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DOMESTIC VERSES

DOMESTIC VERSES

BY

DELTA

NEW EDITION

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCLXXI



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DOMESTIC VERSES

In the Churchyard at Inveresk there is a simple Tombstone, to which all the following little Poems, save the first and the Sonnets, bear reference. It is inscribed as follows :—

CHARLES BELL M.

Died 17th February 1838, aged four and a half years.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD M.

Died 28th February 1838, aged fifteen months.

DAVID MACBETH M.

Died 23d August 1839, aged four years and four months.

Of such is the kingdom of heaven.—*Mat.* xix. 14.

SONNETS

ON THE SCENERY OF THE TWEED.

INSCRIBED TO C. E. M.

As we had been in heart, now linked in hand,
Green Learmonth and the Cheviots left behind,
Homeward 'twas ours by pastoral Tweed to wind,
Through the Arcadia of the Border-land :
Vainly would words portray my feelings, when
(A dreary chasm of separation past)
Fate gave thee to my vacant arms at last,
And made me the most happy man of men.
Accept these trifles, lovely and beloved,
And haply, in the days of future years,
While the far past to memory reappears,
Thou may'st retrace these tablets, not unmoved,
Catherine ! whose holy constancy was proved
By all that deepest tries, and most endears.

June 1829.

I.

WARK CASTLE.

EMBLEM of strength, which time hath quite subdued,
Scarcely on thy green mount the eye may trace
Those girding walls which made thee once a place
Of succour, in old days of deadly feud.
Yes! thou wert once the Scotch marauder's dread;
And vainly did the Roxburgh shafts assail
Thy moated towers, from which they fell like hail;
While waved Northumbria's pennon o'er thy head.¹
Thou wert the work of man, and so hast passed
Like those who piled thee; but the features still
Of steadfast Nature all unchanged remain;
Still Cheviot listens to the northern blast,
And the blue Tweed winds murmuring round thy hill;
While Carham whispers of the slaughtered Dane.²

II.

MELROSE ABBEY.

SUMMER was on thee—the meridian light,
And, as we wandered through thy columned aisles,
Decked all thy hoar magnificence with smiles,
Making the rugged soft, the gloomy bright.
Nor was reflection from us far apart,
As clomb our steps thy lone and lofty stair,
Till, gained the summit, ticked in silent air
Thine ancient clock, as 'twere thy throbbing heart.
Monastic grandeur and baronial pride
Subdued—the former half, the latter quite,
Pile of king David ! to thine altar's site
Full many a footstep guides, and long shall guide ;
Where they repose, who met not save in fight—
And Douglas sleeps with Evers, side by side !³

III.

ABBOTSFORD.

THE calm of evening o'er the dark pine-wood
Lay with an aureate glow, as we explored
Thy classic precincts, hallowed Abbotsford !
And at thy porch in admiration stood :
We felt thou wert the work, th' abode of Him
Whose fame hath shed a lustre on our age,
The mightiest of the mighty !—o'er whose page
Thousands shall hang, until Time's eye grow dim ;
And then we thought, when shall have passed away
The millions now pursuing life's career,
And Scott himself is dust, how, lingering here,
Pilgrims from all the lands of earth shall stray
Amid thy cherished ruins, and survey
The scenes around, with reverential fear !⁴

IV.

DRYBURGH ABBEY.

BENEATH, Tweed murmured 'mid the forests green :
And through thy beech-tree and laburnum boughs,
A solemn ruin, lovely in repose,
Dryburgh ! thine ivy'd walls were greyly seen :
Thy court is now a garden, where the flowers
Expand in silent beauty, and the bird,
Flitting from arch to arch, alone is heard
To cheer with song the melancholy bowers.
Yet did a solemn pleasure fill the soul,
As through thy shadowy cloistral cells we trode,
To think, hoar pile ! that once thou wert the abode
Of men, who could to solitude control
Their hopes—yea ! from Ambition's pathways stole,
To give their whole lives blamelessly to God !⁵

V.

NIDPATH CASTLE.

STERN, rugged pile ! thy scowl recalls the days
Of foray and of feud, when, long ago,
Homes were thought worthy of reproach or praise
Only as yielding safeguards from the foe :
Over thy gateways the armorial arms
Proclaim of doughty Douglasses, who held
Thy towers against the foe, and thence repelled
Oft, after efforts vain, invasion's harms.
Eve dimmed the hills, as, by the Tweed below,
We sat where once thy blossomy orchards smiled,
And yet where many an apple-tree grows wild,
Listening the blackbird, and the river's flow ;
While, high between us and the sunset glow,
Thy giant walls seemed picturesquely piled.^o

VI.

"THE BUSH ABOON TRAQUAIR."

As speaks the sea-shell from the window-sill
Of cottage-home, far inland, to the soul
Of the bronzed veteran, till he hears the roll
Of ocean 'mid its islands chafing still ;
As speaks the love-gift to the lonely heart
Of her whose hopes are buried in the grave
Of him whom tears, prayer, passion could not save,
And fate but linked, that Death might tear apart,—
So speaks the ancient melody of thee,
Green "Bush aboon Traquair," that from the steep
O'erhang'st the Tweed—until, mayhap afar,
In realms beyond the separating sea,
The plaided Exile, 'neath the Evening Star,
Thinking of Scotland, scarce forbears to weep !⁷

TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER, E. C. M.

I.

THERE is no sound upon the night,
As by the shaded lamp I trace,
My babe, in smiling beauty bright,
The changes of thy sleeping face.

II.

Hallowed to us shall be the hour,
Yea, sacred through all time to come,
Which gave us thee, a living flower,
To bless and beautify our home.

III.

Thy presence is a charm, which wakes
A new creation to my sight ;
Gives life another hue, and makes
The withered green, the faded bright.

IV.

Pure as a lily of the brook,
Heaven's signet on thy forehead lies,
And Heaven is read in every look,
My Daughter, of thy soft blue eyes !

V.

In sleep thy gentle spirit seems
To some bright realm to wander back
And seraphs, mingling with thy dreams,
Allure thee to their shining track.

VI.

Already, like a vernal flower,
I see thee opening to the light,
And day by day, and hour by hour,
Becoming more divinely bright.

VII.

Yet in my gladness stirs a sigh,
Even for the blessing of thy birth,
Knowing how sins and sorrows try
Mankind, and darken o'er the earth.

VIII.

Ah ! little dost thou ween, my child,
The dangers of the way before ;
How rocks in every path are piled,
Which few, unharmed, can clamber o'er.

IX.

Sweet bud of beauty ! how wilt thou
Endure the bitter tempest's strife ?
Shall thy blue eyes be dimmed, thy brow
Indented by the cares of life ?

X.

If years are destined thine, alas !
It may be—ah ! it must be so :
For all that live and breathe, the glass
Which must be quaffed is drugged with woe.

XI.

Yet could a father's prayers avail,
So calm thy skies of life should be,
That thou shouldst glide beneath the sail
Of virtue, on a stormless sea :

XII.

And ever on thy thoughts, my child,
This sacred truth should be impressed—
Grief clouds the soul to sin beguiled ;
Who liveth best, God loveth best :

XIII.

Across thy path religion's star
Should ever shed its healing ray,
To lead thee from this world's vain jar,
To scenes of peace and purer day.

XIV.

Shun Vice—the breath of her abode
Is poisoned, though with roses strewn—
And cling to Virtue ; though the road
Be thorny, boldly travel on.

XV.

Yes ; travel on—nor turn thee round,
 Though dark the way and deep the shade ;
Till on that shore thy feet be found,
 Where bloom the palms that never fade.

XVI.

For thee I ask not riches—thou
 Wert wealthy with a spotless name ;
I ask not beauty—for thy brow
 Is fair as Fancy's wish could claim.

XVII.

Be thine a spirit loathing guilt,
 To duty wed, from malice free ;
Be like thy Mother—and thou wilt
 Be all my soul desires to see !

May 1830.

CASA WAPPY.*

I.

AND hast thou sought thy heavenly home,
Our fond, dear boy—
The realms where sorrow dare not come,
Where life is joy ?
Pure at thy death, as at thy birth,
Thy spirit caught no taint from earth,
Even by its bliss we mete our dearth,
Casa Wappy !

* The self-appellative of a beloved child.

II.

Despair was in our last farewell,
As closed thine eye ;
Tears of our anguish may not tell,
When thou didst die ;
Words may not paint our grief for thee,
Sighs are but bubbles on the sea
Of our unfathomed agony,
Casa Wappy !

III.

Thou wert a vision of delight
To bless us given ;
Beauty embodied to our sight—
A type of Heaven :
So dear to us thou wert, thou art
Even less thine own self, than a part
Of mine and of thy Mother's heart,
Casa Wappy !

IV.

Thy bright, brief day knew no decline—

'Twas cloudless joy ;

Sunrise and night alone were thine,

Beloved boy !

This morn beheld thee blithe and gay ;

That found thee prostrate in decay ;

And, ere a third shone, clay was clay,

Casa Wappy !

V.

Gem of our hearth, our household pride,

Earth's undefiled,

Could love have saved, thou hadst not died,

Our dear, sweet child !

Humbly we bow to Fate's decree ;

Yet had we hoped that Time should see

Thee mourn for us, not us for thee,

Casa Wappy !

VI.

Do what I may, go where I will,
 Thou meet'st my sight ;
There dost thou glide before me still—
 A form of light !
I feel thy breath upon my cheek,
I see thee smile, I hear thee speak,
Till oh ! my heart is like to break,
 Casa Wappy !

VII.

Methinks, thou smil'st before me now,
 With glance of stealth ;
The hair thrown back from thy full brow
 In buoyant health :
I see thine eyes' deep violet light,
Thy dimpled cheek carnationed bright,
Thy clasping arms so round and white,
 Casa Wappy !

VIII.

The nursery shows thy pictured wall,
Thy bat, thy bow,
Thy cloak and bonnet, club and ball ;
But where art thou ?
A corner holds thine empty chair ;
Thy playthings idly scattered there,
But speak to us of our despair,
Casa Wappy !

IX.

Even to the last, thy every word—
To glad—to grieve—
Was sweet, as sweetest song of bird
On summer's eve ;
In outward beauty undecayed,
Death o'er thy spirit cast no shade,
And, like the rainbow, thou didst fade,
Casa Wappy !

X.

We mourn for thee, when blind blank night
 The chamber fills ;
We pine for thee, when morn's first light
 Reddens the hills ;
The sun, the moon, the stars, the sea,
All—to the wall-flower and wild-pea—
Are changed : we saw the world through thee,
 Casa Wappy !

XI.

And though, perchance, a smile may gleam
 Of casual mirth,
It doth not own, whate'er may seem,
 An inward birth :
We miss thy small step on the stair ;
We miss thee at thine evening prayer ;
All day we miss thee—every where—
 Casa Wappy !

XII.

Snows muffled earth when thou didst go,
 In life's spring-bloom,
Down to the appointed house below—
 The silent tomb.
But now the green leaves of the tree,
The cuckoo, and "the busy bee,"
Return ; but with them bring not thee,
 Casa Wappy !

XIII.

'Tis so ; but can it be—(while flowers
 Revive again)—
Man's doom, in death that we and ours
 For aye remain ?
Oh ! can it be, that, o'er the grave,
The grass renewed should yearly wave,
Yet God forget our child to save ?—
 Casa Wappy !

XIV.

It cannot be ; for were it so
 Thus man could die,
Life were a mockery—Thought were woe—
 And Truth a lie—
Heaven were a coinage of the brain—
Religion frenzy—Virtue vain—
And all our hopes to meet again,
 Casa Wappy !

XV.

Then be to us, O dear, lost child !
 With beam of love,
A star, death's uncongenial wild
 Smiling above !
Soon, soon, thy little feet have trode
The skyward path, the seraph's road,
That led thee back from man to God,
 Casa Wappy !

XVI.

Yet, 'tis sweet balm to our despair,
Fond, fairest boy,
That Heaven is God's, and thou art there,
With Him in joy !
There past are death and all its woes,
There beauty's stream for ever flows,
And pleasure's day no sunset knows,
Casa Wappy !

XVII.

Farewell, then—for a while, farewell—
Pride of my heart !
It cannot be that long we dwell,
Thus torn apart :
Time's shadows like the shuttle flee ;
And, dark howe'er life's night may be,
Beyond the grave I'll meet with thee,
Casa Wappy !

March 1838.

WEE WILLIE.

I.

FARE-THEE-WELL, our last and fairest,
Dear wee Willie, fare-thee-well !
God, who lent thee, hath recalled thee
Back, with Him and His to dwell :
Fifteen moons their silver lustre
Only o'er thy brow had shed,
When thy spirit joined the seraphs,
And thy dust the dead.

