'For sely child wil alday sone lere': Wordsworth's 'simple' is quite correct. This is the meaning of 'sely or, as in Milton's Hymn on the Nativity, 'silly.' Cp. Chaucer's Legend of Good Women; Dido, l. 234 and l. 331.

Ll. 57-64. This stanza has a line more than the rest, and the rhyme-system altered. The words 'Sweet is the holiness of youth' are not represented in the original. St. Nicholas, the patron of schoolboys, was said to have shown his piety at such an early age that on Wednesdays and Fridays in his infancy he would only be suckled once a day, in the evening. See Prof. Skeat's Chaucer (Clarendon Press), vol. v. p. 177.

P. 454, l. 113. Our:—In Chaucer the MSS. vary between 'your' and 'oure.' Prof. Skeat adopts 'your,' which is obviously the more likely expression here.

P. 457, l. 231. Enclosed his uncorrupted body sweet:—In Chaucer, 'enclosen they his litel body swete.' It is difficult to see the motive of Wordsworth's alteration.

P. 458. II. The Cuckoo and the Nightingale. The Cuckoo and the Nightingale is now recognised as not having been written by Chaucer: Prof. Skeat observes that at the end of it in a MS. in the Cambridge University Library are the words Explicit Clanvowe, and attributes it to Sir Thomas Clanvowe, 'a well-known personage at the courts of Richard ii. and Henry iv.,' and 'a friend of "Prince Hal."'

L. 20. But most his might he sheds on the eve of May:—In the original, 'And most his might he sheweth ever in May.'

P. 459, l. 28. Rememberance:—Printed 'remembrance' in ed. 1849-50, and by Prof. Knight and Prof. Dowden. Mr. Hutchinson restores 'rememberance' (which spelling occurs also in Troilus and Cressida, l. 44 below) from ed. 1842.

L. 39. Both hot and cold, and heart-aches every day:—In the original, 'both hoot and cold, an acces every day.'

P. 460, l. 64. Tall were the flowers, the grove a lofty cover:—In the original, as Wordsworth had it before him, 'The flowers and the greves
like hie.' The true text is 'The floures and the gras ilike al hie' or, with slight variations, to that effect; *i.e.* the daisies and the grass were equally high, or low.

P. 461, l. 99. 'A loud rioting' is an addition of Wordsworth.

L. 104. *She*:—Some MSS. of the original fluctuate in the gender of the Cuckoo; but there can be little doubt that it should be masculine throughout.

P. 462, ll. 127-129. *Oci* was the imperative of the old French verb *ocire* 'to kill': it also in Old French, when doubled, represented the cry of the nightingale.—Prof. Skeat.

P. 464, l. 130. *He may full soon go with an old man's hair*:—Wordsworth correctly renders the text as he had it, but the original is really: 'He may ful some of age have his heyr, *i.e.* according to Prof. Skeat, 'may very soon find that his heir has come of age,'—and threatens his inheritance. At the end of the next stanza the original 'And thanne thou shalt hiten as do I' means, 'and then thou shalt be called *cocu* like me,' *cocu* in Old French meaning both *cuckoo* and *cuckold*. This gives its point to l. 186.

P. 465, l. 203. *And knows not when he hurts and when he heals*:—In the best MS. of the original, 'And whom he hit he not, or whom he fayleth, with better sense: *i.e.* 'And he knows not whom he hits or whom he misses.'

P. 466, l. 240. This line is scarcely intelligible, as the point of the poem is in honour of Love. Wordsworth followed the text of his day: but the right reading is, in the original,

'Nay,' quod I, 'ther to shal no thing me bringe
Fro love; and yet he doth me machol wo.'

P. 467, l. 270. *Of that false Bird whom Love can not abide*:—In the original, 'Of that foule, false, unkinde brid.'

L. 283. *Under a maple that is well beseen*:—In the original, 'Under a maple that is fayre and groene.'

P. 463. Ll. 291 to the end follow the popular texts in being closely attached to the preceding poem; according to Prof. Skeat, however, they have nothing to do with it.


