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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS ***

POEMS

BY

DENIS FLORENCE MAC CARTHY

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Memorial to Denis Florence MacCarthy.

A Committee of friends and admirers of the late Denis Florence MacCarthy has been formed for the purpose of perpetuating in a fitting manner the memory of this distinguished Irish poet. Among the contributors to the Memorial Fund are Cardinal Newman, Cardinal MacCabe, Cardinal MacClosky; Most Rev. Dr. M'Gottigan, Most Rev. Dr. Croke, Most Rev. Dr. Butler, and many of the Irish Clergy; Lord O'Hagan, the Marquis of Ripon, Archbishop Trench, Judge O'Hagan, Sir. C. G. Duffy, Aubrey de Vere, Sir Samuel Ferguson, and Dr. J. K. Ingram.

Subscriptions will be received by the Lord Mayor, Mansion House, Dublin; by Dr. James Brady, 38 Harcourt-st; Mr. W. L. Joynt, D. L., 43 Merrion-square; Rev. C. P. Meehan, SS. Michael and John's; or by any Member of the Committee.

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PREFACE.

This volume contains, besides the poems published in 1850 and 1857,¹ the odes written for the centenary celebrations in honour of O'Connell in 1875, and of Moore in 1879. To these are added several sonnets and miscellaneous poems now first collected, and the episode of "Ferdiah" translated from the *Tain Bó Cuailgné*.

Born in Dublin,² May 26th, 1817, my father, while still very young, showed a decided taste for literature. The course of his boyish reading is indicated in his "Lament." Some verses from his pen, headed "My Wishes," appeared in the *Dublin Satirist*, April 12th, 1834. This was, as far as I can discover, the earliest of his writings published. To the journal just mentioned he frequently contributed, both in prose and verse, during the next two years. The following are some of the titles:—"The Greenwood Hill;" "Songs of other Days" (Belshazzar's Feast—Thoughts in the Holy Land—Thoughts of the Past); "Life," "Death," "Fables" (The Zephyr and the Sensitive Plant—The Tulip and the Rose—The Bee and the Rose); "Songs of Birds" (Nightingale—Eagle—Phoenix—Fire-fly); "Songs of the Winds," &c.

On October 14th, 1843, his first contribution ("Proclamation Songs," No. 1) appeared in the *Dublin Nation*. "Here is a song by a new recruit," wrote Mr., now Sir, Charles Gavan Duffy, "which we should give in our leading columns if they were not preoccupied." In the next number I find "The Battle of Clontarf," with this editorial note: "'Desmond' is entitled to be enrolled in our national brigade." "A Dream" soon follows; and at intervals, between this date and 1849—besides many other poems—all the National songs and most of the Ballads included in this volume. In April, 1847, "The Bell-Founder" and "The Foray of Con O'Donnell" appeared in the *University Magazine*, in which "Waiting for the May," "The Bridal of the Year," and "The Voyage of Saint Brendan," were subsequently published (in January and May, 1848). Meanwhile, in 1846, the year in which he was called to the bar, he edited the "Poets and Dramatists of Ireland," with an introduction, which evinced considerable reading, on the early religion and literature of the Irish people. In the same year he also edited the "Book of Irish Ballads," to which he prefixed an introduction on ballad poetry. This volume was republished with additions and a preface in 1869. In 1853, the poems afterwards published under the title of "Underglimpses" were chiefly written.³

The plays of Calderon—thoroughly national in form and matter—have met with but scant appreciation from foreigners. Yet we find his genius recognized in unexpected quarters, Goethe and Shelley uniting with Augustus Schlegel and Archbishop Trench to pay him homage. My father was, I think, first led to the study of Calderon by Shelley's glowing eulogy of the poet ("Essays," vol. ii., p. 274, and elsewhere). The first of his translations was published in 1853, the last twenty years later. They consist⁴ of fifteen complete plays, which I believe to be the largest amount of translated verse by any one author, that has ever appeared in English. Most of it is in the difficult assonant or vowel rhyme, hardly ever previously attempted in our language. This may be a fitting place to cite a few testimonies as to the execution of the work. Longfellow, whom I have myself heard speak of the "Autos" in a way that showed how deeply he had studied them in the original, wrote, in 1857: "You are doing this work admirably, and seem to gain new strength and sweetness as you go on. It seems as if Calderon himself were behind you whispering and suggesting. And what better work could you do in your bright hours or in your dark hours than just this, which seems to have been put providentially into your hands." Again, in 1862: "Your new work in the vast and flowery fields of Calderon is, I think, admirable, and presents the old Spanish dramatist before the English reader in a very attractive light. Particularly in the most poetical passages you are excellent; as, for instance, in the fine description of the gerfalcon and the heron in 'El Mayor Encanto.' I hope you mean to add more and more, so as to make the translation as nearly complete as a single life will permit. It seems rather appalling to undertake the whole of so voluminous a writer; nevertheless, I hope you will do it. Having proved that you can, perhaps you ought to do it. This may be your appointed work. It is a noble one."⁵ Ticknor ("History of Spanish Literature," new edition, vol. iii. p. 461) writes thus: "Calderon is a poet who, whenever he is translated, should have his very excesses and extravagances, both in thought and manner, fully reproduced, in order to give a faithful idea of what is grandest and most distinctive in his genius. Mr. MacCarthy has done this, I conceive, to a degree which I had previously supposed impossible. Nothing, I think, in the English language will give us so true an impression of what is most characteristic of the Spanish drama; perhaps I ought to say, of what is most characteristic of Spanish poetry generally."

Another eminent Hispaniologist (Mr. C. F. Bradford, of Boston) has spoken of the work in similar terms. His labours did not pass without recognition from the great dramatist's countrymen. He was elected a member of the Real Academia some years ago, and in 1881 this learned body presented him with the medal struck in commemoration of Calderon's bicentenary, "in token of their gratitude and their appreciation of his translations of the great poet's works."