II.

Like a sunbeam, through our dwelling
Shone thy presence, bright and calm ;
Thou didst add a zest to pleasure,
To our sorrows thou wert balm ;—
Brighter beamed thine eyes than summer ;
And thy first attempt at speech
Thrilled our heartstrings with a rapture
Music ne'er could reach.

III.

As we gazed upon thee sleeping,
With thy fine fair locks outspread,
Thou didst seem a little angel,
Who to earth from Heaven had strayed ;
And, entranced, we watched the vision,
Half in hope, and half affright,
Lest what we deemed ours, and earthly,
Should dissolve in light.

IV.

Snows o'ermantled hill and valley,
Sullen clouds begrimed the sky,
When the first drear doubt oppressed us,
That our child was doomed to die.
Through each long night-watch, the taper
Showed the hectic of his cheek ;
And each anxious dawn beheld him
More worn out and weak.

V.

Oh, the doubts, the fears, the anguish
Of a parent's brooding heart,
When despair is hovering round it,
And yet hope will scarce depart—
When each transient flush of fever
Omens health's returning light,
Only to involve the watchers
'Mid intenser night !

VI.

'Twas even then Destruction's angel
Shook his pinions o'er our path,
Seized the rosiest of our household,
And struck Charlie down in death !
Fearful, awful ! Desolation
On our lintel set his sign ;
And we turned from his quick death-scene,
Willie, round to thine !

VII.

Like the shot-star in blue midnight,
Like the rainbow, ray by ray,
Thou wert waning as we watched thee,
Loveliest, in thy last decay !
As a zephyr, so serenely
Came and went thy last, low breath,
That we paused, and asked our spirits—
Is it so ? Can this be death ?

VIII.

As the beams of Spring's first morning
Through the silent chamber played,
Lifeless, in my arms I raised thee,
And in thy small coffin laid ;
Ere the day-star with the darkness
Nine times had triumphant striven,
In one grave had met your ashes,
And your souls in Heaven !

IX.

Five were ye, the beauteous blossoms
Of our hopes, our hearts, our hearth ;
Two asleep lie buried under—
Three for us yet gladden earth.
Thee, our hyacinth, gay Charlie—
Willie, thee our snow-drop pure—
Back to us shall second spring-time
Never more allure !

X.

Yet while thinking, oh ! our lost ones,
Of how dear ye were to us,
Why should dreams of doubt and darkness
Haunt our troubled spirits thus ?
Why across the cold dim churchyard
Flit our visions of despair ?
Seated on the tomb, Faith's angel
Says, " Ye are not there ! "

XI.

Where, then, are ye ? With the Saviour
Blest, for ever blest are ye,
'Mid the sinless, little children,
Who have heard His " Come to me ! "
'Yond the shades of death's dark valley
Now ye lean upon His breast,
Where the wicked dare not enter,
And the weary rest.

XII.

We are wicked—we are weary—
For us pray and for us plead ;
God, who ever hears the sinless,
May through you the sinful heed :
Pray that, through the Mediator,
All our faults may be forgiven ;
Plead that ye be sent to greet us
At the gates of Heaven !

March 1838.

CASA'S DIRGE.

I.

VAINLY for us the sunbeams shine,
Dimmed is our joyous hearth ;
O Casa, dearer dust than thine
Ne'er mixed with mother earth !
Thou wert the corner-stone of love,
The keystone of our fate ;
Thou art not ! Heaven scowls dark above,
And earth is desolate !

II.

Ocean may rave with billows curled,
And moons may wax and wane,
And fresh flowers blossom ; but this world
Shall claim not thee again.
Closed are the eyes which bade rejoice
Our hearts till love ran o'er ;
Thy smile is vanished, and thy voice
Silent for evermore !

III.

Yes ; thou art gone—our hearth's delight,
Our boy so fond and dear ;
No more thy smiles to glad our sight,
No more thy songs to cheer ;
No more thy presence, like the sun,
To fill our home with joy :
Like lightning hath thy race been run,
As bright as swift, fair boy.

IV.

Now winter with its snow departs,
The green leaves clothe the tree ;
But summer smiles not on the hearts
That bleed and break for thee :
The young May weaves her flowery crown,
Her boughs in beauty wave ;
They only shake their blossoms down
Upon thy silent grave.

V.

Dear to our souls is every spot
Where thy small feet have trod ;
There odours, breathed from Eden, float,
And sainted is the sod ;
The wild-bee with its buglet fine,
The blackbird singing free,
Melt both thy Mother's heart and mine—
They speak to us of thee !

VI.

Only in dreams thou comest now
From Heaven's immortal shore,
A glory round that infant brow,
Which Death's pale signet bore :
'Twas thy fond looks, 'twas thy fond lips,
That lent our joys their tone ;
And life is shaded with eclipse,
Since thou from earth art gone.

VII.

Thine were the fond, endearing ways,
That tenderest feeling prove ;
A thousand wiles to win our praise,
To claim and keep our love ;
Fondness for us thrilled all thy veins ;
And, Casa, can it be
That nought of all the past remains
Except vain tears for thee ?

VIII.

Idly we watch thy form to trace
 In children on the street ;
Vainly, in each familiar place,
 We list thy pattering feet ;
Then, sudden, o'er these fancies crushed,
 Despair's black pinions wave ;
We know that sound for ever hushed—
 We look upon thy grave.

IX.

O heavenly child of mortal birth !
 Our thoughts of thee arise,
Not as a denizen of earth,
 But inmate of the skies :
To feel that life renewed is thine,
 A soothing balm imparts ;
We quaff from out Faith's cup divine,
 And Sabbath fills our hearts.

X.

Thou leanest where the fadeless wands
Of amaranth bend o'er ;
Thy white wings brush the golden sands
Of Heaven's refulgent shore.
Thy home is where the psalm and song
Of angels choir abroad ;
And blessed spirits, all day long,
Bask round the throne of God.

XI.

There chance and change are not ; the soul
Quaffs bliss as from a sea,
And years, through endless ages, roll,
From sin and sorrow free :
There gush for aye fresh founts of joy,
New raptures to impart ;
Oh ! dare we call thee still *our* boy,
Who now a seraph art ?

XII.

A little while—a little while—

Ah! long it cannot be!

And thou again on us wilt smile,

Where angels smile on thee.

How selfish is the worldly heart—

How sinful to deplore!

Oh! that we were where now thou art,

Not lost, but gone before.^s

April 1838.

ELEGIAC STANZAS.

TO THE MEMORY OF D. M. M.

I.

BRIGHTLY the sun illumes the skies,
But Nature's charms no bliss impart ;
A cloud seems spread before the eyes,
Whose wintry shadow chills the heart :
Oh ! eyes that, for my children's sake,
Have poured forth tears like summer rain !
Oh ! breaking heart, that will not break,
Yet never can be whole again !

II.

Two years ago, and where shone hearth
So fraught with buoyant mirth as ours?
Five fairies knit our thoughts to earth
With bands like steel, tho' wreathed of flowers:
How wildly warm, how softly sweet,
The spells that bade our hearts rejoice;
While echoed round us pattering feet,
And voices—that seemed Joy's own voice!

III.

Then light and life illumed each eye,
And rapture beamed from each young brow,
And eager forms were flitting by,
That would not—could not rest; but now—
The light is quenched, the life is fled;
Where are the feet that bounded free?
Thrice have we wept the early dead,
And one small grave-turf covers three!

IV.

The spell is broken ! never more
Can mortal life again seem gay ;
No future ever can restore
The perished and the past away !
Though many a blessing gilds our lot,
Though bright eyes still our hearth illumine ;
Yet, O dear lost ones ! ye are not,
And half the heart is in your tomb !

V.

Sudden it fell, the fatal shaft,
That struck blithe Charlie down in death ;
And, while Grief's bitterest cup we quaffed,
We turned to watch wee Willie's breath,
That faintly ebb'd, and ebb'd away,
Till all was still ; and, ere the sun
A tenth time shed his parting ray,
Their bed of dreamless rest was one !

VI.

And next, dear David, thou art gone !
Beloved boy, and can it be,
That now to us remains alone
Our unavailing grief for thee ?
Yet, when we trace thine upward track
To where immortal spirits reign,
We do not, dare not, wish thee back—
Back to this world of care again !

VII.

Summer was on the hills ; the trees
Were bending down with golden fruit ;
The bushes seemed alive with bees,
And birds whose songs were never mute ;
But 'twas even then, dear boy, when flowers,
O'ermantling earth, made all things gay,
That winter of the heart was ours,
And thine the hues of pale decay !

VIII.

Yes ! David, but two moons ago,
 And who so full of life as thou ?
An infant Samson, vigour shone
 In thy knit frame and fearless brow.
Oh ! how our inmost souls it stirred,
 To listen to thine altered tongue,
And see thee moping like a bird,
 Whose strength was like the lion's young.

IX.

Yet so it was ;—and, day by day,
 Unquenched thy thirst for sun and air,
Down the smooth walks, with blossoms gay,
 We wheeled thee in thy garden-chair ;
And as we marked thy languid eye,
 Wistful, the beds of bloom survey,
We dared not think thou wert to die,
 Even in a briefer space than they.

X.

Now gleams the west, a silver sea
Besprent with clouds of wavy gold ;
Earth looks like Eden ; can it be
That all thy days and nights are told ?
Is there no voice, whose potent sway,
Can pierce through Death's Cimmerian gloom,
Can bid the dead awake, and say—
“ Arise ! 'tis morning in the tomb ” ?

XI.

Yes ! such there is ; and thou that voice
Hast heard.—hast heard it, and obeyed ;
And we should mourn not, but rejoice
That Heaven is now thy dwelling made—
That thou hast joined thy brothers lost—
That thou hast reached a happy shore,
Where peace awaits the tempest-tost,
And stormy billows rage no more.

XII.

Three blessed beings ! ye are now
Where pangs and partings are unknown,
Where glory girds each sainted brow,
And golden harps surround the throne :
Oh ! to have hailed that blissful sight,
Unto the angels only given,
When thy two brothers, robed in light,
Embraced thee at the gates of Heaven !

XIII.

David, farewell ! our mourning thus
We know 'tis vain ; it may not be
That thou canst come again to us,
But we, dear child, will go to thee :⁹
Then let our thoughts ascend on high,
To Him whose arm is strong to save ;
Hope gives to Faith the victory,
And glory dawns beyond the grave !

September 1839.

THE LOST LAMB.

A SHEPHERD laid upon his bed,
With many a sigh, his aching head,
For him—his favourite boy—to whom
Death had been dealt—a sudden doom.
“But yesterday,” with sobs he cried,
“Thou wert, with sweet looks, at my side
Life’s loveliest blossom, and to-day,
Woe’s me! thou liest a thing of clay!
It cannot be that thou art gone;
It cannot be that now, alone,
A greyhaired man on earth am I,
Whilst thou within its bosom lie?
Methinks I see thee smiling there,
With beaming eyes, and sunny hair,

As thou wert wont, when fondling me,
To clasp my neck from off my knee !
Was it thy voice ? Again, oh speak,
My son, or else my heart will break !”

Each adding to that father's woes,
A thousand bygone scenes arose ;
At home—a-field—each with its joy,
Each with its smile—and all his boy !
Now swelled his proud rebellious breast,
With darkness and with doubt opprest,
Now sank despondent, while amain
Unnerving tears fell down like rain :
Air—air—he breathed, yet wanted breath—
It was not life—it was not death—
But the drear agony between,
Where all is heard, and felt, and seen—
The wheels of action set ajar ;
The body with the soul at war.
’Twas vain—’twas vain ; he could not find
A haven for his shipwrecked mind ;
Sleep shunned his pillow. Forth he went—
The moon from midnight's azure tent

Shone down, and, with serenest light,
Flooded the windless plains of night ;
The lake in its clear mirror showed
Each little star that twinkling glowed ;
Aspens, that quiver with a breath,
Were stirless in that hush of death ;
The birds were nestled in their bowers ;
The dewdrops glittered on the flowers :
Almost it seemed as pitying Heaven
A while its sinless calm had given
To lower regions, lest despair
Should make abode for ever there ;
So softly pure, so calmly bright,
Brooded o'er earth the wings of night.

O'ershadowed by its ancient yew,
His sheep-cote met the shepherd's view ;
And, placid, in that calm profound,
His silent flocks lay slumbering round :
With flowing mantle by his side,
Sudden, a stranger he espied ;
Bland was his visage, and his voice
Softened the heart, yet bade rejoice.—

“Why is thy mourning thus?” he said,
“Why thus doth sorrow bow thy head?
Why faltereth thus thy faith, that so
Abroad despairing thou dost go?
As if the God, who gave thee breath,
Held not the keys of life and death!—
When from the flocks that feed about,
A single lamb thou choosest out,
Is it not that which seemeth best
That thou dost take, yet leave the rest?—
Yes! such thy wont; and, even so,
With his choice little ones below
Doth the Good Shepherd deal; he breaks
Their earthly bands, and homeward takes,
Early, ere sin hath rendered dim
The image of the seraphim!”