P. 469, l. 21. *Continuance*:—In Chaucer, 'countenance,' which is natural and makes sense.

P. 470, l. 57. *And at the corner of that self-same house*:—In the original, 'And at that corner, in the yonder house.'

P. 471, l. 118. *With a soft voice*:—In ed. 1849-50, 'With a soft night voice.' This phrase raises one of the most curious questions of text in Wordsworth. In the version contributed by Wordsworth to *The Poems of Geoffrey Chaucer Modernised* (1841), in which this poem first appeared, this line ran, 'With a soft voice, he of his Lady dear,'—a literal version.
of the original Chaucer (l. 636). The phrase ‘with a soft night voice’ appeared in ed. 1842 (Poems chiefly of Early and Late Years) and in all subsequent editions until, on the suggestion of Prof. Dowden in a paper read to the Wordsworth Society, Mr. Hutchinson expelled the word ‘night’ from the Oxford ed. Mr. Hutchinson thinks that ‘night’ was foisted in by the compositor, being ‘evidently caught from the expression “night by night,” which occurs four lines below’: from the point of view of textual criticism I cannot help thinking that this is a rash assumption: but that ‘night’ was foisted in by some mistake or other seems quite certain. It would have been quite in Wordsworth’s manner to insert a monosyllable before or after ‘soft’ to strengthen the rhythm: there are many instances of a similar treatment of such light words as ‘with a,’ and many more of Wordsworth’s frequent uneasiness, even in the minutest points of rhythm, where perhaps, but for his alterations, few readers would have felt what seemed to him amiss. But it is scarcely conceivable that he should have inserted the word ‘night,’ which is not an adjective, clashes harshly with the end of the preceding line, is otiose for the sense, and represents nothing in the original.

L. 123. I steer and sail:—In Chaucer, ‘with wind in stere I sayle’: but in common edd. ‘I stere and sayle.’

P. 472, l. 138. Above:—In the original, more intelligibly, ‘aboute,’ i.e. throughout thy circular course. It seems probable that the mistake was originally a misprint.

L. 147. Phaëthon, the son of Helios the Sun-god, persuaded his father to allow him to drive his chariot. The horses, getting out of his control, came so near to Earth as nearly to burn it; whereupon Zeus killed Phaëthon with lightning.

L. 152. Or yonder is it that the tents must be:—In the original, ‘Or elles yonder, ther tho tentes be’! i.e. where those tents are. Wordsworth’s line would imply that the tents were not visible from the walls.

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF OLD AGE

P. 475. I. The Old Cumberland Beggar. The passage from l. 79 ‘Then be assured,’ to l. 87 ‘worthless,’ was added in ed. 1837.

P. 477. 1797-1798:—‘Written at Racedown and Alfoxden in my twenty-third year.’—I. F. Wordsworth was in his twenty-fifth year when he went to Racedown, in his twenty-seventh when he went to Alfoxden.

P. 477. II. The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale. With this picture, which was taken from real life, compare the imaginative one of The Reverie of Poor Susan [vol. i. p. 314]; and see (to make up the deficiencies of this class) The Excursion, passim.—W. The character of this man was described to me, and the incident upon which the verses turn was told me, by Mr. Poole of Nether Stowey, with whom I became
acquainted through our common friend S. T. Coleridge. During my residence at Alfoxden I used to see much of him, and had frequent occasions to admire the course of his daily life, especially his conduct to his labourers and poor neighbours: their virtues he carefully encouraged, and weighed their faults in the scales of charity. If I seem in these verses to have treated the weaknesses of the farmer, and his transgression, too tenderly, it may in part be ascribed to my having received the story from one so averse to all harsh judgment. After his death, was found in his escritoire a lock of grey hair carefully preserved, with a notice that it had been cut from the head of his faithful shepherd, who had served him for a length of years. I need scarcely add that he felt for all men as his brothers. He was much beloved by distinguished persons—Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Southey, Sir H. Davy, and many others; and in his own neighbourhood was highly valued as a magistrate, a man of business, and in every other social relation. The latter part of the poem, perhaps, requires some apology as being too much of an echo to the *Reverie of Poor Susan.*—I. F.

P. 478, ll. 41-42. In ed. 1800:

You lift up your eyes, ‘O the merciless Jew!’
But in truth he was never more cruel than you.

P. 479, ll. 73-76. This stanza in ed. 1815 took the place of the following two:

Where proud Covent-garden, in frost and in snow,
Spreads her fruits and her flow’rs, built up row after row,
Old Adam will point with his finger and say
To them that stand by, ‘I’ve seen better than they.’

Where the apples are heaped on the barrows in piles,
You see him stop short, he looks long, and he smiles;
He looks, and he smiles, and a Poet might spy
The image of fifty green fields in his eye.

P. 480, l. 90. In ed. 1849-50 ‘up’ is omitted.


P. 480. III. The Small Celandine. Cp. the two other poems to this flower, vol. i. p. 257, 259.

P. 481. IV. The Two Thieves; or, *The Last Stage of Avarice*, l. 1. Thomas Bewick, the wood- engraver, best known perhaps for his illustrations of the *History of British Birds*, was born in 1753 at Cherryburn, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, served his apprenticeship and lived for most of his life at Newcastle, and died in 1823.

P. 482. Published 1800:—Dated by Wordsworth 1800, in which year it was published. Prof. Knight quotes variants from a MS. version which he dates 1798.
P. 482. V. Animal Tranquillity and Decay. l. 14. In editions previous to 1815, the following lines, with slight variations, continue the poem:

I asked him whither he was bound, and what
The object of his journey; he replied
'Sir! I am going many miles to take
A last leave of my son, a mariner,
Who from a sea-fight has been brought to Falmouth,
And there is dying in an hospital.'