In 1855, at the request of the Marchioness of Donegal, my father wrote the ode which was recited at the inauguration of the statue of her son, the Earl of Belfast. About the same time, his Lectures on Poetry were delivered at the Catholic University at the desire of Cardinal Newman. The Lectures on the Poets of Spain, and on the Dramatists of the Sixteenth Century, were delivered a few years later. In 1862 he published a curious bibliographical treatise on the

"Mémoires of the Marquis de Villars." In 1864 the ill-health of some of his family his leaving his home near Killiney Hill⁶ to reside on the Continent. In 1872, "Shelley's Early Life" was published in London, where he had settled, attracted by the facilities for research which its great libraries offered. This biography gives an amusing account of the young poet's visit to Dublin in 1812, and some new details of his adventures and writings at this period. My father's admiration for Shelley was of long standing. At the age of seventeen he wrote some lines to the poet's memory, which appeared in the *Dublin Satirist* already mentioned, and an elaborate review of his poetry in an early number of the *Nation*. I have before alluded to Shelley's influence in directing his attention to Calderon. The centenary odes in honour of O'Connell and Moore were written, in 1875 and 1879, at the request of the committees which had charge of these celebrations. He returned to Ireland a few months before his death, which took place at Blackrock, near Dublin, on April 7th,⁷ in the present year. His nature was most sensitive, but though it was his lot to suffer many sorrows, I never heard a complaint or and unkind word from his lips.

From what has been said it will be evident that this volume contains only a part of his poetical works, it having been found impossible to include the humorous pieces, parodies, and epigrams, without some acquaintance with which an imperfect idea would be formed of his genius. The same may be said of his numerous translations from various languages (exclusive of Calderon's plays). Of those published in 1850, "The Romance of Maleca," "Saint George's Knight," "The Christmas of the Foreign Child," and others have been frequently reprinted. He has since rendered from the Spanish poems by Juan de Pedraza, Antonio de Trueba, Garcilaso de la Vega, Gongora and "Fernan Caballero," whom he visited when in Spain shortly before her death, and whose prose story, "The Two Muleteers," he has also translated. To these must be added, besides several shorter ballads from Duran's Romancero General, "The Poem of the Cid," "The Romance of Gayferos," and "The Infanta of France." The last is a metrical tale of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, presenting analogies with the "Thousand and One Nights," and probably drawn from an Oriental source. His translations from the Latin, chiefly of mediæval hymns, are also numerous.

In inserting the poem of "Ferdiah" I was influenced by its subject as well as by the wish of friends. A few extracts appeared in a magazine several years ago, and it was afterwards completed without any view to publication. It follows the present Irish text⁸ as closely as the laws of metre will allow. Since these pages were in the printer's hands Mr. Aubrey de Vere has given to the world his treatment of the same theme,⁹ adorning as usual all that he touches. As he well says: "It is not in the form of translation that an ancient Irish tale of any considerable length admits of being rendered in poetry. What is needed is to select from the original such portions as are at once the most essential to the story, and the most characteristic, reproducing them in a condensed form, and taking care that the necessary additions bring out the idea, and contain nothing that is not in the spirit of the original." (Preface, p. vii.) The "Tale of Troy Divine" owes its form, and we may never know how much of its tenderness and grace, to its Alexandrian editor. However, the present version may, from its very literalness, have an interest for some readers.

Many of the earlier poems here collected have been admirably rendered into French by the late M. Ernest de Chatelain.¹⁰ The Moore Centenary Ode has been translated into Latin by the Rev. M. J. Blacker, M. A.

My thanks are due to the Rev. Matthew Russell, S. J., for his kind assistance in preparing this book for the press, and to the Publishers for the accuracy and speed with which it has been produced.

I cannot let pass this opportunity of expressing my gratitude for the self-sacrificing labours of the committee formed at the suggestion of Mr. William Lane Joynt, D. L., to honour my father's memory, and for the generous response his friends have made to their appeal.¹¹

JOHN MAC CARTHY

Blackrock, Dublin, August, 1882.

¹ "Ballads, Poems, and Lyrics, Original and Translated:" Dublin, 1850. "The Bell-Founder, and other Poems," "Underglimpses, and other Poems:" London, 1857. A few pieces which seemed not to be of abiding interest have been omitted.

² At 24 Lower Sackville-street. The house, with others adjoining, was pulled down several years ago. Their site is now occupied by the Imperial Hotel.

³ The subjective view of nature developed in these Poems has been censured as remote from human interest. Yet a critic of deep insight, George Gilfillan, declares his special admiration for "the joyous, sunny, lark-like carols on May, almost worthy of Shelley, and such delicate, tender, Moore-like trifles (shall I call them?) as *All Fool's Day*. The whole" he adds, "is full of a beautiful poetic spirit, and rich resources both of fancy and language." I may be permitted to transcribe here an extract from some unpublished comments by Sir William Rowan Hamilton on another poem of the same class. His remarks are interesting in themselves, as coming from one illustrious as a man of science, and, at the same time, a true poet—a combination which may hereafter become more frequent, since already in the vast regions of space and time brought within human ken, imagination strives hard to keep pace with established fact. In a manuscript volume now in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, he writes, under date, May, 1848:—

"*The University Magazine* for the present month contains a poem which delights one, entitled 'The Bridal of the Year.' It is signed 'D. F. M. C.,' as is also a shorter, but almost a sweeter piece immediately following it, and headed, 'Summer Longings.'"

Sir William goes through the whole poem, copying and criticising every stanza, and concludes as follows:—

"After a very pretty ninth stanza respecting the 'fairy phantoms' in the poet's 'glorious visions seen,' which the author

conceives to 'follow the poet's steps beneath the morning's beam,' he burst into rapture at the approach of the Bride herself—

"'Bright as are the planets seven--
with her glances
She advances,
For her azure eyes are Heaven!
And her robes are sunbeams woven,
And her beauteous bridesmaids are
Hopes and wishes--
Dreams delicious--
Joys from some serener star,
And Heavenly-hued Illusions gleaming from afar!'"