Heart-struck, the shepherd home returned;
Again within his bosom burned
The light of faith; and from that day,
He trode serene life's onward way.¹⁰

TO THE BUST OF MY SON CHARLES.

————— Tender was the time,
When we two parted, ne'er to meet again!—*Home.*

I.

FAIR image of our sainted boy,
Whose beauty calmly shows,
Blent with life's sunny smiles of joy,
Death's most serene repose—
I gaze upon thee, overcast
With sweet, sad memories of the past ;
Visions which owed to thee their birth,
And, for a while, made Heaven of earth,

Return again in hues of light,
To melt my heart, yet mock my sight,
And sink amid the rayless gloom,
Which shadows thy untimely tomb.
Our fair, fond boy ! and can it be,
 That this pale mould of clay
Is all that now remains of thee,
 So loving, loved, and gay ?

II.

The past awakens—thou art there
 Before me, even now—
The silken locks of sunny hair,
 Thrown backward from thy brow—
Thy full white brow of sinless thought ;
Thy cheeks by smiles to dimples wrought ;
Thy radiant eyes, to which were given
The blue of autumn's midnight heaven ;

Thy rose-bud mouth, whose voice's tone
Made every household heart thine own,
Our fondling child, our winning boy,
Whose thoughts, words, looks, were all of joy—
Yes ! there thou art, from death come back ;
 And vainly we deplore,
That earth had once a flowery track,
 Which ne'er shall blossom more !

III.

A fresh life renovates dull earth,
 Now spring renews the world ;
The little birds in joy sing forth,
 'Mid leaflets half uncurled ;—
But, Charlie, where art thou ? We see
The snowdrops fade, uncultured by thee ;
We hear no more thy feet—thy voice—
Sweet sounds that made our hearts rejoice ;

And every dear, familiar spot
Says—here thou wert, who now art not ;
Thy beauty is a blossom crushed ;
Thy being is a fountain hushed ;
We look—we long for thee in vain—
 The dearest soonest die !
And bankrupt Age but finds the brain
 In all its sluices dry.

IV.

Methinks the afternoons come back,
 When, perched upon my knee,
Renewed in heart, I roamed the track
 Of fairy-land with thee ;
Or told of Joseph, when, within
The sack of little Benjamin,
The cup was found, and how he strove
In vain to smother filial love ;

Or Joshua and his mail-clad men ;
Or Daniel in the lions' den ;
Or Jonah whelmed beneath the sea ;
Or Absalom, when to the tree
Fixed by his tresses floating wild,
 Until by Joab slain !
While David mourned his rebel child
 The more—because in vain !

v.

And sweet it was, on summer days,
 To saunter through the park,
Amid the frisking lambs at graze,
 And listen to the lark ;
While thou wouldst run before, behind,
Blue-bell and butter-cup to find ;
A gaysome elf, whose heart had ne'er
Been tamed by grief, or scathed by fear :

I see thy flushed and open brow ;
I hear thy soft voice, even now ;
And scent the wild-flowers bright and bland,
Compressed within thy warm white hand.
Still bloom the daisies there ; the bee
 Booms round each fragrant spot ;
The small birds sing from bush and tree ;
 And only thou art not !

VI.

Thy voice was like a summer brook,
 For ever singing on ;
And every thing around thee took
 From happiness its tone :
We think of thee, and of the blue
Bright heaven, with sunshine streaming thro' ;
Of blossomed groves ; of oceans calm ;
Of zephyrs breathing nought but balm ;

Thy life was bliss—and can it be,
That only now remains for thee
The grave's blank horror, the despair
Of silence, that endureth there ?
And is this love which shall decay
 Only with being's breath,
But wasted on a thing of clay,
 That sleeps in endless death ?

VII.

No, Charlie, thus it cannot be :—
 And, gazing on thy bust,
I would not stop to dream of thee,
 As perishable dust ;
Opened for thee the golden doors
Of Heaven, thy feet are on its floors,
With jasper, beryl, and gems inlaid,
To which our sunshine is like shade ;

And all we dream of bright and fair
For evermore are with thee there ;
A halo glows around thy brow ;
The seraphs are thy playmates now.—
It must be so—and dear, fond boy,
 If glad and glorious thus,
'Twere sin to wish thee back from joy,
 To pain and care with us !

VIII.

A year hath circled since that day—
 That day of doleful gloom,
When thou wert rapt from earth away,
 In beauty's opening bloom ;
That day of woe, when, horror-smote,
To know, to feel, that *thou* wert not,
 We hung above thy bed of death,
And listened to thy last low breath,

And lingered, nor would turn away,
To own thee but a thing of clay !
That day when *thou* didst ope thine eyes
In bliss—an angel in the skies !
Oh blind, blank hour for us ! Oh dawn
Of endless life for thee !
Noon saw thy soul from earth withdrawn,
Night, at the Saviour's knee.

IX.

Farewell, sweet loan divine, which Heaven,
Beholding that man's heart
Less loved the Giver than the given,
Took to itself apart !
The waves of Time roll on—its sea
Still bears us more remote from thee,
As hour on hour, and day on day,
Melt in the spectral past away.

Yet art thou like a star on high,
To lure from earth the mental eye ;
And I would hate my heart, if e'er
Its love of thee it could outwear :
No ! in its core, aye to remain,
Thy sainted form shall dwell,
Until on high we meet again :—
Farewell !—dear boy, Farewell !

February 1839.

SONNET.

How change our days ! not oftener doth its hue
 The lank chameleon change, than we our joys ;
 The bliss that feeds upon the heart destroys ;
 Little is done, while much remains to do :
 We fix our eyes on phantoms and pursue ;
 We chase the airy bubbles of the brain ;
 We leave, for Fancy's lures, the fixed and true ;
 Destroy what time hath spared, yet build again :
 Years o'er us pass, and age, that comes to few,
 Comes but to tell them they have lived in vain ;
 Sin blights — Death scatters — Hope misleads —
 Thought errs—
 Joy's icicles melt down before Time's sun—
 And, ere the ebbing sands of life be run,
 Another generation earth prefers !

VICISSITUDE.

ALL things around us preach of Death ; yet Mirth
 Swells the vain heart, darts from the careless eye,
 As if we were created ne'er to die,
 And had our everlasting home on earth !
 All things around us preach of death :—the leaves
 Drop from the forests—perish the bright flowers—
 Shortens the day's shorn sunlight, hours on hours—
 And o'er bleak sterile fields the wild wind grieves.
 Yes ! all things preach of death—we are born to die :
 We are but waves along Time's ocean driven ;
 Life is to us a brief probation given,
 To fit us for a dread Eternity.
 Hear ye that watch with Faith's unslumbering eye ?—
 Earth is our pilgrimage, our home is Heaven !

ELEGIAC EFFUSIONS

THE BOWER OF PEACE.

I.

WHEN Hope's illusions all have waned,
And silence broods above the dead,
When Sorrow's gloomy clouds have rained
Full oft on man's devoted head,—
The time-taught spirit loves to wend
Back through the past its mazy way,
And see the early larks ascend
Up to the gates of day :
While earth, outspread to childhood's glance,
Glowed like a dream of bright romance.

II.

'Twas in the depth of dazzling May,
When bland the air and blue the skies,
When groves in blossomed pride were gay,
And flow'rets of innumerable dyes
Gemmed Earth's green carpet, that I strayed,
On a salubrious morning bright,
Out to the champaign, and surveyed,
With thrillings of delight,
Landscapes around my path unfurled,
That made an Eden of this world.

III.

I listened to the blackbird's song,
That from the covert of green trees
Came like a hymn of Heaven along,
Borne on the bloom-enamoured breeze :
I listened to the birds that trilled,
Each in its turn, some witching note ;
With insect swarms the air was filled,
Their wintry sleep forgot ;
Such was the summer feeling there,
God's love seemed breathing every where.

IV.

The water-lilies in the waves
 Reared up their crowns all freshly green,
And, bursting forth as from their graves,
 King-cups and daffodils were seen ;
The lambs were frisking in the mead ;
 Beneath the white-flowered chestnut tree
The ox reclined his stately head,
 And bent his placid knee ;
From brakes the linnet carolled loud,
While larks responded from the cloud.

V.

I stood upon a high green hill,
 On an oak stump mine elbow laid,
And, pondering, leant to gaze my fill
 Of glade and glen, in pomp arrayed.
Beneath me, on a daisied mound,
 A peaceful dwelling I espied,
Girt with its orchard branches round,
 And bearing on its side
Rich cherry-trees, whose blossoms white
Half-robbed the windows of their light :—

VI.

There dozed the mastiff on the green—
His night-watch finished ; and, elate,
The strutting turkey-cock was seen,
Arching his fan-like tail in state.
There was an air of placid rest
Around the spot so blandly spread,
That sure the inmates must be blest,
Unto my soul I said ;
Sin, strife, or sorrow cannot come,
To desolate so sweet a home !

VII.

Far from the hum of crowds remote,
From life's parade and idle show,
'Twould be an enviable lot
Life's silent tenor here to know ;
To banish every thought of sin,
To gaze with pure and blameless eyes ;
To nurse those holy thoughts within
Which fit us for the skies,
And to regenerate hearts dispense
A bliss akin to innocence.

VIII.

We make our sorrows ; Nature knows
Alone of happiness and peace ;
'Tis guilt that girds us with the throes
And hydra-pangs that never cease :
Is it not so ? And yet we blame
Our fate for frailties all our own,
Giving, with sighs, Misfortune's name
To what is fault alone :
Plunge we in sin's black flood, yet dream
To rise unsullied from such stream ?

IX.

Vain thought ! far better, then, to shun
The turmoils of the rash and vain,
And pray the Everlasting One
To keep the heart from earthly stain ;
Within some sylvan home like this,
To hear the world's far billows roll ;
And feel, with deep contented bliss,
They cannot shake the soul,
Or dim the impress bright and grand,
Stamped on it by the Maker's hand.

X.

When round this bustling world we look,
What treasures observation there ?
Doth it not seem as man mistook
This passing scene of toil and care
For an eternity ? As if
This cloud-land were his final home ;
And that he mocked the great belief
Of something yet to come ?
Rears he not sumptuous palaces,
As if his faith were built in these ?¹¹

XI.

To Power he says—" I trust in thee !"
As if terrestrial strength could turn
The avenging shafts of Destiny,
And disappoint the funeral urn :
To Pride—" Behold, I must, and can !"
To Fame—" Thou art mine idol-god !"
To Gold—" Thou art my talisman
And necromantic rod !"
Down Time's far stream he darts his eye,
Nor dreams that he shall ever die.

XII.

Oh, fool, fool, fool !—and is it thus
Thou feed'st of vanity the flame ?
The great, the good, are swept from us,
And only live in deed or name.
From out the myriads of the past,
Two only have been spared by Death ;¹²
And deem'st thou that a spell *thou* hast
To deprecate his wrath ?
Or dost thou hope, in frenzied pride,
By threats to turn his scythe aside ?

XIII.

Where are the warrior-chiefs of old ?
Where are the realms on which they trod ?
While conquest's blood-red flag unrolled,
And man proclaimed himself a god !
Where are the sages and their saws,
Whence wisdom shone with dazzling beams ?
The legislators, and their laws,
What are they now but dreams ?
The prophets, do they still forebode ?
Our fathers, where are they ?—with God !

XIV.

Our fathers ! We ourselves have seen
The days when vigour arched each brow—
Our fathers !!—are they aught, I ween,
But household recollections now ?
Our fathers !!!—nay, the very boys,
Who, with ourselves, were such at school,
When, nectar-sweet, life's cup of joys
Felt almost over-full,
Although one parish gave them birth,
Their graves are scattered o'er the earth !

XV.

Where are the blazoned dreams of Youth,
And where the friends on whom we leant,
Whose feelings—ay ! whose hearts of truth,
Fraternal, with our own were blent ?
Where now Romance's rich attire,
In which the universe was drest,
As Evening, like a city on fire,
Burned down along the West,
Leaving the enchanted eastern sky
To the round moon's calm argentry ?

XVI.

Alas ! with care we sow the wind,
To reap the whirlwind for our pains ;
On the dark day of need to find
Each proffered ransom Time disdains :
All that was once our idle boast,
Weighed in the balance, dust shall be ;
Death knocks—frail man gives up the ghost—
He dies—and where is he ?
Vanished for ever and forgot ;
The place that knew him knows him not !

XVII.