ADDITIONAL NOTE (p. 505)

Memoir of the Rev. Robert Walker

In the year 1709, Robert Walker was born at Under-crag, in Seathwaite; he was the youngest of twelve children. His eldest brother, who inherited the small family estate, died at Under-crag, aged ninety-four, being twenty-four years older than the subject of this Memoir, who was born of the same mother. Robert was a sickly infant; and, through his boyhood and youth, continuing to be of delicate frame and tender health, it was deemed best, according to the country phrase, to breed him a scholar; for it was not likely that he would be able to earn a livelihood by bodily labour. At that period few of these dales were furnished with schoolhouses; the children being taught to read and write in the chapel; and in the same consecrated building, where he officiated for so many years both as preacher and schoolmaster, he himself received the rudiments of his education. In his youth he became schoolmaster at Loweswater; not being called upon, probably, in that situation to teach more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. But, by the assistance of a 'Gentleman' in the neighbourhood, he acquired, at leisure hours, a knowledge of the classics, and became qualified for taking holy orders. Upon his ordination, he had the offer of two curacies: the one, Torver, in the vale of Coniston,—the other, Seathwaite, in his native vale. The value of each was the same, viz. five pounds per annum: but the cure of Seathwaite having a cottage attached to it, as he wished to marry, he chose it in preference. The young person on whom his affections were fixed, though in the condition of a domestic servant, had given promise, by her serious and modest deportment, and by her virtuous dispositions, that she was worthy to become the helpmate of a man entering upon a plan of life such as he had marked out for himself. By her frugality she had stored up a small sum of money, with which they began housekeeping. In 1735 or 1736, he entered upon his curacy; and, nineteen years afterwards, his situation is thus described, in some letters to be found in the Annual Register for 1760, from which the following is extracted:—
'Sir,—I was the other day upon a party of pleasure, about five or six miles from this place, where I met with a very striking object, and of a nature not very common. Going into a clergyman's house (of whom I had frequently heard), I found him sitting at the head of a long square table, such as is commonly used in this country by the lower class of people, dressed in a coarse blue frock, trimmed with black horn buttons; a checked shirt, a leathern strap about his neck for a stock, a coarse apron, and a pair of great wooden-soled shoes plated with iron to preserve them (what we call clogs in these parts), with a child upon his knee, eating his breakfast; his wife, and the remainder of his children, were some of them employed in waiting upon each other, the rest in teasing and spinning wool, at which trade he is a great proficient; and moreover, when it is made ready for sale, will lay it, by sixteen or thirty-two pounds' weight, upon his back, and on foot, seven or eight miles, will carry it to the market, even in the depth of winter. I was not much surprised at all this, as you may possibly be, having heard a great deal of it related before. But I must confess myself astonished with the alacrity and the good humour that appeared both in the clergyman and his wife, and more so at the sense and ingenuity of the clergyman himself. . . .'

Then follows a letter from another person, dated 1755, from which an extract shall be given.

'By his frugality and good management, he keeps the wolf from the door, as we say; and if he advances a little in the world, it is owing more to his own care, than to anything else he has to rely upon. I don't find his inclination is running after further preferment. He is settled among the people, that are happy among themselves; and lives in the greatest unanimity and friendship with them; and, I believe, the minister and people are exceedingly satisfied with each other; and indeed how should they be dissatisfied when they have a person of so much worth and probity for their pastor? A man who, for his candour and meekness, his sober, chaste, and virtuous conversation, his soundness in principle and practice, is an ornament to his profession, and an honour to the country he is in; and bear with me if I say, the plainness of his dress, the sanctity of his manners, the simplicity of his doctrine, and the vehemence of his expression, have a sort of resemblance to the pure practice of primitive Christianity.'

We will now give his own account of himself, to be found in the same place.

FROM THE REV. ROBERT WALKER

'Sir,—Yours of the 26th instant was communicated to me by Mr. C——, and I should have returned an immediate answer, but the hand
of Providence, then laying heavy upon an amiable pledge of conjugal endearment, hath since taken from me a promising girl, which the disconsolate mother too pensively laments the loss of; though we have yet eight living, all healthful, hopeful children, whose names and ages are as follows:—Zaccheus, aged almost eighteen years; Elizabeth, sixteen and ten months; Mary, fifteen; Moses, thirteen years and three months; Sarah, ten years and three months; Mabel, eight years and three months; William Tyson, three years and eight months; and Anne Esther, one year and three months; besides Ann, who died two years and six months ago, and was then aged between nine and ten; and Eleanor, who died the 23d inst., January, aged six years and ten months. Zaccheus, the eldest child, is now learning the trade of tanner, and has two years and a half of his apprenticeship to serve. The annual income of my chapel at present, as near as I can compute it, may amount to about 17l., of which is paid in cash, viz., 5l. from the bounty of Queen Anne, and 5l. from W. P., Esq., of P——, out of the annual rents, he being lord of the manor, and 3l. from the several inhabitants of L——, settled upon the tenements as a rent-charge; the house and gardens I value at 4l. yearly, and not worth more; and I believe the surplise fees and voluntary contributions, one year with another, may be worth 3l.; but as the inhabitants are few in number, and the fees very low, this last-mentioned sum consists merely in free-will offerings.