"Her eyes *are* heaven, her robes *are* sunbeams, and with these physical aspects of the May, how well does the author of this ode (for such, surely, we may term the poem, so rich in lyrical enthusiasm and varied melody) conceive the combination as bridesmaids, as companions to the bride; of those mental feelings, those new buddings of hope in the heart which the season is fitted to awaken. The azure eyes glitter back to ours, for the planets shine upon us from the lovely summer night; but lovelier still are those 'dreams delicious, joys from some serener star,' which at the same sweet season float down invisibly, and win their entrance to our souls. The image of a bridal is happily and naturally kept before us in the remaining stanzas of this poem, which well deserve to be copied here, in continuation of these notes—the former for its cheerfulness, the latter for its sweetness. I wish that I knew the author, or even that I were acquainted with his name.—Since ascertained to be D. F. MacCarthy."

⁴ The following are the titles and dates of publication: In 1853, "The Constant Prince," "The Secret in Words," "The Physician of his own Honour," "Love after Death," "The Purgatory of St. Patrick," "The Scarf and the Flower." In 1861, "The Greatest Enchantment," "The Sorceries of Sin," "Devotion of the Cross." In 1867, "Belshazzar's Feast," "The Divine Philothea" (with Essays from the German of Lorinser, and the Spanish of Gonzales Pedroso). In 1870, "Chrysanthus and Daria, the Two Lovers of Heaven." In 1873, "The Wonder-working Magician," "Life is a Dream," "The Purgatory of St. Patrick" (a new translation entirely in the assonant metre). Introductions and notes are added to all these plays. Another, "Daybreak in Copacabana," was finished a few months before his death, and has not been published.

⁵ When the author of "Evangeline" visited Europe for the last time in 1869, they met in Italy. The [sonnets at p. 174](#) refer to this occasion.

⁶ The "Campo de Estio," described in the lines "Not Known."

⁷ A fortnight after that of Longfellow. His attached friend and early associate, Thomas D'Arcy M'Gee, perished by assassination at Ottawa on the same day and month fourteen years ago.

⁸ Edited by his friend Br. W. K. Sullivan, President of Queen's College, Cork, who, I may add, has in preparation a paper on the "Voyage of St. Brendan," and on other ancient Irish accounts of voyages, of which he finds an explanation in Keltic mythology. The paper will appear in the Transactions of the American Geographical Society.

⁹ "The Combat at the Ford" being Fragment III. of his "Legends of Ireland's Heroic Age." London, 1882.

¹⁰ In his "*Beautés de la Poesie Anglaise, Rayons et Reflets,*" &c.

¹¹ The first meeting was held on April 15th, at the Mansion House, Dublin, under the presidency of the Lord Mayor, the Right Hon. Charles Dawson, M. P.

Poems.

BALLADS AND LYRICS.

WAITING FOR THE MAY.

Ah! my heart is weary waiting,
Waiting for the May--
Waiting for the pleasant rambles,
Where the fragrant hawthorn brambles,
With the woodbine alternating,
Scent the dewy way.
Ah! my heart is weary waiting,
Waiting for the May.

Ah! my heart is sick with longing,
Longing for the May--
Longing to escape from study,
To the young face fair and ruddy,
And the thousand charms belonging

To the summer's day.
Ah! my heart is sick with longing,
Longing for the May.

Ah! my heart is sore with sighing,
Sighing for the May--
Sighing for their sure returning,
When the summer beams are burning,
Hopes and flowers that, dead or dying,
All the winter lay.
Ah! my heart is sore with sighing,
Sighing for the May.

Ah! my heart is pained and throbbing,
Throbbing for the May--
Throbbing for the sea-side billows,
Or the water-wooing willows,
Where in laughing and in sobbing
Glide the streams away.
Ah! my heart is pained and throbbing,
Throbbing for the May.

Waiting sad, dejected, weary,
Waiting for the May.
Spring goes by with wasted warnings,
Moon-lit evenings, sun-bright mornings;
Summer comes, yet dark and dreary
Life still ebbs away:
Man is ever weary, weary,
Waiting for the May!

DEVOTION.

When I wander by the ocean,
When I view its wild commotion,
Then the spirit of devotion
Cometh near;
And it fills my brain and bosom,
Like a fear!

I fear its booming thunder,
Its terror and its wonder,
Its icy waves, that sunder
Heart from heart;
And the white host that lies under
Makes me start.

Its clashing and its clangour
Proclaim the Godhead's anger--
I shudder, and with langour
Turn away;
No joyance fills my bosom
For that day.

When I wander through the valleys,
When the evening zephyr dallies,
And the light expiring rallies
In the stream,
That spirit comes and glads me,
Like a dream.

The blue smoke upward curling,
The silver streamlet purling,
The meadow wildflowers furling
Their leaflets to repose:
All woo me from the world
And its woes.

The evening bell that bringeth
A truce to toil outringeth,
No sweetest bird that singeth
Half so sweet,
Not even the lark that springeth
From my feet.

Then see I God beside me,
The sheltering trees that hide me,
The mountains that divide me
From the sea:
All prove how kind a Father
He can be.

Beneath the sweet moon shining
The cattle are reclining,
No murmur of repining
 Soundeth sad:
All feel the present Godhead,
 And are glad.

With mute, unvoiced confessings,
To the Giver of all blessings
I kneel, and with caressings
 Press the sod,
And thank my Lord and Father,
 And my God.

THE SEASONS OF THE HEART.

The different hues that deck the earth
All in our bosoms have their birth;
'Tis not in the blue or sunny skies,
'Tis in the heart the summer lies!
The earth is bright if that be glad,
Dark is the earth if that be sad:
And thus I feel each weary day--
'Tis winter all when thou'rt away!

In vain, upon her emerald car,
Comes Spring, "the maiden from afar,"
And scatters o'er the woods and fields
The liberal gifts that nature yields;
In vain the buds begin to grow,
In vain the crocus gilds the snow;
I feel no joy though earth be gay--
'Tis winter all when thou'rt away!

And when the Autumn crowns the year,
And ripened hangs the golden ear,
And luscious fruits of ruddy hue
The bending boughs are glancing through,
When yellow leaves from sheltered nooks
Come forth and try the mountain brooks,
Even then I feel, as there I stray--
'Tis winter all when thou'rt away!