Ho ! wanderer, ho !—eschew the wrong,
To reason turn, from error cease ;
And list the words of wisdom's tongue,
The still small tongue that whispers peace :
Withhold the heart from worldly strife—
Do good—love mercy—evil fly ;
And know that, from this dream called life,
We wake but when we die ;—
Unto the eager to be pure
The path is straight—the palm is sure !

XVIII.

For ne'er hath prodigal come round,
Subdued in heart and craving grace,
Whate'er his faults, who hath not found
Forgiveness in the Saviour's face.
At contrite hearts He will not scoff—
Whoever knocks, an entrance wins :
Then let us at the Cross throw off
The burden of our sins ;
And though their dye be black as night,
His blood can make—has made them white !

WEEP NOT FOR HER.

A DIRGE.

I.

WEEP not for her !—Oh ! she was far too fair,
Too pure to dwell on this guilt-tainted earth !
The sinless glory, and the golden air
Of Zion, seemed to claim her from her birth :
A spirit wandered from its native zone,
Which, soon discovering, took her for its own :
Weep not for her !

II.

Weep not for her!—Her span was like the sky,
Whose thousand stars shine beautiful and bright;
Like flowers that know not what it is to die;
Like long-linked shadeless months of Polar light;
Like music floating o'er a waveless lake,
While Echo answers from the flowery brake:
Weep not for her!

III.

Weep not for her!—She died in early youth,
Ere hope had lost its rich romantic hues;
When human bosoms seemed the homes of truth,
And earth still gleamed with beauty's radiant dews;
Her summer-prime waned not to days that freeze;
Her wine of life was run not to the lees:
Weep not for her!

IV.

Weep not for her!—By fleet or slow decay,
It never grieved her bosom's core to mark
The playmates of her childhood wane away,
Her prospects wither, or her hopes grow dark ;
Translated by her God, with spirit shriven,
She passed as 'twere in smiles from earth to Heaven :
Weep not for her !

V.

Weep not for her!—It was not hers to feel
The miseries that corrode amassing years,
'Gainst dreams of baffled bliss the heart to steel,
To wander sad down Age's vale of tears ;
As whirl the withered leaves from Friendship's tree,
And on earth's wintry world alone to be :
Weep not for her !

VI.

Weep not for her!—She is an angel now,
And treads the sapphire floors of Paradise ;
All darkness wiped from her refulgent brow,
Sin, sorrow, suffering, banished from her eyes ;
Victorious over death, to her appear
The vista'd joys of Heaven's eternal year :
Weep not for her !

VII.

Weep not for her!—Her memory is the shrine
Of pleasant thoughts, soft as the scent of flowers ;
Calm as on windless eve the sun's decline ;
Sweet as the song of birds among the bowers ;
Rich as a rainbow with its hues of light ;
Pure as the moonshine of an autumn night :
Weep not for her !

VIII.

Weep not for her!—There is no cause for woe ;
But rather nerve the spirit, that it walk
Unshrinking o'er the thorny paths below,
And from earth's low defilements keep thee back :
So, when a few fleet severing years have flown,
She'll meet thee at Heaven's gate—and lead thee on !
Weep not for her !

THE FOWLER.

And is there care in Heaven? and is there love
 In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
 That may compassion of their evils move?
 There is—else much more wretched were the case
 Of men than beasts. But O! the exceeding grace
 Of highest God, that loves His creatures so,
 And all His works with mercy doth embrace,
 That blessed angels He sends to and fro,
 To serve on wicked man—to serve His wicked foe!

SPENSER.

I.

I HAVE an old remembrance—'tis as old
 As childhood's visions, and 'tis mingled with
 Dim thoughts and scenes grotesque, by fantasy
 From out oblivion's twilight conjured up,
 Ere truth had shorn imagination's beams,
 Or to forlorn reality tamed down
 The buoyant spirit. Yes! the shapes and hues
 Of winter twilight, often as the year

Revolves, and hoar-frost grimes the window-sill,
Bring back the lone waste scene that gave it birth,
And make me, for a moment, what I was
Then, on that Polar morn—a little boy,
And Earth again the realm of fairyland.

II.

A Fowler was our visitant ; his talk
At eve beside the flickering hearth, while howled
The outward winds, and hail-drops on the pane
Tinkled, or down the chimney in the flame
Whizzed as they melted, was of forest and field,
Wherein lay bright wild birds and timorous beasts,
That shunned the face of man ; and O ! the joy,
The passion which lit up his brow, to con
The feats of sleight and cunning skill by which
Their haunts were neared, or on the heathy hills,
Or 'mid the undergrove ; on snowy moor,
Or by the rushy lake—what time the dawn
Reddens the east, or from on high the moon
In the smooth waters sees her pictured orb,
The white cloud slumbering in the windless sky,
And midnight mantling all the silent hills.

III.

I do remember me the very time—
(Though thirty shadowy years have lapsed between)—
'Tis graven as by the hand of yesterday.
For weeks had raved the winds, the angry seas
Howled to the darkness, and down fallen the snows ;
The redbreast to the window came for crumbs ;
Hunger had to the coleworts driven the hare ;
The crow at noontide pecked the travelled road ;
And the wood-pigeon, timorously bold,
Starved from the forest, neared the homes of man.
It was the dreariest depth of winter-tide,
And on the ocean and its isles was felt
The iron sway of the North ; yea, even the fowl—
That through the polar summer months could see
A beauty in Spitzbergen's naked isles,
Or on the drifting icebergs seek a home—
Even they had fled, on southern wing, in search
Of less inclement shores.

Perturbed by dreams
Passed o'er the slow night-watches ; many a thought
And many a hope was forward bent on morn ;

But weary was the tedious chime on chime,
And hour on hour 'twas dark, and still 'twas dark.
At length we arose—for now we counted five—
And by the flickering hearth arrayed ourselves
In coats and 'kerchiefs, for the early drift
And biting season fit ; the fowling-piece
Was shouldered, and the blood-stained game-pouch
 slung
On this side, and the gleaming flask on that ;
In sooth we were a most accordant pair ;
And thus accoutred, to the lone sea-shore
In fond and fierce precipitance we flew.

IV.

There was no breath abroad ; each in its cave,
As if enchanted, slept the winds, and left
Earth in a voiceless trance : around the porch
All stirlessly the darksome ivy clung ;
All silently the leafless trees held up
Their bare boughs to the sky ; the atmosphere,
Untroubled in its cold serenity,
Wept icy dews ; and now the later stars,
As by some hidden necromantic charm,

Dilate, amid the death-like calm profound,
On the white slumber-mantled earth gazed down.—
Words may not tell, how to the temperament,
And to the hue of that enchanted hour,
The spirit was subdued—a wizard scene !
In the far west, the Pentland's gloomy ridge
Belted the pale blue sky, whereon a cloud,
Fantastic, grey, and tinged with solemn light,
Lay, like a dreaming monster, and the moon,
Waning, above its silvery rim upheld
Her horns—as 'twere the Spectre of the Past.
Silently, silently, on we trode and trode,
As if a spell had frozen up our words :—
White lay the wolds around us, ankle-deep
In new-fallen snows, which champed beneath our
tread ;
And by the marge of winding Esk, which showed
The mirrored stars upon its map of ice,
Downwards in haste we journeyed to the shore
Of Ocean, whose drear, multitudinous voice
Unto the listening spirit of Silence sang.

V.

O leaf ! from out of the volume of far years
Dissevered, oft, how oft have the young buds
Of spring unfolded, have the summer skies
In their deep blue o'ercanopied the earth,
And autumn, in September's ripening breeze,
Rustled her harvests, since the theme was one
Present, and darkly all that Future lay,
Which now is of the perished and the past !
Since then a generation's span hath fled,
With all its varied whirls of chance and change—
With all its casualties of birth and death ;
And, looking round, sadly I feel this world
Another, though the same ;—another in
The eyes that gleam, the hearts that throb, the hopes,
The fears, the friendships of the soul ; the same
In outward aspect—in the hills which cleave,
As landmarks of historical renown,
With azure peaks the sky ; in the green plain,
That spreads its annual wild-flowers to the sun ;
And in the river, whose blue course is marked
By many a well-known bend and shadowy tree :

Yet o'er the oblivious gulf, whose mazy gloom
Ensepulchres so many things, I see
As 'twere of yesterday—yet robed in tints
Which yesterday has lost, or never had—
The desolate features of that Polar morn,—
Its twilight shadows, and its twinkling stars—
The snows far spreading—the expanse of sand,
Ribbed by the roaring and receded sea,
And, shedding over all a wizard light,
The waning moon above the dim-seen hills.

VI.

At length, upon the solitary shore
We walked of Ocean, which, with sullen voice,
Hollow and never-ceasing, to the north
Sang its primeval song. A weary waste!—
We passed through pools, where mussel, clam, and wilk,
Clove to their gravelly beds; o'er slimy rocks,
Ridgy and dark, with dank fresh fuci green,
Where the prawn wriggled, and the tiny crab
Slid sideway from our path, until we gained
The land's extremest point, a sandy jut,
Narrow, and by the weltering waves begirt

Around ; and there we laid us down and watched,
While from the west the pale moon disappeared,
Pronely, the sea-fowl and the coming dawn.

VII.

Now day with darkness for the mastery strove :
The stars had waned away—all, save the last
And fairest, Lucifer, whose silver lamp,
In solitary beauty, twinkling, shone
'Mid the far west, where, through the clouds of rack
Floating around, peeped out at intervals
A patch of sky ;—straightway the reign of night
Was finished, and, as if instinctively,
The ocean flocks, or slumbering on the wave
Or on the isles, seemed the approach of dawn
To feel ; and, rising from afar, were heard
Shrill shrieks and pipings desolate—a pause
Ensued, and then the same lone sounds returned,
And suddenly the whirring rush of wings
Went circling round us o'er the level sands,
Then died away ; and, as we looked aloft,
Between us and the sky we saw a speck
Of black upon the blue—some huge, wild bird,

Osprey or eagle, high amid the clouds
Sailing majestic, on its plumes to catch
The earliest crimson of the approaching day.

VIII.

'Twere sad to tell our murderous deeds that morn.
Silent upon the chilly beach we lay
Prone, while the drifting snow-flakes o'er us fell,
Like Nature's frozen tears for our misdeeds
Of wanton cruelty. The eider-ducks,
With their wild eyes, and necks of changeful blue,
We watched, now diving down, now on the surge
Flapping their pinions, of our ambushade
Unconscious—till a sudden death was found ;
While floating o'er us, in the graceful curves
Of silent beauty, down the sea-mew fell ;
The gilinet upon the shell-bank lay
Bleeding, and oft, in wonderment, its mate
Flew round, with mournful cry, to bid it rise,
Then shrieking, fled afar ; the sand-pipers,
A tiny flock, innumerable, as round
And round they flew, bewailed their broken ranks ;
And the scared heron sought his inland marsh.

With blood-bedabbled plumes around us rose
A slaughtered hecatomb ; and to my heart
(My heart then open to all sympathies)
It spoke of tyrannous cruelty—of man
The desolator ; and of some far day,
When the accountable shall make account,
And but the merciful shall mercy find.

IX.

Soul-sickened, satiate, and dissatisfied,
An altered being homewards I returned,
My thoughts revolting at the thirst for blood,
So brutalising, so destructive of
The finer sensibilities, which man
In boyhood owns, and which the world destroys.
Nature had preached a sermon to my heart :
And from that moment, on that snowy morn—
(Seeing that earth enough of suffering has
And death)—all cruelty my soul abhorred,
Yea, loathed the purpose and the power to kill.

THE DESERTED CHURCHYARD.

I.

THERE lay an ancient churchyard
Upon a heathy hill,
And oft of yore I loitered there,
Amid the twilight still ;
For 'twas a place deserted,
And all things spake a tone,
Whose wild long music vibrated
To things for ever gone.

II.

Yes ! Nature's face looked lonelier
To fancy's brooding eye,
The dusky moors, the mountains,
And solitary sky ;
And there was like a mournfulness
Upon the fitful breeze,
As it wailed among the hoary weeds,
Or mounted through the trees.

III.

Around were gnarly sycamores,
And, by the wizard stream,
I lay in youth's enchanted ring,
When life was like a dream ;
And spectral generations passed
Before my mind like waves,
Men that for creeping centuries
Had mouldered in their graves.

IV.

There, as the west was paling,
And the evening-star shone out,
I leant to watch the impish bat,
That flitting shrieked about ;
Or the crow that to the forest,
With travel-wearied wing,
Sailed through the twilight duskily,
Like some unearthly thing.

V.

The scowl of Desolation
Hung o'er it like a shade ;
And Ruin there, amid the moss,
Her silent dwelling made :
Only unto the elements
'Twas free, and human breath
Felt like unhallowed mockery,
In that calm field of death.