I am situated greatly to my satisfaction with regard to the conduct and behaviour of my auditory, who not only live in the happy ignorance of the follies and vices of the age, but in mutual peace and goodwill with one another, and are seemingly (I hope really too) sincere Christians, and sound members of the established church, not one dissenter of any denomination being amongst them all. I got to the value of 40l. for my wife’s fortune, but had no real estate of my own, being the youngest son of twelve children, born of obscure parents; and, though my income has been but small, and my family large, yet, by a providential blessing upon my own diligent endeavours, the kindness of friends, and a cheap country to live in, we have always had the necessaries of life. By what I have written (which is a true and exact account, to the best of my knowledge), I hope you will not think your favour to me, out of the late worthy Dr. Stratford’s effects, quite misbestowed, for which I must ever gratefully own myself, sir, your much obliged and most obedient humble servant,

R. W., Curate of S——.

‘To Mr. C., of Lancaster.’

About the time when this letter was written, the Bishop of Chester recommended the scheme of joining the curacy of Ulpha to the contiguous one of Seathwaite, and the nomination was offered to Mr. Walker; but an unexpected difficulty arising, Mr. W., in a letter to the Bishop (a copy of which, in his own beautiful handwriting, now lies before me), thus expresses himself: ‘If he,’ meaning the person in whom the diffi-
ulty originated, 'had suggested any such objection before I should utterly have declined any attempt to the curacy of Ulpha: indeed, I was always apprehensive it might be disagreeable to my auditory at Seathwaite, as they have been always accustomed to double duty, and the inhabitants of Ulpha despair of being able to support a schoolmaster who is not curate there also; which suppressed all thoughts in me of serving them both.' And in a second letter to the Bishop he writes:—

'My Lord,—I have the favour of yours of the 1st instant, and am exceedingly obliged on account of the Ulpha affair: if that curacy should lapse into your Lordship's hands, I would beg leave rather to decline than embrace it; for the chapels of Seathwaite and Ulpha, annexed together, would be apt to cause a general discontent among the inhabitants of both places; by either thinking themselves slighted, being only served alternately, or neglected in the duty, or attributing it to covetousness in me; all which occasions of murmuring I would willingly avoid.' And in concluding his former letter, he expresses a similar sentiment upon the same occasion, 'desiring, if it be possible, however, as much as in me lieth, to live peaceably with all men.'

The year following, the curacy of Seathwaite was again augmented; and, to effect this augmentation, fifty pounds had been advanced by himself; and, in 1760, lands were purchased with eight hundred pounds. Scanty as was his income, the frequent offer of much better benefits could not tempt Mr. W. to quit a situation where he had been so long happy, with a consciousness of being useful. Among his papers I find the following copy of a letter, dated 1775, twenty years after his refusal of the curacy of Ulpha, which will show what exertions had been made for one of his sons.

'May it please your Grace,—Our remote situation here makes it difficult to get the necessary information for transacting business regularly; such is the reason of my giving your Grace the present trouble.

'The bearer (my son) is desirous of offering himself candidate for deacon's orders at your Grace's ensuing ordination; the first, on the 25th instant, so that his papers could not be transmitted in due time. As he is now fully at age, and I have afforded him education to the utmost of my ability, it would give me great satisfaction (if your Grace would take him, and find him qualified) to have him ordained. His constitution has been tender for some years; he entered the college of Dublin, but his health would not permit him to continue there, or I would have supported him much longer. He has been with me at home above a year, in which time he has gained great strength of body, sufficient, I hope, to enable him for performing the function. Divine Providence, assisted by liberal benefactors, has blest my endeavours, from a small income, to rear a numerous family; and as my time of life renders me now unfit for much future expectancy from this world,
I should be glad to see my son settled in a promising way to acquire an honest livelihood for himself. His behaviour, so far in life, has been irreproachable; and I hope he will not degenerate, in principles or practice, from the precepts and pattern of an indulgent parent. Your Grace’s favourable reception of this, from a distant corner of the diocese, and an obscure hand, will excite filial gratitude, and a due use shall be made of the obligation vouchsafed thereby to your Grace’s very dutiful and most obedient Son and Servant,

Robert Walker.