And when the winter comes at length,
With swaggering gait and giant strength,
And with his strong arms in a trice
Binds up the streams in chains of ice,
What need I sigh for pleasures gone,
The twilight eve, the rosy dawn?
My heart is changed as much as they--
'Tis winter all when thou'rt away!

Even now, when Summer lends the scene
Its brightest gold, its purest green,
Whene'er I climb the mountain's breast,
With softest moss and heath-flowers dress'd,
When now I hear the breeze that stirs
The golden bells that deck the furze,
Alas! unprized they pass away--
'Tis winter all when thou'rt away!

But when thou comest back once more,
Though dark clouds hang and loud winds roar,
And mists obscure the nearest hills,
And dark and turbid roll the rills,
Such pleasures then my breast shall know,
That summer's sun shall round me glow;
Then through the gloom shall gleam the May--
'Tis winter all when thou'rt away!

KATE OF KENMARE.

Oh! many bright eyes full of goodness and gladness,
 Where the pure soul looks out, and the heart loves to shine,
And many cheeks pale with the soft hue of sadness,
 Have I worshipped in silence and felt them divine!
But Hope in its gleamings, or Love in its dreamings,
 Ne'er fashioned a being so faultless and fair
As the lily-cheeked beauty, the rose of the Roughty,[12]
 The fawn of the valley, sweet Kate of Kenmare!

It was all but a moment, her radiant existence,
Her presence, her absence, all crowded on me;
But time has not ages and earth has not distance
To sever, sweet vision, my spirit from thee!
Again am I straying where children are playing,
Bright is the sunshine and balmy the air,
Mountains are heathy, and there do I see thee,
Sweet fawn of the valley, young Kate of Kenmare!

Thine arbutus beareth full many a cluster
Of white waxen blossoms like lilies in air;
But, oh! thy pale cheek hath a delicate lustre
No blossoms can rival, no lily doth wear;
To that cheek softly flushing, thy lip brightly blushing,
Oh! what are the berries that bright tree doth bear?
Peerless in beauty, that rose of the Roughty,
That fawn of the valley, sweet Kate of Kenmare!

O Beauty! some spell from kind Nature thou bearest,
Some magic of tone or enchantment of eye,
That hearts that are hardest, from forms that are fairest,
Receive such impressions as never can die!
The foot of the fairy, though lightsome and airy,[13]
Can stamp on the hard rock the shapes it doth wear;
Art cannot trace it, nor ages efface it:
And such are thy glances, sweet Kate of Kenmare!

To him who far travels how sad is the feeling,
How the light of his mind is o'ershadowed and dim,
When the scenes he most loves, like a river's soft stealing,
All fade as a vision and vanish from him!
Yet he bears from each far land a flower for that garland
That memory weaves of the bright and the fair;
While this sigh I am breathing my garland is wreathing,
And the rose of that garland is Kate of Kenmare!

In lonely Lough Quinlan in summer's soft hours,
Fair islands are floating that move with the tide,
Which, sterile at first, are soon covered with flowers,
And thus o'er the bright waters fairy-like glide.
Thus the mind the most vacant is quickly awakened,
And the heart bears a harvest that late was so bare,
Of him who in roving finds objects of loving,
Like the fawn of the valley, sweet Kate of Kenmare!

Sweet Kate of Kenmare! though I ne'er may behold thee,
Though the pride and the joy of another thou be,
Though strange lips may praise thee, and strange arms enfold thee,
A blessing, dear Kate, be on them and on thee!
One feeling I cherish that never can perish--
One talisman proof to the dark wizard care--
The fervent and dutiful love of the Beautiful,
Of which thou art a type, gentle Kate of Kenmare!

¹² The river of Kenmare.

¹³ Near the town is the "Fairy Rock," on which the marks of several feet are deeply impressed. It derives its name from the popular belief that these are the work of fairies.

A LAMENT.

The dream is over,
The vision has flown;
Dead leaves are lying
Where roses have blown;
Wither'd and strown
Are the hopes I cherished,--
All hath perished
But grief alone.

My heart was a garden
Where fresh leaves grew
Flowers there were many,
And weeds a few;
Cold winds blew,
And the frosts came thither,
For flowers will wither,
And weeds renew!

Youth's bright palace

Is overthrown,
With its diamond sceptre
And golden throne;
As a time-worn stone
Its turrets are humbled,--
All hath crumbled
But grief alone!

Wither, oh, whither,
Have fled away
The dreams and hopes
Of my early day?
Ruined and gray
Are the towers I builded;
And the beams that gilded--
Ah! where are they?

Once this world
Was fresh and bright,
With its golden noon
And its starry night;
Glad and light,
By mountain and river,
Have I bless'd the Giver
With hushed delight.

These were the days
Of story and song,
When Hope had a meaning
And Faith was strong.
"Life will be long,
And lit with Love's gleamings;"
Such were my dreamings,
But, ah, how wrong!

Youth's illusions,
One by one,
Have passed like clouds
That the sun looked on.
While morning shone,
How purple their fringes!
How ashy their tinges
When that was gone!

Darkness that cometh
Ere morn has fled--
Boughs that wither
Ere fruits are shed--
Death bells instead
Of a bridal's pealings--
Such are my feelings,
Since Hope is dead!

Sad is the knowledge
That cometh with years--
Bitter the tree
That is watered with tears;
Truth appears,
With his wise predictions,
Then vanish the fictions
Of boyhood's years.

As fire-flies fade
When the nights are damp--
As meteors are quenched
In a stagnant swamp--
Thus Charlemagne's camp,
Where the Paladins rally,
And the Diamond Valley,
And Wonderful Lamp,

And all the wonders
Of Ganges and Nile,
And Haroun's rambles,
And Crusoe's isle,
And Princes who smile
On the Genii's daughters
'Neath the Orient waters
Full many a mile,

And all that the pen
Of Fancy can write
Must vanish

In manhood's misty light--
Squire and knight,
And damosels' glances,
Sunny romances
So pure and bright!