VI.

Within that solitary place
No monuments were seen
Of woman's love, or man's regret,
To tell that such had been ;
And to the soul's wild question,
" Oh dead ! where are ye flown ?"
Waved to and fro, in mournful guise,
The thistle's beard of down.

VII.

There as I lingered pondering,
Amid the mantling night,
Upon the old grey wall the hawk
Would silently alight ;
And, rushing from the blasted hills,
With rain-drops on its wing,
The wind amid the hemlock-stalks
Would desolately sing.

VIII.

Life, and the living things of earth,
Seemed vanished quite away ;
As there, in vague abstraction,
Amid the graves I lay :
The world seemed an enchanted world,
A region dim and drear,
A shadowy land of reverie,
Where Silence dwelt with Fear.

IX.

'Twas hard to think that Passion
Had stirred, how many a breast,
Which now beneath the nettles rank
Decayed in lonely rest ;
That once they loved like kindred,
These unacknowledged dead,
From whose bare, mouldering relics long
The famished worm had fled.

X.

For ages there no mourner
To wail his loss had come ;
The dead, and their descendants,
Like yesterday, were dumb ;
And sang the hoary cannach,
Upon the casual wind,
A dirge for generations
That left no trace behind.

XI.

So dreary and so desolate
That churchyard was, and rude,
That Fantasy upon the verge
Of Night and Chaos stood ;
And, like a Sybil's chronicle,
Mysteriously it told,
In hieroglyph and symbol,
The shadowy days of old.

TO A WOOD-PIGEON.

I.

HAVE I scared thee from thy bough,
Tenant of the lonely wild,
Where, from human face exiled,
'Tis thine the sky to plough ;
Hearing but the wailing breeze,
Or the cataract's sullen roaring,
Where, 'mid clumps of ancient trees,
O'er its rocks the stream is pouring?—
Up on ready wing thou rushest
To the gloom of woods profound,
And through silent ether brushest
With the whirring sound.

II.

Ring-dove beauteous ! is the face
Of man so hateful, that his sight
Startles thee in wild affright,
From beechen resting-place ?—
Time was once, when sacrifice,
Served by blue-eyed Druids hoary,
Smoked beneath the woodland skies
O'er their human victims gory ;
And time hath been when veiled Religion
Bade the calm-browed Hermit roam,
Seeking, with the lark and pigeon,
Guilt-untroubled home.

III.

Truly 'twas an erring choice—
If (as Reason says) be given
Earth, preparative for Heaven,
And calm, unclouded joys.

Nobler far 'tis sure to brave
Every barrier which retards us,
Than, to craven fear a slave,
Flee the path that Fate awards us :
He, from duty never altering,
Who, with Faith's heroic ken,
Forward treads with step unfaltering,
Is the man of men !

IV.

Surely pleasant life is thine,
Underneath the shining day ;
Thus from sorrow far away,
'Mid bowering groves to pine—
To pine in wild, luxurious love,
With thy cooing partner near thee ;
Flowers below, and boughs above,
And nought around to fear thee ;
While thy bill so gently carries
To thy young, from field or wood,
Seeds, or fruits, or purple berries,
For their slender food.

V.

In sequestered haunts like thine,
Where, in solitude, the trees
Blossom to the sun and breeze,
Worth has loved to shine ;
And ardent Genius structured high
Her magic piles of bright invention,
Achieving immortality,
And sharing not in Time's declension :
Glorious task, that nobly smothers
Earthward cravings, power and pelf,
Scorning, in proud zeal for others,
Every thought of self.

VI.

Time was once, when Man, like thee,
In the forest made his home,
Near the river's yellow foam,
Beneath the spreading tree.
Cities then were not : he dwelt

In the cavern's twilight chamber ;
And in adoration knelt,
When the morn with clouds of amber,
Or the wild birds singing round him,
Bade him to the chase arise ;
Then with quivered shafts he bound him,
'Neath the opal skies.

VII.

Rapidly thou wing'st away ;
I saw thee now, a tiny spot—
Again—and now I see thee not—
Nought save the skies of day.
The Psalmist once his prayer addressed—
“Dove, could I thy pinions borrow,
My soul would flee, and be at rest,
Far from earth's oppressing sorrow !”¹³
Alas ! we turn to brave the billows
Of the world's tempestuous sway,
Where Life's stream, beneath Care's willows,
Murmurs night and day !

THE YELLOW LEAF.

I.

THE year is on the wane—the blue
Of heaven assumes a paler hue ;
And when the sun comes forth at morn,
Through melancholy mists forlorn,
Awhile he struggles ere his beam
Falls on the forest and the stream ;
And then 'tis with a feebler power
He gilds the day and marks the hour !
Scathed are the mountains and the plains
By sweeping winds and plashing rains,
And both that wintry look assume
Which speaks to us of withered bloom
And vanished beauty : roaring floods
Are grown from tiny streams ; the woods,

Instead of emerald green, are known
By yellow sere and sullen brown ;
And all things which the eyes survey
Are tinged with death, and preach decay !

II.

But yet no hour more sweet than this,
More perfect in its tranquil bliss,
Could man of Heaven desire ; the light
Of eve is melting into night,
And from her eastern shrine, where lie,
Pillowed upon the soft blue sky,
A wreath of snowy clouds, the rim
Of the white moon about to swim
Her course of glory ; all around
The scene becomes enchanted ground :
The stream that late in darkness strayed,
The forest late so black with shade,
Are lighted up ; and lo ! the hills
A flood of argent glory fills ;

While even—far off—the murmuring sea
Is seen in its immensity,
A line of demarcation given
As 'twere beneath the earth and heaven !

III.

In gazing o'er a scene so fair,
Well may the wondering mind compare
Majestic nature with the strife
And littleness of human life !
Within the rank and narrow span,
Where man contends with brother man,
And where, a few brief seasons past,
Death is the common doom at last,
What find we ? In our hour of need,
The generous thought, the liberal deed ?—
Or in prosperity, the kind
O'erflowing of congenial mind ?
Ah no ! instead of these, to Woe
Is ever given another blow ;



A drop to Misery's cup of gall ;
To Error's feet a further fall ;
And, where 'tis least expected, still
Grows up Resentment or Ill-will—
Envy has poison, and has power
To wither Friendship's brightest flower ;
And Love, too oft a gilded dream,
Melts like the rain-drop in the stream.

IV.

But nature grows not old ; 'tis we
Who change, and not the flower or tree—
For years, as they revolve, renew
The faded with reviving dew
And genial heat, until as bright
Earth rises on the startled sight,
As when enchanted Adam's eyes
The leafing groves of Paradise—
And showered the new-made sun his beams
On spangled plains and crystal streams !

V.

O ! could we let the heart retain
Its glow, and dash away the stain
Which sins of others, or our own,
Have made its tablet white upon,
Then might we feel that earth is not
Entirely an accursed spot ;
That gleams of beauty, sparks of bliss,
Flash oft athwart Life's drear abyss ;
That from the poison-cup of Wee
A balm of healing oft may flow :
That round the heart are twisted ties
To keep us good, or make us wise ;
That duty is the Polar Star
Which leads to peace, though from afar ;
And to the pure in heart are given
Visions, whose resting-place is heaven !

THE DYING SPANIEL.

I.

OLD OSCAR, how feebly thou crawl'st to the door,
Thou who wert all beauty and vigour of yore ;
How slow is thy stagger the sunshine to find,
And thy straw-sprinkled pallet—how crippled and
blind !

But thy heart is still living—thou hearest my voice—
And thy faint-wagging tail says thou yet canst
rejoice ;

Ah ! how different art thou from the Oscar of old,
The sleek and the gamesome, the swift and the bold !

II.

At sunrise I wakened to hear thy proud bark,
With the coo of the house-dove, the lay of the lark ;
And out to the green fields 'twas ours to repair,
When sunrise with glory empurpled the air ;
And the streamlet flowed down in its gold to the sea ;
And the night-dew like diamond-sparks gleamed from
 the tree ;
And the sky o'er the earth in such purity glowed,
As if angels, not men, on its surface abode !

III.

How then thou wouldst gambol, and start from my
 feet,
To scare the wild birds from their sylvan retreat ;
Or plunge in the smooth stream, and bring to my
 hand
The twig or the wild-flower I threw from the land :
On the moss-sprinkled stone if I sat for a space,
Thou wouldst crouch on the greensward, and gaze
 in my face,
Then-in wantonness pluck up the blooms in thy teeth,
And toss them above thee, or tread them beneath.

IV.

Then I was a schoolboy all thoughtless and free,
And thou wert a whelp full of gambol and glee ;
Now dim is thine eyeball, and grizzled thy hair,
And I am a man, and of grief have my share !
Thou bring'st to my mind all the pleasures of youth,
When Hope was the mistress, not handmaid, of
Truth ;
When Earth looked an Eden, when Joy's sunny
hours
Were cloudless, and every path glowing with flowers.

V.

Now Summer is waning ; soon tempest and rain
Shall harbinger desolate Winter again,
And thou, all unable its gripe to withstand,
Shall die, when the snow-mantle garments the land :
Then thy grave shall be dug 'neath the old cherry-
tree,
Which in spring-time will shed down its blossoms
on thee ;
And, when a few fast-fleeting seasons are o'er,
Thy faith and thy form shall be thought of no more !

VI.

Then all who caressed thee and loved, shall be laid,
Life's pilgrimage o'er, in the tomb's dreary shade ;
Other steps shall be heard on these floors, and the past
Be like yesterday's clouds from the memory cast :
Improvements will follow ; old walls be thrown
 down,
Old landmarks removed, when old masters are gone ;
And the gard'ner, when delving, will marvel to see
White bones, where once blossomed the old cherry-
 tree !

VII.

Frail things ! could we read but the objects around,
In the meanest some deep-lurking truth might be
 found,
Some type of our frailty, some warning to show
How shifting the sands are we build on below :
Our fathers have passed, and have mixed with the
 mould ;
Year presses on year, till the young become old ;
Time, though a stern teacher, is partial to none ;
And the friend and the foe pass away, one by one !

EVENING TRANQUILLITY.

1.

How still this hour ! the mellow sun
Withdraws his western ray,
And, evening's haven almost won,
He leaves the seas of day :
Soft is the twilight reign, and calm,
As o'er autumnal fields of balm
The languid zephyrs stray ;
Across the lawn the heifers roam,
The wearied reaper seeks his home.

II.

The laden earth is rich with flowers,
All bathed in crimson light ;
While hums the bee, 'mid garden bowers
With clustering roses bright :
The woods outshoot their shadows dim ;
O'er the smooth lake the swallows skim
In wild erratic flight ;
Moored by the marge, the shallop sleeps,
Above its deck the willow weeps.

III.

'Tis sweet, in such an hour as this,
To bend the pensive way,
Scan Nature, and partake the bliss
Which charms like hers convey :
No city's bustling noise is near,
And but the little birds you hear,
That chant so blithe and gay ;
And ask ye whence their mirth began ?
Perchance since free, and far from man.

IV.

Their little lives are void of care ;
From bush to brake they fly,
Filling the rich ambrosial air
Of August's vermeil sky :
They flit about the fragrant wood ;
Elisha's God provides them food,
And hears them when they cry :
For ever blithe and blest are they,
Their sinless span a summer's day.

V.

Yon bending clouds all purpling streak
The mantle of the west ;
And trem'lously the sunbeams break
On Pentland's mountain crest :
Hill, valley, ocean, sky, and stream,
All wear one placid look, and seem
In silent beauty blest ;
As if created Nature raised
To heaven their choral songs, and praised.

VI.

Above yon cottage on the plain
The wreathy smoke ascends ;
A silent emblem, with the main
Of sailing clouds it blends ;
Like a departed spirit gone
Up from low earth to Glory's throne
To mix with sainted friends,
Where, life's probation voyage o'er,
Grief's sail is furled for evermore !

HYMN TO HESPERUS.

Ἐσπερε πάντα φερεῖς.

SAPPH. *Frag.*

I.

BRIGHT lonely beam, fair heavenly speck,
 That, calling all the stars to duty,
 Through stormless ether gleam'st to deck
 The fulgent west's unclouded beauty ;
 All silent are the fields, and still
 The umbrageous wood's recesses dreary,
 As if calm came at thy sweet will,
 And Nature of Day's strife were weary.

II.

Blent with the season and the scene,
From out her treasured stores, Reflection
Looks to the days when life was green,
With fond and thrilling retrospection ;
The earth again seems haunted ground ;
Youth smiles, by Hope and Joy attended ;
And bloom afresh young flowers around,
With scent as rich and hues as splendid.

III.