The same man, who was thus liberal in the education of his numerous family, was even munificent in hospitality as a parish priest. Every Sunday, were served, upon the long table, at which he has been described sitting with a child upon his knee, messes of broth, for the refreshment of those of his congregation who came from a distance, and usually took their seats as parts of his own household. It seems scarcely possible that this custom could have commenced before the augmentation of his cure; and what would to many have been a high price of self-denial, was paid, by the pastor and his family, for this gratification; as the treat could only be provided by dressing at one time the whole, perhaps, of their weekly allowance of fresh animal food; consequently, for a succession of days, the table was covered with cold victuals only. His generosity in old age may be still further illustrated by a little circumstance relating to an orphan grandson, then ten years of age, which I find in a copy of a letter to one of his sons; he requests that half a guinea may be left for ‘little Robert’s pocket-money,’ who was then at school: intrusting it to the care of a lady, who, as he says, ‘may sometimes frustrate his squandering it away foolishly;’ and promising to send him an equal allowance annually for the same purpose. The conclusion of the same letter is so characteristic, that I cannot forbear to transcribe it. ‘We,’ meaning his wife and himself, ‘are in our wonted state of health, allowing for the hasty strides of old age knocking daily at our door, and threateningly telling us, we are not only mortal, but must expect ere long to take our leave of our ancient cottage, and lie down in our last dormitory. Pray pardon my neglect to answer yours: let us hear sooner from you, to augment the mirth of the Christmas holidays. Wishing you all the pleasures of the approaching season, I am, dear Son, with lasting sincerity, yours affectionately, Robert Walker.’

He loved old customs and old usages, and in some instances stuck to them to his own loss; for, having had a sum of money lodged in the hands of a neighbouring tradesman, when long course of time had raised the rate of interest, and more was offered, he refused to accept it; an act not difficult to one, who, while he was drawing seventeen pounds a year from his curacy, declined, as we have seen, to add the profits of another small benefice to his own, lest he should be suspected of cupidity.—From this vice he was utterly free; he made no charge for teaching school; such as could afford to pay, gave him what they
pleased. When very young, having kept a diary of his expenses, however trifling, the large amount, at the end of the year, surprised him; and from that time the rule of his life was to be economical, not avaricious. At his decease he left behind him no less a sum than 2000/.; and such a sense of his various excellencies was prevalent in the country, that the epithet of wonderful is to this day attached to his name.

There is in the above sketch something so extraordinary as to require further explanatory details.—And to begin with his industry: eight hours in each day, during five days in the week, and half of Saturday, except when the labours of husbandry were urgent, he was occupied in teaching. His seat was within the rails of the altar; the communion table was his desk; and, like Shenstone's schoolmistress, the master employed himself at the spinning-wheel, while the children were repeating their lessons by his side. Every evening, after school hours, if not more profitably engaged, he continued the same kind of labour, exchanging, for the benefit of exercise, the small wheel, at which he had sate, for the large one on which wool is spun, the spinner stepping to and fro. Thus, was the wheel constantly in readiness to prevent the waste of a moment's time. Nor was his industry with the pen, when occasion called for it, less eager. Intrusted with extensive management of public and private affairs, he acted, in his rustic neighbourhood, as scrivener, writing out petitions, deeds of conveyance, wills, covenants, etc., with pecuniary gain to himself, and to the great benefit of his employers. These labours (at all times considerable) at one period of the year, viz., between Christmas and Candlemas, when money transactions are settled in this country, were often so intense, that he passed great part of the night, and sometimes whole nights, at his desk. His garden also was tilled by his own hand; he had a right of pasturage upon the mountains for a few sheep and a couple of cows, which required his attendance; with this pastural occupation, he joined the labours of husbandry upon a small scale, renting two or three acres in addition to his own less than one acre of glebe; and the humblest drudgery which the cultivation of these fields required was performed by himself.