These have vanished,
And what remains?--
Life's budding garlands
Have turned to chains;
Its beams and rains
Feed but docks and thistles,
And sorrow whistles
O'er desert plains!

The dove will fly
From a ruined nest,
Love will not dwell
In a troubled breast;
The heart has no zest
To sweeten life's dole--
If Love, the Consoler,
Be not its guest!

The dream is over,
The vision has flown;
Dead leaves are lying
Where roses have blown;
Wither'd and strown
Are the hopes I cherished,--
All hath perished
But grief alone!

THE BRIDAL OF THE YEAR.

Yes! the Summer is returning,
Warmer, brighter beams are burning
Golden mornings, purple evenings,
Come to glad the world once more.
Nature from her long sojourning
In the Winter-House of Mourning,
With the light of hope outpeeping,
From those eyes that late were weeping,
Cometh dancing o'er the waters
To our distant shore.
On the boughs the birds are singing,
Never idle,
For the bridal
Goes the frolic breeze a-ringing
All the green bells on the branches,
Which the soul of man doth hear;
Music-shaken,
It doth waken,
Half in hope, and half in fear,
And dons its festal garments for the Bridal of the Year!

For the Year is sempiternal,
Never wintry, never vernal,
Still the same through all the changes
That our wondering eyes behold.
Spring is but his time of wooing--
Summer but the sweet renewing
Of the vows he utters yearly,
Ever fondly and sincerely,
To the young bride that he weddeth,
When to heaven departs the old,
For it is her fate to perish,
Having brought him,
In the Autumn,
Children for his heart to cherish.
Summer, like a human mother,
Dies in bringing forth her young;
Sorrow blinds him,
Winter finds him
Childless, too, their graves among,
Till May returns once more, and the bridal hymns are sung.

Thrice the great Betrothéd naming,
Thrice the mystic banns proclaiming,
February, March, and April,
Spread the tidings far and wide;
Thrice they questioned each new-comer,

"Know ye, why the sweet-faced Summer,
With her rich imperial dower,
Golden fruit and diamond flower,
And her pearly raindrop trinkets,
Should not be the green Earth's Bride?"
All things vocal spoke elated
(Nor the voiceless
Did rejoice less)--

"Be the heavenly lovers mated!"
All the many murmuring voices
Of the music-breathing Spring,
Young birds twittering,
Streamlets glittering,
Insects on transparent wing--

All hailed the Summer nuptials of their King!

Now the rosy East gives warning,
'Tis the wished-for nuptial morning.
Sweetest truant from Elysium,
Golden morning of the May!
All the guests are in their places--
Lilies with pale, high-bred faces--
Hawthorns in white wedding favours,
Scented with celestial savours--
Daisies, like sweet country maidens,
Wear white scalloped frills to-day;
'Neath her hat of straw the Peasant
Primrose sitteth,
Nor permitteth

Any of her kindred present,
Specially the milk-sweet cowslip,
E'er to leave the tranquil shade;
By the hedges,
Or the edges

Of some stream or grassy glade,
They look upon the scene half wistful, half afraid.

Other guests, too, are invited,
From the alleys dimly lighted,
From the pestilential vapours
Of the over-peopled town--
From the fever and the panic,
Comes the hard-worked, swarth mechanic--
Comes the young wife pallor-stricken
At the cares that round her thicken--
Comes the boy whose brow is wrinkled,
Ere his chin is clothed in down--
And the foolish pleasure-seekers,
Nightly thinking
They are drinking

Life and joy from poisoned beakers,
Shudder at their midnight madness,
And the raving revel scorn:
All are treading
To the wedding

In the freshness of the morn,
And feel, perchance too late, the bliss of being born.

And the Student leaves his poring,
And his venturous exploring
In the gold and gem-enfolding
Waters of the ancient lore--
Seeking in its buried treasures,
Means for life's most common pleasures;
Neither vicious nor ambitious--
Simple wants and simple wishes.
Ah! he finds the ancient learning
But the Spartan's iron ore;
Without value in an era
Far more golden
Than the olden--
When the beautiful chimera,
Love, hath almost wholly faded
Even from the dreams of men.
From his prison
Newly risen--

From his book-enchanted den--
The stronger magic of the morning drives him forth again.

And the Artist, too--the Gifted--
He whose soul is heaven-ward lifted.
Till it drinketh inspiration
At the fountain of the skies;

He, within whose fond embraces
Start to life the marble graces;
Or, with God-like power presiding,
With the potent pencil gliding,
O'er the void chaotic canvas
 Bids the fair creations rise!
And the quickened mass obeying
 Heaves its mountains;
 From its fountains
Sends the gentle streams a-straying
Through the vales, like Love's first feelings
Stealing o'er a maiden's heart;
 The Creator--
 Imitator--
From his easel forth doth start,
And from God's glorious Nature learns anew his Art!

But who is this with tresses flowing,
Flashing eyes and forehead glowing,
From whose lips the thunder-music
 Pealeth o'er the listening lands?
'Tis the first and last of preachers--
First and last of priestly teachers;
First and last of those appointed
In the ranks of the anointed;
With their songs like swords to sever
 Tyranny and Falsehood's bands!
'Tis the Poet--sum and total
 Of the others,
 With his brothers,
In his rich robes sacerdotal,
Singing with his golden psalter.
Comes he now to wed the twain--
 Truth and Beauty--
 Rest and Duty--

Hope, and Fear, and Joy, and Pain,
Unite for weal or woe beneath the Poet's chain!

And the shapes that follow after,
Some in tears and some in laughter,
Are they not the fairy phantoms
 In his glorious vision seen?
Nymphs from shady forests wending,
Goddesses from heaven descending;
Three of Jove's divinest daughters,
Nine from Aganippe's waters;
And the passion-immolated,
 Too fond-hearted Tyrian Queen,
Various shapes of one idea,
 Memory-haunting,
 Heart-enchanting,
Cythna, Genevieve, and Nea,[14]
Rosalind and all her sisters,
Born by Avon's sacred stream,
 All the blooming
 Shapes, illuming
The Eternal Pilgrim's dream,[15]

Follow the Poet's steps beneath the morning's beam.