How oft, 'mid eves as clear and calm,
These wild-wood pastures have I strayed in,
When all these scenes of bliss and balm
Blue Twilight's mantle were arrayed in !
How oft I've stole from bustling man,
From Art's parade and city riot,
The sweets of Nature's reign to scan,
And muse on Life in rural quiet !

IV.

Fair Star ! with calm repose and peace
I hail thy vesper beam returning ;
Thou seem'st to say that troubles cease
In the calm sphere where thou art burning :
Sweet 'tis on thee to gaze and muse ;—
Sure angel wings around thee hover,
And from Life's fountain scatter dew
To freshen Earth, Day's fever over.

V.

Star of the Bee ! with laden thigh
Thy twinkle warns its homeward winging ;
Star of the Bird ! thou bidd'st her lie
Down o'er her young, and hush her singing ;
Star of the Pilgrim ! travel-sore,
How sweet, reflected in the fountains,
He hails thy circlet, gleaming o'er
The shadow of his native mountains !

VI.

Thou art the Star of Freedom, thou
 Undo'st the bonds which gall the sorest ;
Thou bring'st the ploughman from his plough ;
 Thou bring'st the woodman from his forest ;
Thou bring'st the wave-worn fisher home,
 With all his scaly wealth around him ;
And bidd'st the hearth-sick schoolboy roam,
 Freed from the lettered tasks that bound him.

VII.

Star of the Mariner ! thy car,
 O'er the blue waters twinkling clearly,
Reminds him of his home afar,
 And scenes he still loves, ah, how dearly !
He sees his native fields, he sees
 Grey twilight gathering o'er his mountains,
And hears the rustle of green trees,
 The bleat of flocks, and gush of fountains.

VIII.

How beautiful, when, through the shrouds,
The fierce presaging storm-winds rattle,
Thou glitterest far above the clouds,
O'er waves that lash, and gales that battle ;
And as, athwart the billows driven,
He turns to thee in fond devotion,
Star of the Sea ! thou tell'st that Heaven
O'erlooks alike both land and ocean.

IX.

Star of the Mourner ! 'mid the gloom,
When droops the West o'er Day departed,
The widow bends above the tomb
Of him who left her broken-hearted :
Darkness within, and Night around,
The joys of life no more can move her,
When lo ! thou lightest the profound,
To tell that Heaven's eye glows above her.

X.

Star of the Lover! O, how bright
Above the copsewood dark thou shinest,
As longs he for those eyes of light,
For him whose lustre burns divinest!
Earth and the things of earth depart,
Transformed to scenes and sounds Elysian;
Warm rapture gushes o'er his heart,
And Life seems like a faëry vision.

XI.

Yes, thine the hour when, daylight done,
Fond Youth to Beauty's bower thou lightest;
Soft shines the moon, bright shines the sun,
But thou, of all things, softest, brightest.
Still is thy beam as fair and young,
The torch illuming Evening's portal,
As when of thee lorn Sappho sung,
With burning soul, in lays immortal.

XII.

Star of the Poet ! thy pale fire,
Awakening, kindling inspiration,
Burns in blue ether, to inspire
The loftiest themes of meditation ;
He deems some holier, happier race
Dwells in the orbit of thy beauty,—
Souls of the Just, redeemed by grace,
Whose path on earth was that of duty.

XIII.

Beneath thee Earth turns Paradise
To him, all radiant, rich, and tender ;
And dreams arrayed by thee arise
'Mid Twilight's dim and dusky splendour :
Blest or accurst each spot appears ;
A frenzy fine his fancy seizes ;
He sees unreal shapes, and hears
The wail of spirits on the breezes.

XIV.

Bright leader of the hosts of Heaven !

When day from darkness God divided,
In silence through the empyrean driven,
Forth from the East thy chariot glided :
Star after star, o'er night and earth,
Shone out in brilliant revelation ;
And all the angels sang for mirth,
To hail the finished, fair Creation.

XV.

Star of declining Day, farewell !—

Ere lived the Patriarchs, thou wert yonder ;
Ere Isaac, 'mid the piny dell,
Went forth at eventide to ponder :
And when to Death's stern mandate bow
All whom we love, and all who love us,
Thou shalt arise, as thou dost now,
To shine, and shed thy tears above us.

XVI.

Star that proclaims Eternity !

When o'er the lost Sun Twilight weepeth,
Thou light'st thy beacon-tower on high,

To say, " He is not dead, but sleepeth ;"
And forth with Dawn thou comest too,

As all the hosts of Night surrender,
To prove thy sign of promise true,
And usher in Day's orient splendour.

FADED FLOWERS.

I.

FAREWELL, ye perished flowers
That on the cold ground lie ;
 How gay ye smiled
 'Mid the brown wild,
'Neath summer's painted sky !—
Passed hath your bloom away ;
Your stalks are sere and bent :
 On the howling blast
 The rain sweeps past,
From the dim firmament.

II.

I think me of your pride,
When Zephyr came with Spring ;
 Then sigh to know
 What wreck and woe
A few brief months may bring !
Emblems of human fate,
Ye say—" Though bright and fair
 Life's morning be,
 Its eve may see
The clouds of grief and care !"

III.

In you I scan the fate
Life's sunniest hopes have met,
 When Youth's bright noon,
 (Alas ! how soon !)
In manhood's twilight set—
Yes ! joy by joy decayed
As ye did fade, sweet blooms,
 Leaving behind,
 Upon the wind,
Awhile your soft perfumes.

IV.

As waned each blossom bright,
So doomed were to depart
 Friend after friend—
 And each to rend
A fibre from the heart :
Green Spring again shall bid
Your boughs with bloom be crowned ;
 But alas ! to Man,
 In earth's brief span,
No second spring comes round !

V.

Yes ! friends who clomb Life's hill
Together, long ago,
 Are parted, and
 Their fatherland
No more their places know !
We see them not, nor hear them,
Among the garden bowers ;
 They have passed away
 In bright decay,
Like you, ye perished flowers !

VI.

Mourn not—we meet again,
Although we meet not here ;
 Turn ye above,
 Where Faith and Love
Taste Heaven's eternal year :—
For though Time's winter bows
The grey head to the clod, ,
 Dust goes to dust,
 But (as we trust)
The Spirit back to God !

THE NIGHT HAWK.

Vox, et præterea nihil.

I.

THE winds are pillowed on the waveless deep,
And from the curtained sky the midnight moon
Looks sombred o'er the forest depths, that sleep
Unstirring, while a soft melodious tune,
Nature's own voice, the lapsing stream, is heard,
And ever and anon th' unseen, night-wandering
bird.

II.

An Arab of the air, it floats along,
 Enamoured of the silence and the night,
The tall pine-tops, the mountains dim among,
 Aye wheeling on in solitary flight ;
Like an ungentle spirit earthwards sent,
To haunt the pale-faced moon, a cheerless banish-
 ment.

III.

A lone, low sound—a melancholy cry,
 Now near, remoter now, and more remote ;
In the blue dusk, unseen, it journeys by,
 Loving amid the starlight-calm to float ;
Now sharp and shrill, now faint ; and by degrees
Fainter, like summer winds that die 'mid leafy trees.

IV.

Listening, in the blue solitude I stand—

The breathless hush of midnight—all is still ;
Unmoved the valleys spread, the woods expand ;
There is a slumbering mist upon the hill ;
Nature through all her regions seems asleep,
Save, ever and anon, that sound so wild and deep.

V.

Moonlight and midnight ! all so vast and void,
Life seems a vision of the shadowy past,
By mighty silence swallowed and destroyed,
And Thou of living things the dirge and last :
Such quietude enwraps the moveless scene,
As if, all discord o'er, Mankind had never been.

VI.

Doubtless in elder times, unhallowed sound,
When Fancy ruled the subject realms, and Fear,
Some demon elf, or goblin shrieking round,
Darkly thou smot'st on Superstition's ear :
The wild wood had its spirits, and the glen
Swarmed with dim shapes and shades inimical to
Men.

VII.

Then Fairies tripped it in the hazel glade ;
And Fahm stalked muttering through the cavern's
gloom ;¹⁴
And corpse-fires, glancing through the yew-trees'
shade,
Lighted each sheeted spectre from its tomb ;
While Morning showed, in nature's grassy death,
Where the Foul Fiend had danced with Witches on
the heath.

VIII.

On Summer's scented eve, when fulgent skies
The last bright traces of the day partook,
And heaven looked down on earth with starry eyes,
Reflected softly in the wimpling brook,
Far, far above, wild solitary bird,
Thy melancholy scream 'mid woodlands I have
heard ;

IX.

And I have heard thee, when December's snow
Mantled with chilling white the moonless vales,
Through the drear darkness, wandering to and fro,
And mingling with the sharp and sighing gales
Thy wizard note—when Nature's prostrate form,
In desolation sad, lay buried in the storm.

X.

It is a sound most solemn, strange, and lone,
That wildly talks of something far remote
Amid the past—of something dimly known—
Of Time's primeval voice, a parted note—
The echo of Antiquity—the cry
Of Ruin, fluttering o'er some Greatness doomed to
die.

XI.

So parted from communion with mankind,
So severed from all life, and living sound,
Calmly the solemnised and softened mind
Sinks down, and dwells, in solemn thought pro-
found,
On dreams of yore, on visions swept away—
The loves and friendships warm of being's early day.

XII.

Lov'st Thou, when storms are dark, and rains come
down,

When wild winds round lone dwellings moan
and sigh,

And Night is hooded in its gloomiest frown,

To mingle with the tempest thy shrill cry,

To pierce the rolling thunder-clouds, and brook

The scythe-winged lightning's glare with fierce un-
shrinking look ?

XIII.

Most lonely voice ! most wild unbodied scream !

Aye haunting thus the sylvan wilderness,

Thou tellest man that life is but a dream,

Romantic as the tones of thy distress,

Leaving on earth no lingering trace behind,

And melting as thou meltest on the trackless wind.

XIV.

Faint come the notes ;—Thou meltest distant far,
Scarce heard at intervals upon the night,
Leaving to loneliness each listening star,
The trees, the river, and the moonshine bright ;
And, 'mid this stirless hush, this still of death,
Heard is my bosom's throb, and audible my breath.

XV.

Thus wane the noonday dreams of Youth away,
And twilight hues the path of Life pervade ;
Thus, like the western sunlight, ray by ray,
Into the darkness of old age we fade ;
While of our early friends the memories seem
Half lost in bygone years, like fragments of a
dream.

XVI.

Lo ! 'mid the future dim, remote or near,
Lurks in the womb of Time a final day,
When shuddering Earth a trumpet voice shall hear,
And ruin seize the Universe for prey ;
And Silence, as the pulse of Nature stills,
In viewless robe, shall sit enthroned on smoking
hills.

STARLIGHT REFLECTIONS.

I.

ON this grey column—overthrown
By giant Time's unsparing hand,
Where lichens spring and moss is strown
Along the desert land—
Resting alone, I fix mine eye,
With feelings of sublime delight,
On June's resplendent galaxy,
The studded arch of night.
How awful is the might of *Him*
Who stretched the skies from pole to pole!
And breathed, through chaos waste and dim,
Creation's living soul!

A thousand worlds are glowing round,
And thousands more than sight can trace
Revolve throughout the vast profound,
And fill the realms of space :
Then what is man ? It ill befits
That such should hear or heed the prayer—
Lip-mockery of the worm that sits
Within the scorner's chair !

II.

There are no clouds to checker night ;
The winds are hushed, the skies serene ;
The landscape, outlined darkly bright,
Is still distinctly seen :
Remotest Ocean's tongue is heard
Declaiming to his island shores ;
And wails the lonely water-bird
From yonder marshy moors.
This is the realm of solitude ;
A season and a scene for thought,
When Melancholy well may brood
On years, that now are not—

On siren years, whose witchery smiled,
Ere time had leagued the heart with strife,
The Eden of this earthly wild—
The paradise of life.
They feign, who tell us wealth can strike
In to the thornless paths of bliss ;
Alas ! its best is, Judas-like,
To sell us with a kiss.

III.

Ambition is a gilded toy,
A baited hook, a trap of guile ;
Alluring only to destroy,
And mocking with a smile.
Alas ! for what hath youth exchanged
The garden of its vernal prime ?
Is Care—Sin—Sorrow—more estranged,
More gently lenient Time ?
Doth Friendship quaff from bowl more deep ?
Bathes Hope in more delightful streams ?
Comes Love to charm the pillowed sleep
With brighter, holier dreams ?

Ah, no ! the ship of life is steered
More boldly to the central main,
Only to cope with tempests feared,
Lightning, and wind, and rain !
Around lurks shipwreck ; hidden rocks
Beneath the billows darkling lie ;
Death threatens in the breaker's shocks
And thunder-cloven sky !

IV.