He also assisted his neighbours in haymaking and shearing their flocks, and in the performance of this latter service he was eminently dexterous. They, in their turn, complimented him with the present of a haycock, or a fleece; less as a recompence for this particular service than as a general acknowledgment. The Sabbath was in a strict sense kept holy; the Sunday evenings being devoted to reading the Scripture and family prayer. The principal festivals appointed by the Church were also duly observed; but through every other day in the week, through every week in the year he was incessantly occupied in work of hand or mind; not allowing a moment for recreation, except upon a Saturday afternoon, when he indulged himself with a Newspaper, or sometimes with a Magazine. The frugality and temperance established in his house,
were as admirable as the industry. Nothing to which the name of luxury could be given was there known; in the latter part of his life, indeed, when tea had been brought into almost general use, it was provided for visitors, and for such of his own family as returned occasionally to his roof, and had been accustomed to this refreshment elsewhere; but neither he nor his wife ever partook of it. The raiment worn by his family was comely and decent, but as simple as their diet; the home-spun materials were made up into apparel by their own hands. At the time of the decease of this thrifty pair, their cottage contained a large store of webs of woollen and linen cloth, woven from thread of their own spinning. And it is remarkable that the pew in the chapel in which the family used to sit, remains neatly lined with woollen cloth spun by the pastor’s own hands. It is the only pew in the chapel so distinguished; and I know of no other instance of his conformity to the delicate accommodations of modern times. The fuel of the house, like that of their neighbours, consisted of peat, procured from the mosses by their own labour. The lights by which, in the winter evenings, their work was performed, were of their own manufacture, such as still continue to be used in these cottages; they are made of the pith of rushes dipped in any unctuous substance that the house affords. White candles, as tallow candles are here called, were reserved to honour the Christmas festivals, and were perhaps produced upon no other occasions. Once a month, during the proper season, a sheep was drawn from their small mountain flock, and killed for the use of the family; and a cow, towards the close of the year, was salted and dried for winter provision: the hide was tanned to furnish them with shoes.—By these various resources, this venerable clergyman reared a numerous family, not only preserving them, as he affectionately says, ‘from wanting the necessaries of life’; but affording them an unstinted education, and the means of raising themselves in society. In this they were eminently assisted by the effects of their father’s example, his precepts, and injunctions: he was aware that truth-speaking, as a moral virtue, is best secured by inculcating attention to accuracy of report even on trivial occasions; and so rigid were the rules of honesty by which he endeavoured to bring up his family, that if one of them had chanced to find in the lanes or fields anything of the least use or value without being able to ascertain to whom it belonged, he always insisted upon the child’s carrying it back to the place from which it had been brought.

No one, it might be thought, could, as has been described, convert his body into a machine, as it were, of industry for the humblest uses, and keep his thoughts so frequently bent upon secular concerns, without grievous injury to the more precious parts of his nature. How could the powers of intellect thrive, or its graces be displayed, in the midst of circumstances apparently so unfavourable, and where, to the direct cultivation of the mind, so small a portion of time was allotted? But, in this extraordinary man, things in their nature adverse were reconciled.

2—MM
His conversation was remarkable, not only for being chaste and pure, but for the degree in which it was fervent and eloquent; his written style was correct, simple, and animated. Nor did his affections suffer more than his intellect; he was tenderly alive to all the duties of his pastoral office: the poor and needy 'he never sent empty away,' — the stranger was fed and refreshed in passing that unfrequented vale — the sick were visited; and the feelings of humanity found further exercise among the distresses and embarrassments in the worldly estate of his neighbours, with which his talents for business made him acquainted; and the disinterestedness, impartiality, and uprightness which he maintained in the management of all affairs confided to him were virtues seldom separated in his own conscience from religious obligation. Nor could such conduct fail to remind those who witnessed it of a spirit nobler than law or custom: they felt convictions which, but for such intercourse, could not have been afforded, that, as in the practice of their pastor, there was no guile, so in his faith there was nothing hollow; and we are warranted in believing that, upon these occasions, selfishness, obstinacy, and discord would often give way before the breathings of his good-will and saintly integrity. It may be presumed also — while his humble congregation were listening to the moral precepts which he delivered from the pulpit, and to the Christian exhortations that they should love their neighbours as themselves, and do as they would be done unto — that peculiar efficacy was given to the preacher's labours by recollections in the minds of his congregation, that they were called upon to do no more than his own actions were daily setting before their eyes.

The afternoon service in the chapel was less numerously attended than that of the morning, but by a more serious auditory; the lesson from the New Testament, on those occasions, was accompanied by Burkitt's Commentaries. These lessons he read with impassioned emphasis, frequently drawing tears from his hearers, and leaving a lasting impression upon their minds. His devotional feelings and the powers of his own mind were further exercised, along with those of his family, in perusing the Scriptures; not only on the Sunday evenings, but on every other evening, while the rest of the household were at work, some one of the children, and in her turn the servant, for the sake of practice in reading, or for instruction, read the Bible aloud; and in this manner the whole was repeatedly gone through. That no common importance was attached to the observance of religious ordinances by his family, appears from the following memorandum by one of his descendants, which I am tempted to insert at length, as it is characteristic, and somewhat curious. 'There is a small chapel in the county palatine of Lancaster, where a certain clergyman has regularly officiated above sixty years, and a few months ago administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the same, to a decent number of devout communicants. After the clergyman had received himself, the first company out of the assembly
who approached the altar, and kneeled down to be partakers of the sacred elements, consisted of the parson's wife, to whom he had been married upwards of sixty years; one son and his wife; four daughters, each with her husband; whose ages, all added together, amount to above 714 years. The several and respective distances from the place of each of their abodes, to the chapel where they all communicated, will measure more than 1000 English miles. Though the narration will appear surprising, it is without doubt a fact that the same persons, exactly four years before, met at the same place, and all joined in performance of the same venerable duty.'