But the Bride--the Bride is coming!
Birds are singing, bees are humming;
Silent lakes amid the mountains
 Look but cannot speak their mirth;
Streams go bounding in their gladness,
With a bacchanalian madness;
Trees bow down their heads in wonder,
Clouds of purple part asunder,
As the Maiden of the Morning
 Leads the blushing Bride to Earth!
Bright as are the planets seven--
 With her glances
 She advances,
For her azure eyes are Heaven!
And her robes are sunbeams woven,
And her beauteous bridesmaids are
 Hopes and wishes--
 Dreams delicious--
Joys from some serener star,

And Heavenly-hued Illusions gleaming from afar.

Now the mystic right is over--
Blessings on the loved and lover!
Strike the tabours, clash the cymbals,

Let the notes of joy resound!
 With the rosy apple-blossom,
 Blushing like a maiden's bosom;
 With all treasures from the meadows
 Strew the consecrated ground;
 Let the guests with vows fraternal
 Pledge each other,
 Sister, brother,
 With the wine of Hope--the vernal
 Vine-juice of Man's trustful heart:
 Perseverance
 And Forbearance,
 Love and Labour, Song and Art,
 Be this the cheerful creed wherewith the world may start.

But whither the twain departed?
 The United--the One-hearted--
 Whither from the bridal banquet
 Have the Bride and Bridegroom flown?
 Ah! their steps have led them quickly
 Where the young leaves cluster thickly;
 Blossomed boughs rain fragrance o'er them,
 Greener grows the grass before them,
 As they wander through the island,
 Fond, delighted, and alone!
 At their coming streams grow brighter,
 Skies grow clearer,
 Mountains nearer,
 And the blue waves dancing lighter
 From the far-off mighty ocean
 Frolic on the glistening sand;
 Jubilations,
 Gratulations,
 Breathe around, as hand-in-hand
 They roam the Sutton's sea-washed shore, or soft Shanganah's strand.

14 Characters in Shelley, Coleridge, and Moore.

15 "The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
 Over his living head, like Heaven, is bent,
 An early but enduring monument."
 Byron. (*Shelley's "Adonais."*)

THE VALE OF SHANGANAH.¹⁶

When I have knelt in the temple of Duty,
 Worshipping honour and valour and beauty--
 When, like a brave man, in fearless resistance,
 I have fought the good fight on the field of existence;
 When a home I have won in the conflict of labour,
 With truth for my armour and thought for my sabre,
 Be that home a calm home where my old age may rally,
 A home full of peace in this sweet pleasant valley!
 Sweetest of vales is the Vale of Shanganah!
 Greenest of vales is the Vale of Shanganah!
 May the accents of love, like the droppings of manna,
 Fall sweet on my heart in the Vale of Shanganah!

Fair is this isle--this dear child of the ocean--
 Nurtured with more than a mother's devotion;
 For see! in what rich robes has nature arrayed her,
 From the waves of the west to the cliffs of Ben Hader,[17]
 By Glengariff's lone islets--Lough Lene's fairy water,[18]
 So lovely was each, that then matchless I thought her;
 But I feel, as I stray through each sweet-scented alley,
 Less wild but more fair is this soft verdant valley!
 Sweetest of vales is the Vale of Shanganah!
 Greenest of vales is the Vale of Shanganah!
 No wide-spreading prairie, no Indian savannah,
 So dear to the eye as the Vale of Shanganah!

How pleased, how delighted, the rapt eye reposes
 On the picture of beauty this valley discloses,
 From the margin of silver, whereon the blue water
 Doth glance like the eyes of the ocean foam's daughter!
 To where, with the red clouds of morning combining,
 The tall "Golden Spears"[19] o'er the mountains are shining,
 With the hue of their heather, as sunlight advances,
 Like purple flags furled round the staffs of the lances!
 Sweetest of vales is the Vale of Shanganah!
 Greenest of vales is the Vale of Shanganah!

No lands far away by the swift Susquehannah,
So tranquil and fair as the Vale of Shanganah!

But here, even here, the lone heart were benighted,
No beauty could reach it, if love did not light it;
'Tis this makes the earth, oh! what mortal could doubt it?
A garden with *it*, but a desert without it!
With the lov'd one, whose feelings instinctively teach her
That goodness of heart makes the beauty of feature.
How glad, through this vale, would I float down life's river,
Enjoying God's bounty, and blessing the Giver!
Sweetest of vales is the Vale of Shanganah!
Greenest of vales is the Vale of Shanganah!
May the accents of love, like the droppings of manna,
Fall sweet on my heart in the Vale of Shanganah!

¹⁶ Lying to the south of Killiney-hill, near Dublin.

¹⁷ Hill of Howth.

¹⁸ Killarney.

¹⁹ The Sugarloaf Mountains, county Wicklow, were called in Irish, "The Spears of Gold."

THE PILLAR TOWERS OF IRELAND.

The pillar towers of Ireland, how wondrously they stand
By the lakes and rushing rivers through the valleys of our land;
In mystic file, through the isle, they lift their heads sublime,
These gray old pillar temples, these conquerors of time!

Beside these gray old pillars, how perishing and weak
The Roman's arch of triumph, and the temple of the Greek,
And the gold domes of Byzantium, and the pointed Gothic spires,
All are gone, one by one, but the temples of our sires!

The column, with its capital, is level with the dust,
And the proud halls of the mighty and the calm homes of the just;
For the proudest works of man, as certainly, but slower,
Pass like the grass at the sharp scythe of the mower!

But the grass grows again when in majesty and mirth,
On the wing of the spring, comes the Goddess of the Earth;
But for man in this world no springtide e'er returns
To the labours of his hands or the ashes of his urns!

Two favourites hath Time--the pyramids of Nile,
And the old mystic temples of our own dear isle;
As the breeze o'er the seas, where the halcyon has its nest,
Thus Time o'er Egypt's tombs and the temples of the West!