Hearken to Truth ! Though joys remain,
And friends unchanged and faithful prove—
The heart can never love again
As when it learned to love :
Oh ! ne'er shall manhood's bosom feel
The raptures boyhood felt of yore ;
Nor fancy lend, nor life reveal
Such faëry landscapes more !
Above the head when tempests break,
When cares flit round on ebon wing,
When Hope o'er being's troubled lake
No sunny gleam can fling ;

When Love's clear flame no longer burns,
And Griefs distract, and fears annoy,
Then Retrospection fondly turns
To long-departed joy—
The visions brought by sleep, the dreams
By scarce-awakened daylight brought,
And reveries by sylvan streams,
And mountains far remote.

v.

Elysium's hues have fled : the joy
Of youth departs on seraph wing ;
Soon breezes from the Pole destroy
The opening blooms of Spring !
We gaze around us ; earth seems bright
With flowers and fruit, the skies are blue ;
The bosom flutters with delight,
And deems the pageant true :—
Then lo ! a tempest darkles o'er
The summer plain and waveless sea ;
Lash the hoarse billows on the shore ;
Fall blossoms from the tree ;

Star after star is quenched ; the night
Of blackness gathers round in strife ;
And storms howl o'er a scene of blight ;—
Can such be human life ?
Expanding beauties charm the heart,
The garden of our life is fair ;
But in a few short years we start,
To find a desert there !

VI.

Stars ! far above that twinkling roll—
Stars ! so resplendent, yet serene—
Ye look (ah ! how unlike the soul)
As ye have ever been :
In you 'tis sweet to read at eve
The themes of youth's departed day
Call up the past, and fondly grieve
O'er what hath waned away—
The faces that we see no more ;
The friends whom Fate hath doomed to roam ;
Or silence, through Death's iron door,
Called to his cheerless home !

O ! that the heart again were young ;
 O ! that the feelings were as kind,
Artless, and innocent ; the tongue
 The oracle of mind :
O ! that the sleep of Night were sweet,
 Gentle as childhood's sleep hath been,
When angels, as from Jacob's feet,
 Soared earth and Heaven between.

VII.

What once hath been no more can be—
 'Tis void, 'tis visionary all ;
The past hath joined eternity—
 It comes not at the call.
No ! worldly thoughts and selfish ways
 Have banished Truth, to rule instead ;
We, dazzled by a meteor-blaze,
 Have run where Folly led ;
Yet happiness was found not there—
 The spring-bloom of the heart was shed ;
We turned from Nature's face, though fair,
 To muse upon the dead !

As dewdrops from the sparry cave,
Trickling, new properties impart,
A tendency Life's dealings have
To petrify the heart.

There is an ecstasy in thought,
A soothing warmth, a pleasing pain ;
Away ! such dreams were best forgot—
They shall not rise again !

TO A WOUNDED PTARMIGAN.

I.

HAUNTER of the herbless peak,
Habitant 'twixt earth and sky,
Snow-white bird of bloodless beak,
Rushing wing, and rapid eye,
Hath the Fowler's fatal aim
Of thy freeborn rights bereft thee,
And, 'mid natures curbed or tame,
Thus engaged, a captive left thee?—
Thee, who earth's low valleys scorning,
From thy cloud-embattled nest
Wont to catch the earliest morning
Sunbeam on thy breast!

II.

Where did first the light of day
See thee bursting from thy shell?
Was it where Ben-Nevis grey
Towers aloft o'er flood and fell?
Or where down upon the storm
Plaided shepherds gaze in wonder
Round thy rocky sides, Cairngorm,
Rolling with its clouds and thunder?
Or with summit, heaven-directed,
Where Benvoirlich views, in pride,
All his skyey groves reflected
In Loch Ketturin's tide?

III.

Boots it not—but this we know
That a wild free life was thine,
Whether on the peak of snow
Or amid the clumps of pine;
Now on high begirt with heath,
Now, decoyed by cloudless weather,

To the golden broom beneath,
Happy with thy mates together ;
Yours were every cliff and cranny
Of your birth's majestic hill ;—
Tameless flock ! and ye were many,
Ere the spoiler came to kill !

IV.

Gazing, wintry bird, at thee,
Thou dost bring the wandering mind
Visions of the Polar Sea—
Where, impelled by wave and wind,
Drift the icebergs to and fro,
Crashing oft in fierce commotion,
While the snorting whale below,
In its anger tumults ocean ;—
Naked, treeless shores, where howling
Tempests vex the brumal air,
And the famished wolf-cub prowling
Shuns the fiercer bear :—

V.

And far north the daylight dies—
And the twinkling stars alone
Glitter through the icy skies,
Down from mid-day's ghastly throne ;
And the moon is in her cave ;
And no living sound intruding,
Save the howling wind and wave,
'Mid that darkness ever brooding ;
Morn as 'twere in anger blotted
From creation's wistful sight,
And Time's progress only noted
By the Northern Light.

VI.

Sure 'twas sweet for thee, in spring,
Nature's earliest green to hail,
As the cuckoo's slumberous wing
Dreamt along the sunny vale ;
As the blackbird from the brake
Hymned the Morning Star serenely ;

And the wild swan o'er the lake,
Ice-unfettered, oared it queenly ;
Brightest which ?—the concave o'er thee
Deepening to its summer hue,
Or the boundless moors before thee,
With their bells of blue ?

VII.

Then from larchen grove to grove,
And from wild-flower glen to glen,
Thine it was in bliss to rove,
High o'er hills, and far from men ;
Wilds Elysian ! not a sound
Heard except the torrents booming :
Nought beheld for leagues around
Save the heath in purple blooming ;
Why that startle ? From their shieling
On the hazel-girded mount,
'Tis the doe and fawn down stealing
To the silvery fount.

VIII.

Sweet to all the summer time—
But how sweeter far to thee,
Sitting in thy home sublime,
High o'er cloudland's soundless sea !
Or if morn, by July drest,
Steeped the hill-tops in vermilion,
Or the sunset made the west
Even like Glory's own pavilion ;
While were fixed thine ardent eyes on
Realms, outspread in blooming mirth,
Bounded but by the horizon
Belting Heaven to Earth.

IX.

Did the Genius of the place,
Which of living things but you
Had for long beheld no trace,
That unhallowed visit rue ?
Did the gathered snow of years
Which begirt that mountain's forehead,

Thawing, melt as 'twere in tears,
O'er that natural outrage horrid ?
Did the lady-fern hang drooping,
And the quivering pine-trees sigh,
As, to cheer his game-dogs whooping,
Passed the spoiler by ?

X.

None may know—the dream is o'er—
Bliss and beauty cannot last ;
To that haunt, for evermore,
Ye are creatures of the past !
And for you it mourns in vain ;
While the dirgeful night-breeze only
Sings, and falls the fitful rain,
'Mid your homes forlorn and lonely.
Ye have passed—the bonds enthrall you
Of supine and wakeless death ;
Never more shall spring recall you
To the scented heath !

XI.

Such their fate—but unto thee,
Bleeding bird ! protracted breath,
Hopeless, drear captivity,
Life which in itself is death :—
Yet alike the fate of him
Who, when all his views are thwarted,
Finds earth but a desert dim,
Relatives and race departed ;
Soon are Fancy's realms Elysian
Peopled by the brood of Care ;
And Truth finds Hope's gilded vision
Painted but—in air.

THE CHILD'S BURIAL IN SPRING.

I.

WHERE Ocean's waves to the hollow caves murmur
a low wild hymn,
In pleasant musing I pursued my solitary way ;
Then upwards wending from the shore, amid the
woodlands dim,
From the gentle height, like a map in sight, the
downward country lay.

II.

'Twas in the smile of "green Aprile,"¹⁵ a cloudless
noontide clear ;
In ecstasy the birds sang forth from many a leafing
tree ;
Both bud and bloom, with fresh perfume, pro-
claimed the awakened year ;
And Earth, arrayed in beauty's robes, seemed
Heaven itself to be.

III.

So cheerfully the sun shone out, so smilingly the
sky
O'erarched green earth, so pleasantly the stream
meandered on,
So joyous was the murmur of the honey-bee and
fly,
That of our Fall, which ruined all, seemed traces few
or none.

IV.

Then hopes, whose gilded pageantry wore all the
hues of truth—
Elysian thoughts—Arcadian dreams—the poet's
fabling strain—
Again seemed shedding o'er our world an amaran-
thine youth,
And left no vestiges behind of death, decay, or
pain.

V.

At length I reached a churchyard gate—a church-
yard? Yes! but there
Breathed out such calm serenity o'er every thing
around,
That "the joy of grief" (as Ossian sings) o'erbalmed
the very air,
And the place was less a mournful place than con-
secrated ground.

VI.

Beneath the joyous noontide sun, beneath the cloud-
less sky,
'Mid bees that hummed, and birds that sang, and
flowers that gemmed the wild,
The sound of measured steps was heard—a grave
stood yawning by—
And lo! in sad procession slow, the Funeral of a
Child!

VII.

I saw the little coffin borne unto its final rest ;
The dark mould shuffled o'er it, and replaced the
daisied sod ;
I marked the deep convulsive throes that heaved
the Father's breast,
As he returned (too briefly given !) that loan of love
to God !

VIII.

Then rose in my rebellious heart unhallowed
thoughts and wild,
Daring the inscrutable decrees of Providence to
scan—
How death should be allotted to a pure, a sinless
child,
And length of days the destiny of sinful, guilty
man!

IX.

The laws of the material world seemed beautiful
and clear ;
The day and night, the bloom and blight, and sea-
sons as they roll
In regular vicissitude to form a circling year,
Made up of parts dissimilar, and yet a perfect
whole.

X.

But darkness lay o'er the moral way which man is
told to tread ;

A shadow veiled the beam divine by Revelation
lent :

“ How awfully mysterious are Thy ways, O
Heaven ! ” I said ;

“ We see not whence, nor know for what, fate's
arrows oft are sent ! ”

XI.

Under the shroud of the sullen cloud, when the
hills are capped with snow,

When the moaning breeze, through leafless trees,
bears tempest on its wing—

In the Winter's wrath, we think of death ; but not
when lilies blow,

And, Lazarus-like, from March's tomb walks forth
triumphant Spring.

XII.

As in distress o'er this wilderness I mused of stir
and strife,
Where, 'mid the dark, seemed scarce a mark our
tangled path to scan,
A shadow o'er the season fell ; a cloud o'er human
life—
A veil to be by Eternity but ne'er by time with-
drawn !

SPRING HYMN.

1.

How pleasant is the opening year !

 The clouds of Winter melt away ;

The flowers in beauty reappear ;

 The songster carols from the spray ;

Lengthens the more refulgent day ;

 And bluer glows the arching sky ;

All things around us seem to say—

 “Christian ! direct thy thoughts on high.”

II.

In darkness, through the dreary length
Of Winter, slept both bud and bloom ;
But Nature now puts forth her strength,
And starts renewed, as from the tomb ;
Behold an emblem of thy doom,
O man !—a star hath shone to save—
And morning yet shall re-illumine
The midnight darkness of the grave !

III.

Yet ponder well, how then shall break
The dawn of second life on thee—
Shalt thou to hope—to bliss awake ?
Or vainly strive God's wrath to flee ?
Then shall pass forth the dread decree,
That makes or weal or woe thine own :
Up, and to work ! Eternity
Must reap the harvest Time hath sown.

OCTOBER—A SKETCH.

In spring, in summer, in autumnal wane,
How beautiful are Nature's thousand hues !
And which the fairest who can say ? For each
In turn is passing fair, possesses charms
Peculiar, and upon the heart and mind
Leaves an imperial impress. Blandly crowned
With crocus and with snowdrop coronal,
First comes the vestal Spring, with emerald scarf
And cheeks of glowing childhood. Summer next,
With all her gay and gorgeous trappings on,
Rejoicing in the glory of her youth,
And braiding roses in her auburn hair,

Under the light of the meridian sun,
In the green covert of a spreading beech :
While all around the fields are musical
With song of bird, and hum of bee. And lo !
Matronly Autumn passes, bright at first
In eye, and firm of step, her cincture rich,
Of wheat-ear and of vine-wreath intertwined ;
But sadness dwells in her departing look,
And darklier glooms the atmosphere around,
Till Winter meets her on the desert heath,
And breathes consumption on her fallow cheek.