He was indeed most zealously attached to the doctrine and frame of the Established Church. We have seen him congratulating himself that he had no dissenters in his cure of any denomination. Some allowance must be made for the state of opinion when his first religious impressions were received, before the reader will acquit him of bigotry, when I mention, that at the time of the augmentation of the cure, he refused to invest part of the money in the purchase of an estate offered to him upon advantageous terms, because the proprietor was a Quaker;—whether from scrupulous apprehension that a blessing would not attend a contract framed for the benefit of the church between persons not in religious sympathy with each other; or, as a seeker of peace, he was afraid of the uncomplying disposition which at one time was too frequently conspicuous in that sect. Of this an instance had fallen under his own notice; for while he taught school at Loweswater, certain persons of that denomination had refused to pay annual interest due under the title of Church-stock;¹ a great hardship upon the incumbent, for the curacy of Loweswater was scarcely less poor than that of Seathwaite. To what degree this prejudice of his was blameable need not be determined;—certain it is, that he was not only desirous, as he himself says, to live in peace, but in love, with all men. He was placable, and charitable in his judgments; and, however correct in conduct and rigorous to himself, he was ever ready to forgive the trespasses of others, and to soften the censure that was cast upon their frailties.—It would be unpardonable to omit that, in the maintenance of his virtues he received due support from the partner of his long life. She was equally strict, in attending to her share of their joint cares, nor less diligent in her appropriate occupations. A person who had been some time their servant in the latter part of their lives, concluded the panegyric of her mistress by saying to me, 'She was no less excellent than her husband; she was good to the poor; she was good to everything!' He survived for a short time this virtuous companion. When she died, he ordered that her body should be borne to the grave by three

¹ Mr. Walker's charity being of that kind which 'seeketh not her own,' he would rather forego his rights than distress for dues which the parties liable refused, as a point of conscience, to pay.
of her daughters and one grand-daughter; and, when the corpse was
lifted from the threshold, he insisted upon lending his aid, and feeling
about, for he was then almost blind, took hold of a napkin fixed to the
coffin; and, as a bearer of the body, entered the chapel, a few steps from
the lowly parsonage.

What a contrast does the life of this obscurely-seated, and, in point of
worldly wealth, poorly-repaid Churchman, present to that of a Cardinal
Wolsey!

'O 'tis a burthen, Cromwell, 'tis a burthen
Too heavy for a man who hopes for heaven.'

We have been dwelling upon images of peace in the moral world, that
have brought us again to the quiet enclosure of consecrated ground,
in which this venerable pair lie interred. The sounding brook, that rolls
close by the churchyard, without disturbing feeling or meditation, is now
unfortunately laid bare; but not long ago it participated, with the chapel,
the shade of some stately ash-trees, which will not spring again. While
the spectator from this spot is looking round upon the girdle of stony
mountains that encompasses the vale,—masses of rock, out of which
monuments for all men that ever existed might have been hewn—it
would surprise him to be told, as with truth he might be, that the plain
blue slab dedicated to the memory of this aged pair is a production
of a quarry in North Wales. It was sent as a mark of respect by one of
their descendants from the vale of Festiniog, a region almost as beautiful
as that in which it now lies!

Upon the Seathwaite Brook, at a small distance from the parsonage,
has been erected a mill for spinning yarn; it is a mean and disagreeable
object though not unimportant to the spectator, as calling to mind the
momentous changes wrought by such inventions in the frame of society
—changes which have proved especially unfavourable to these mountain
solitudes. So much had been effected by those new powers, before the
subject of the preceding biographical sketch closed his life, that their
operation could not escape his notice, and doubtless excited touching
reflections upon the comparatively insignificant results of his own
manual industry. But Robert Walker was not a man of times and
circumstances: had he lived at a later period, the principle of duty
would have produced application as unremitting; the same energy of
character would have been displayed, though in many instances with
widely different effects.

With pleasure I annex, as illustrative and confirmatory of the above
account, extracts from a paper in the Christian Remembrancer, October
1819: it bears an assumed signature, but is known to be the work of the
Rev. Robert Bamford, vicar of Bishopton, in the county of Durham;
a great-grandson of Mr. Walker, whose worth it commemorates, by
a record not the less valuable for being written in very early youth.
His house was a nursery of virtue. All the inmates were industrious, and cleanly, and happy. Sobriety, neatness, quietness, characterised the whole family. No railings, no idleness, no indulgence of passion were permitted. Every child, however young, had its appointed engagements; every hand was busy. Knitting, spinning, reading, writing, mending clothes, making shoes, were by the different children constantly performing. The father himself sitting amongst them, and guiding their thoughts, was engaged in the same occupations.

He sate up late, and rose early; when the family were at rest, he retired to a little room which he had built on the roof of his house. He had slated it, and fitted it up with shelves for his books, his stock of cloth, wearing apparel, and his utensils. There many a cold winter's night, without fire, while the roof was glazed with ice, did he remain reading or writing till the day dawned. He taught the children in the chapel, for there was no schoolhouse. Yet in that cold, damp place he never had a fire. He used to send the children in parties either to his own fire at home, or make them run up the mountain side.