The names of their founders have vanished in the gloom,
Like the dry branch in the fire or the body in the tomb;
But to-day, in the ray, their shadows still they cast--
These temples of forgotten gods--these relics of the past!

Around these walls have wandered the Briton and the Dane--
The captives of Armorica, the cavaliers of Spain--
Phœnician and Milesian, and the plundering Norman Peers--
And the swordsmen of brave Brian, and the chiefs of later years!

How many different rites have these gray old temples known!
To the mind what dreams are written in these chronicles of stone!
What terror and what error, what gleams of love and truth,
Have flashed from these walls since the world was in its youth?

Here blazed the sacred fire, and, when the sun was gone,
As a star from afar to the traveller it shone;
And the warm blood of the victim have these gray old temples drunk,
And the death-song of the druid and the matin of the monk.

Here was placed the holy chalice that held the sacred wine,
And the gold cross from the altar, and the relics from the shrine,
And the mitre shining brighter with its diamonds than the East,
And the crosier of the pontiff and the vestments of the priest.

Where blazed the sacred fire, rung out the vesper bell,
Where the fugitive found shelter, became the hermit's cell;
And hope hung out its symbol to the innocent and good,
For the cross o'er the moss of the pointed summit stood.

There may it stand for ever, while that symbol doth impart
To the mind one glorious vision, or one proud thro' to the heart;
While the breast needeth rest may these gray old temples last,
Bright prophets of the future, as preachers of the past!

OVER THE SEA.

Sad eyes! why are ye steadfastly gazing
Over the sea?
Is it the flock of the ocean-shepherd grazing
Like lambs on the lea?--
Is it the dawn on the orient billows blazing
Allureth ye?

Sad heart! why art thou tremblingly beating--
What troubleth thee?
There where the waves from the fathomless water come greeting,
Wild with their glee!
Or rush from the rocks, like a routed battalion retreating,
Over the sea!

Sad feet! why are ye constantly straying
Down by the sea?
There, where the winds in the sandy harbour are playing
Child-like and free,
What is the charm, whose potent enchantment obeying,
There chaineth ye?

O! sweet is the dawn, and bright are the colours it glows in,
Yet not to me!
To the beauty of God's bright creation my bosom is frozen!
Nought can I see,
Since she has departed--the dear one, the loved one, the chosen,
Over the sea!

Pleasant it was when the billows did struggle and wrestle,
Pleasant to see!
Pleasant to climb the tall cliffs where the sea birds nestle,
When near to thee!
Nought can I now behold but the track of thy vessel
Over the sea!

Long as a Lapland winter, which no pleasant sunlight cheereth,
The summer shall be
Vainly shall autumn be gay, in the rich robes it weareth,
Vainly for me!
No joy can I feel till the prow of thy vessel appeareth
Over the sea!

Sweeter than summer, which tenderly, motherly bringeth
Flowers to the bee;
Sweeter than autumn, which bounteously, lovingly flingeth
Fruits on the tree,
Shall be winter, when homeward returning, thy swift vessel wingeth
Over the sea!

OH! HAD I THE WINGS OF A BIRD.

Oh! had I the wings of a bird,
To soar through the blue, sunny sky,
By what breeze would my pinions be stirred?
To what beautiful land should I fly?
Would the gorgeous East allure,
With the light of its golden eyes,
Where the tall green palm, over isles of balm,
Waves with its feathery leaves?
Ah! no! no! no!
I heed not its tempting glare;
In vain should I roam from my island home,
For skies more fair!

Should I seek a southern sea,
Italia's shore beside,
Where the clustering grape from tree to tree
Hangs in its rosy pride?
My truant heart, be still,
For I long have sighed to stray
Through the myrtle flowers of fair Italy's bowers.
By the shores of its southern bay.
But no! no! no!

Though bright be its sparkling seas,
I never would roam from my island home,
For charms like these!

Should I seek that land so bright,
Where the Spanish maiden roves,
With a heart of love and an eye of light,
Through her native citron groves?
Oh! sweet would it be to rest
In the midst of the olive vales,
Where the orange blooms and the rose perfumes
The breath of the balmy gales!
But no! no! no!--
Though sweet be its wooing air,
I never would roam from my island home,
To scenes though fair!

Should I pass from pole to pole?
Should I seek the western skies,
Where the giant rivers roll,
And the mighty mountains rise?
Or those treacherous isles that lie
In the midst of the sunny deeps,
Where the cocoa stands on the glistening sands,
And the dread tornado sweeps!
Ah! no! no! no!
They have no charms for me;
I never would roam from my island home,
Though poor it be!

Poor!--oh! 'tis rich in all
That flows from Nature's hand;
Rich in the emerald wall
That guards its emerald land!
Are Italy's fields more green?
Do they teem with a richer store
Than the bright green breast of the Isle of the West,
And its wild, luxuriant shore?
Ah! no! no! no!
Upon it heaven doth smile;
Oh, I never would roam from my native home,
My own dear isle!

LOVE'S LANGUAGE.

Need I say how much I love thee?--
Need my weak words tell,
That I prize but heaven above thee,
Earth not half so well?
If this truth has failed to move thee,
Hope away must flee;
If thou dost not feel I love thee,
Vain my words would be!

Need I say how long I've sought thee--
Need my words declare,
Dearest, that I long have thought thee
Good and wise and fair?
If no sigh this truth has brought thee,
Woe, alas! to me;
Where thy own heart has not taught thee,
Vain my words would be!

Need I say when others wooed thee,
How my breast did pine,
Lest some fond heart that pursued thee
Dearer were than mine?
If no pity then came to thee,
Mixed with love for me,
Vainly would my words imbue thee,
Vain my words would be!

Love's best language is unspoken,
Yet how simply known;
Eloquent is every token,
Look, and touch, and tone.
If thy heart hath not awoken,
If not yet on thee
Love's sweet silent light hath broken,
Vain my words would be!

Yet, in words of truest meaning,

Simple, fond, and few;
By the wild waves intervening,
Dearest, I love you!
Vain the hopes my heart is gleaning,
If, long since to thee,
My fond heart required unscreening,
Vain my words will be!