The year is now declining, and the air,
When morning blushes on the orient hills,
Imbued with icy chillness. Ocean's wave
Has lost its tepid glow, and slumbering fogs
Brood o'er its level calm on windless days ;
Yet when enshrined at his meridian height,
The sun athwart the fading landscape smiles
With most paternal kindness, softly warm,
And delicately beautiful—a Prince

Blessing the realms whose glory flows from him.
From bough to bough of the thick holly-tree
The spider weaves his net ; the gossamer—
A tenuous line, glistening at intervals—
Now floats and now subsides upon the air ;
The foliage of the forest, brown and sere,
Drops on the margin of the stubble-field,
In which the partridge lingers insecure,
And raises oft at sombre eventide,
With plaintive throat, a wild and tremulous cry.
The sickle of the husbandman hath ceased,
Leaving the lap of nature shorn and bare,
And even the latest gleaner disappeared.
The dandelion from the wayside path,
Its golden sun eclipsed, hath passed away ;
And the sere nettle seeds along the bank.
The odorous clover-flowers—these purely white,
Those richly purple—now are seen no more ;
The perfume of the bean-field has decayed ;
And roams the wandering bee o'er many a strath,
For blossoms which have perished. Grassy blades,

Transparent, taper, and of sickly growth,
Shoot, soon to wither, in the sterile fields,
Doomed in their spring to premature old age.
The garden fruits have mellowed with the year,
Have mellowed, and been gathered—all are gone ;
And save the lingering nectarine—but half,
Not wholly reconciled to us—remains
Nor trace nor token of the varied wealth
Which Summer boasted in her cloudless prime.
Yet on the wild-briar grows the yellow hip ;
The dew-sprent bramble shows its clusters ripe ;
Reddens, 'mong fading branches, the harsh sloe ;
And from the mountain-ash, in scarlet pride,
The fairy bunches drop their countless beads
In richness ; on the lithe laburnum's bough
Mix pods of lighter green among the leaves ;
And on the jointed honeysuckle's stalk
The succulent berries hang. The robin sits
Upon the mossy gateway, singing clear
A requiem to the glory of the woods—
The bright umbrageousness, which, like a dream,

Hath perished and for ever passed away ;
And, when the breeze awakes, a frequent shower
Of withered leaves bestrew the weeded paths,
Or from the branches of the willow whirl,
With rustling sound, into the turbid stream.

Yet there is still a brightness in the sky—
A most refulgent and translucent blue :
Still, from the ruined tower, the wallflower tells
Mournfully of what midsummer's pride hath been ;
And still the mountains heave their ridgy sides
In pastoral greenness. Melancholy time !
Yet full of sweet sad thought ; for everything
Is placid, if not joyful, as in Spring,
When Hope was keen, and, with an eagle eye,
Pryed forward to the glories yet to come.

There cannot be a sweeter hour than this,
Even now, although encompassed with decay,
To him who knows the world wherein he lives,
And all its mournful mutabilities !

There is not on the heavens a single cloud ;
There is not in the air a breathing wind ;
There is not on the earth a sound of grief ;
Nor in the bosom a repining thought :—
Faith having sought and gained the mastery,
Quiet and contemplation mantle all !

NOTES

NOTES.

1.

*Vainly did the Roxburgh shafts assail
Thy moated towers, from which they fell like hail ;
While waved Northumbria's pennon o'er thy head.—P. 4.*

EVEN so far back as the time of Stephen, Wark or Carrum was considered one of the strongest castles on the English border, and is the second of the five noted places enumerated by Ridpath (*Border History*, p. 76) as having been taken by David the First of Scotland, in 1135.

“Carrum,” says Richard of Hexham, “is by the English called Wark.” After two other close and protracted sieges, in 1138, it was at last taken and demolished, but not until the garrison had been reduced to the necessity of killing and salting their horses for food. They were allowed to depart, retaining their arms; and such was the Scottish King’s admiration of their heroic resistance, that he presented them with twenty-four horses in lieu of those that had been thus destroyed.

Being afterwards rebuilt, Wark Castle was again besieged in the reign of Henry the Eighth; and Buchanan, the historian and poet, himself an eyewitness, gives a description of it as it then stood. In the inmost area was a tower of great strength and height, encircled by two walls, the outer of which included a large space, wherein, in times of danger, the inhabitants of the neighbourhood found shelter for themselves and cattle. The

inner was strongly fortified by ditches and towers. It was provided with a garrison, stores of artillery and ammunition, and all things necessary for protracted defence.

The castle of Wark is now so entirely gone, that it is with some difficulty that even the lines of its ancient fortifications can be traced.

2.

Carham whispers of the slaughtered Dane.—P. 4.

Carham was the scene of a great and decisive defeat of the Danes by the Northumbrian Saxons. It was formerly the seat of an Abbey of Black Canons, subordinate to Kirkham in Yorkshire. Wallace, whose encampment gave name to an adjoining field, burned it down in 1295.

The present church, overshadowed by fine old trees, stands directly on the banks of the Tweed. At its altar the Author took upon himself the matrimonial vows.

3.

Douglas sleeps with Evers, side by side.—P. 5.

For a detailed account of the battle of Ancrum Moor, where Lord Evers and his son were slain, see Tytler's *Scotland*, vol. v., p. 380-384; or Appendix to that noble ballad, "The Eve of St John" (*Border Minstrelsy*, vol. iv.)

The chivalrous Douglas, killed at Otterburn in the fight with Percy, was interred beneath the high altar of Melrose, "hys baner hangyng over hym."—(Froissart, vol. ii.) William Douglas, called the Black Knight of Liddesdale, was also buried here with great pomp and pageantry.—(Godscroft's *History of the House of Douglas*, vol. ii. p. 123.) His tomb is still shown.

In the battle of Ancrum Moor, according to Ridpath, eight hundred of the English were killed, with both their leaders, Evers and Latoun; and a thousand taken prisoners. The Scots are said to have lost only two of their number, and to have treated their enemies with great barbarity.—(*Border History*, p. 553.)

It is strongly suspected, however, that the Scottish historians have not given a fair account of their loss. "Parta autem victoria," says Lesly (p. 478), "ita in fugientes sævitum est, ut nihil illustre postea gesserimus, quin potius luculenta ad Musselburghum plaga accepta maximas summæ immanitatis pœnas dederimus."

4.

Thy classic precincts, hallowed Abbotsford.—P. 6.

This sonnet has been honoured by a translation into Italian—by an accomplished scholar of that country—which appeared in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' November 1829. The version is here subjoined :—

A SIR WALTER SCOTT, VISITANDO ABBOTSFORD.

SONETTO.

Placida calma sub pineto ombroso
 Scendea col raggio del cadente giorno,
 Ed io calcava il sacro suoi pensoso
 E reverente, alle tue soglie intorno.

Ecco, lo dicea, le torri ecco il soggiorno
 Dell'ingegno divin, che glorioso
 Fe' il secol nostro collo stile adorno
 Che non teme del tempo il dente esoso.

Oh come, quando l'infinita schiera
 Degli or viventi giacera sotterra
 E Tu pur visto avrai l'ultima sera.

Devoti qui dal plu lontan confine
 I peregrin verranno della terra
 D'este torri a baciar l'alte ruine !

5.

To give their whole lives blamelessly to God.—P. 7.

The monks of the beautifully situated Abbey of Dryburgh belonged to the order of *Premonstratenses*, or White Canons. According to Ridpath (p. 87), the Monastery of Dryburgh was built by the Constable Hugh de Moreville ; but this appears doubtful,

as, from a charter of King David, published by Dugdale (*Monasticon*, vol. ii.), and said to have been copied from the original by Sir John Balfour, the foundation of the Church of St Mary at Dryburgh is distinctly attributed to that monarch. Be this as it may, it was founded in 1141.

At the Reformation, Dryburgh Abbey became the property of the Halliburtons of Newmains, ultimately represented by "the Mighty Minstrel" whose ashes rest there, in the cemetery of that ancient family. It is now the seat of the Earl of Buchan.

6.

*Stern rugged pile ! thy scowl recalls the days
Of foray and of feud.*—P. 8.

Associated with this ancient Castle, the reader of poetry cannot fail to remember the delicately beautiful legend regarding a daughter of one of the Earls of March and the young Laird of Tushielaw, as it has afforded a theme for the muse of two of our most celebrated contemporaries—to Sir Walter Scott, in his ballad "The Maid of Neidpath;" and to Mr Campbell, in his song of "Earl March looked on his dying child."

The Castle itself is more distinguished for strength than architectural beauty; and was built by the powerful family of Frazer, from which it passed, by intermarriage, into that of the Hays of Yester, ancestors of the Marquis of Tweeddale. In 1686, the second Earl sold his estates in Peeblesshire to the first Duke of Queensberry, who settled them on his second son, the Earl of March. At the death of the last Duke, the Castle and adjoining estate fell, by succession, to the present Earl of Wemyss, who also assumed the title of Earl of March.

7.

*So speaks the ancient melody of thee,
Green "Bush aboon Traquair."*—P. 9.

The charming pastoral air, called "The Bonny Bush aboon Traquair," is of great antiquity—indeed, is considered one of the

very oldest which has come down to us ; but the original words have been long since lost. The verses to which the melody was afterwards adapted, and to which it is now sung, were the composition of Crauford, the author of " Tweedside " and other popular songs, and first appeared in the ' Orpheus Caledonius,' 1725. Along with " The Flowers of the Forest," " The Broom of the Cowden-knowes," " Polwarth on the Green," " Fair Helen of Kirkconnel Lee," and others indigenous to the south of Scotland, it may be adduced as a specimen of what Wordsworth so beautifully designates the

" Old songs,
The precious music of the heart."

A few solitary scraggy trees, on a slope overlooking the lawn of Traquair House, mark out the site of the ancient " Bush." Not far distant from these a clump has been planted, which is called " The New Bush." But the spell is untranslatable.

8.

Not lost, but gone before.—P. 37.

The almost Christian sentiment of the great heathen moralist, Seneca.

9.

*It may not be
That thou canst come again to us,
But we, dear child, will go to thee.—P. 44.*

"When David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead : therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead ? And they said, He is dead.

"Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped : then he came to his own house ; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

"Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done ? thou didst fast and weep for the child *while it*

was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

“And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?”

“But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”—2 Sam. xii. 19-23.

10.

*From that day,
He trode serene life's onward way.*—P. 48.

Something like the sentiment inculcated in this little poem is that contained in the following epitaph on a child, written by one of the early Christians;—it has been kindly pointed out to me by my erudite friend, Mr William Hay:—

“*Parcite vos lachrymis, dulces cum conjugate nato,
Viventemque Deo credite flere nefas.*”

11.

*Rears he not sumptuous palaces,
As if his faith were built in these!*—P. 68.

Many years ago, in sauntering through the Abbey burial-ground of Melrose, the author was much struck with the following inscription on a small but venerable tombstone:—

“The Earth walks upon the earth, glistering like gold;
The Earth goeth to the earth sooner than it wold;
The Earth builds upon the earth temples and tow'rs;
But the earth sayeth to the Earth, All shall be ours!”

He has since learned that the original appertains to a churchyard in Gloucestershire, from which the above is only a transcription.

12.

Two only have been spared by Death.—P. 69.

“Christians looking on death not only as the sting, but the period and end of sin, the horizon and isthmus between this life

and a better, and the death of this world but as the nativity of another, do contentedly submit unto the common necessity, and envy not *Enoch* nor *Elias*."—Sir Thomas Browne's Letter to a Friend.

13.

*The Psalmist once his prayer addressed—
"Dove, could I thy pinions borrow."*—P. 98.

"O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."—Psalm lv. 6-8.

The same sentiment has afforded a groundwork for a beautiful lyric by Mrs Hemans—"The Wings of the Dove"—of which part of the above quotation is the motto. It was also evidently thrilling through the heart of Keats in these lines from his deep-thoughted "Ode to the Nightingale":—

"That—I might leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:
Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit, and hear each other groan," &c.

14.

Fahm stalked muttering through the cavern's gloom.—P. 128.

Fahm—a deformed and malignant spirit, peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland, and more particularly to the mountains surrounding Glen-Avin. His accustomed visitations to earth are said to be immediately preceding daybreak; and he is accused by the natives of inflicting diseases upon their cattle. If any person happens to cross his track before the sun has shone on it, death is believed to be the inevitable consequence.

Popular report also denies vegetation to the spots where witches have held their orgies, or been burned.

15.

'Twas in the smile of "*green Aprile*."—P. 151.

"*Grene Aprile*," the favourite appellation of the month by Chaucer, Spenser, Browne, and the older poets.

A prose character, equally impregnated with emerald, is given to its personification, in a curious duodecimo of 1681, entitled '*The Queen-like Closet or Rich Cabinet*,' quoted in Hone's '*Every-Day Book*' (vol. ii. 517) by Charles Lamb, in which the fair author, Anne Wooley, thus describes him:—

"*Aprile*—A young man in green, with a garland of myrtle, and hawthorn buds; Winged; in one hand *Primroses* and *Violets*, in the other the sign *Taurus*."

THE END.





X