It may be further mentioned, that he was a passionate admirer of Nature; she was his mother, and he was a dutiful child. While engaged on the mountains, it was his greatest pleasure to view the rising sun; and in tranquil evenings, as it slid behind the hills, he blessed its departure. He was skilled in fossils and plants; a constant observer of the stars and winds: the atmosphere was his delight. He made many experiments on its nature and properties. In summer he used to gather a multitude of flies and insects, and, by his entertaining description, amuse and instruct his children. They shared all his daily employments, and derived many sentiments of love and benevolence from his observations on the works and productions of nature. Whether they were following him in the field, or surrounding him in school, he took every opportunity of storing their minds with useful information.—Nor was the circle of his influence confined to Seathwaite. Many a distant mother has told her child of Mr. Walker, and begged him to be as good a man.

Once, when I was very young, I had the pleasure of seeing and hearing that venerable old man in his 90th year, and even then, the calmness, the force, the perspicuity of his sermon, sanctified and adorned by the wisdom of grey hairs, and the authority of virtue, had such an effect upon my mind, that I never see a hoary-headed clergyman, without thinking of Mr. Walker. . . . He allowed no dissenter or methodist to interfere in the instruction of the souls committed to his cure: and so successful were his exertions, that he had not one dissenter of any denomination whatever in the whole parish. Though he avoided all religious controversies, yet when age had silvered his head, and virtuous piety had secured to his appearance reverence and silent
honour, no one, however determined in his hatred of apostolic descent, could have listened to his discourse on ecclesiastical history and ancient times, without thinking, that one of the beloved apostles had returned to mortality, and in that vale of peace had come to exemplify the beauty of holiness in the life and character of Mr. Walker.

'Until the sickness of his wife, a few months previous to her death, his health and spirits and faculties were unimpaired. But this misfortune gave him such a shock, that his constitution gradually decayed. His senses, except sight, still preserved their powers. He never preached with steadiness after his wife's death. His voice faltered: he always looked at the seat she had used. He could not pass her tomb without tears. He became, when alone, sad and melancholy, though still among his friends kind and good-humoured. He went to bed about twelve o'clock the night before his death. As his custom was, he went, tottering and leaning upon his daughter's arm, to examine the heavens, and meditate a few moments in the open air. "How clear the moon shines to-night!" He said these words, sighed, and laid down. At six next morning he was found a corpse. Many a tear, and many a heavy heart, and many a grateful blessing followed him to the grave.'

Having mentioned in this narrative the vale of Loweswater as a place in which Mr. Walker taught school, I will add a few memoranda from its parish register, respecting a person apparently of desires as moderate, with whom he must have been intimate during his residence there.

'Let him that would, ascend the tottering seat
Of courtly grandeur, and become as great
As are his mounting wishes; but for me,
Let sweet repose and rest my portion be.

HENRY FOREST, CURATE.'

'Honour, the idol which the most adore,
Receives no homage from my knee;
Content in privacy I value more
Than all uneasy dignity.'

'Henry Forest came to Loweswater, 1708, being twenty-five years of age.'

'This curacy was twice augmented by Queen Anne's Bounty. The first payment, with great difficulty, was paid to Mr. John Curwen of London, on the 9th of May 1724, deposited by me, Henry Forest, Curate of Loweswater. Ye said 9th of May, ye said Mr. Curwen went to the office, and saw my name registered there, etc. This, by the providence of God, came by lot to this poor place.

HÆC TES TOR H. FOREST.
In another place he records, that the sycamore-trees were planted in the churchyard in 1710.

He died in 1741, having been curate thirty-four years. It is not improbable that H. Forest was the gentleman who assisted Robert Walker in his classical studies at Loweswater.

To this parish register is prefixed a motto, of which the following verses are a part:

'Invigilate viri, tacito nam tempora gressu
Diffugiunt, nulloque sono convertitur annus;
Utendum est ætate, cito pede præterit ætas.'

W. W. 1820.

END OF VOL. II.
addendum 528. The motto prefixed by W. to the
Ode to Daudet comes from Seneca
Epistle 120 § 11, with slight verbal
alterations.

519. P. 268. XII Down a swift stream—
This sonnet was formed from one
of The Memorials of a Tour on the
Continent, 1820. See Vol. III p. 432 and
note p. 585.
p. 41. The date Aug. 7th in the title of Sonnet III is an error for Aug. 1st which appears on the MS. The error was made in the first edition of Poems 1807 & never noticed till Miss C. M. Maclean called attention to it in her Note on Gray's Le "View but his picture."

[Am. 11. 1941]
Cruel of heart were they, bloody of hand.

Mr. Walter MacIwan,
Salina, Winnebago.

Suggest the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as source.


p. 153. Valhombrosa, I longed -