THE FIRESIDE.

I have tasted all life's pleasures, I have snatched at all its joys,
The dance's merry measures and the revel's festive noise;
Though wit flashed bright the live-long night, and flowed the ruby tide,
I sighed for thee, I sighed for thee, my own fireside!

In boyhood's dreams I wandered far across the ocean's breast,
In search of some bright earthly star, some happy isle of rest;
I little thought the bliss I sought in roaming far and wide
Was sweetly centred all in thee, my own fireside!

How sweet to turn at evening's close from all our cares away,
And end in calm, serene repose, the swiftly passing day!
The pleasant books, the smiling looks of sister or of bride,
All fairy ground doth make around one's own fireside!

"My Lord" would never condescend to honour my poor hearth;
"His Grace" would scorn a host or friend of mere plebeian birth;
And yet the lords of human kind, whom man has deified,
For ever meet in converse sweet around my fireside!

The poet sings his deathless songs, the sage his lore repeats,
The patriot tells his country's wrongs, the chief his warlike feats;
Though far away may be their clay, and gone their earthly pride,
Each god-like mind in books enshrined still haunts my fireside!

Oh, let me glance a moment through the coming crowd of years,
Their triumphs or their failures, their sunshine or their tears;
How poor or great may be my fate, I care not what betide,
So peace and love but hallow thee, my own fireside!

Still let me hold the vision close, and closer to my sight;
Still, still, in hopes elysian, let my spirit wing its flight;
Still let me dream, life's shadowy stream may yield from out its tide,
A mind at rest, a tranquil breast, a quiet fireside!

THE BANISHED SPIRIT'S SONG.²⁰

Beautiful clime, where I've dwelt so long,
In mirth and music, in gladness and song!
Fairer than aught upon earth art thou--
Beautiful clime, must I leave thee now?

No more shall I join the circle bright
Of my sister nymphs, when they dance at night
In their grottos cool and their pearly halls,
When the glowworm hangs on the ivy walls!

No more shall I glide o'er the waters blue,
With a crimson shell for my light canoe,
Or a rose-leaf plucked from the neighbouring trees,
Piloted o'er by the flower-fed breeze!

Oh! must I leave those spicy gales,
Those purple hills and those flowery vales?
Where the earth is strewn with pansy and rose,
And the golden fruit of the orange grows!

Oh! must I leave this region fair,
For a world of toil and a life of care?
In its dreary paths how long must I roam,
Far away from my fairy home?

The song of birds and the hum of bees,
And the breath of flowers, are on the breeze;
The purple plum and the cone-like pear,
Drooping, hang in the rosy air!

The fountains scatter their pearly rain
On the thirsty flowers and the ripening grain;
The insects sport in the sunny beam,

And the golden fish in the laughing stream.

The Naiads dance by the river's edge,
On the low, soft moss and the bending sedge;
Wood-nymphs and satyrs and graceful fawns
Sport in the woods, on the grassy lawns!

The slanting sunbeams tip with gold
The emerald leaves in the forests old--
But I must away from this fairy scene,
Those leafy woods and those valleys green!

²⁰ Written in early youth.

REMEMBRANCE.

With that pleasant smile thou wearest,
Thou art gazing on the fairest
Wonders of the earth and sea:
Do thou not, in all thy seeing,
Lose the mem'ry of one being
Who at home doth think of thee.

In the capital of nations,
Sun of all earth's constellations,
Thou art roaming glad and free:
Do thou not, in all thy roving,
Lose the mem'ry of one loving
Heart at home that beats for thee.

Strange eyes around thee glisten,
To a strange tongue thou dost listen,
Strangers bend the suppliant knee:
Do thou not, for all their seeming
Truth, forget the constant beaming
Eyes at home that watch for thee.

Stately palaces surround thee,
Royal parks and gardens bound thee--
Gardens of the *Fleur de Lis*:
Do thou not, for all their splendour,
Quite forget the humble, tender
Thoughts at home, that turn to thee.

When, at length of absence weary,
When the year grows sad and dreary,
And an east wind sweeps the sea;
Ere the days of dark November,
Homeward turn, and then remember
Hearts at home that pine for thee!

THE CLAN OF MAC CAURA.²¹

Oh! bright are the names of the chieftains and sages,
That shine like the stars through the darkness of ages,
Whose deeds are inscribed on the pages of story,
There for ever to live in the sunshine of glory,
Heroes of history, phantoms of fable,
Charlemagne's champions, and Arthur's Round Table;
Oh! but they all a new lustre could borrow
From the glory that hangs round the name of MacCaura!

Thy waves, Manzanares, wash many a shrine,
And proud are the castles that frown o'er the Rhine,
And stately the mansions whose pinnacles glance
Through the elms of Old England and vineyards of France;
Many have fallen, and many will fall,
Good men and brave men have dwelt in them all,
But as good and as brave men, in gladness and sorrow,
Have dwelt in the halls of the princely MacCaura!

Montmorency, Medina, unheard was thy rank
By the dark-eyed Iberian and light-hearted Frank,
And your ancestors wandered, obscure and unknown,
By the smooth Guadalquiver and sunny Garonne.
Ere Venice had wedded the sea, or enrolled
The name of a Doge in her proud "Book of Gold;"
When her glory was all to come on like the morrow,
There were the chieftains and kings of the clan of MacCaura!

Proud should thy heart beat, descendant of Heber,[22]
Lofty thy head as the shrines of the Guebre,[23]
Like them are the halls of thy forefathers shattered,
Like theirs is the wealth of thy palaces scattered.
Their fire is extinguished--thy banner long furled--
But how proud were ye both in the dawn of the world!
And should both fade away, oh! what heart would not sorrow
O'er the towers of the Guebre--the name of MacCaura!

What a moment of glory to cherish and dream on,
When far o'er the sea came the ships of Heremon,
With Heber, and Ir, and the Spanish patricians,
To free Inisfail from the spells of magicians.[24]
Oh! reason had these for their quaking and pallor,
For what magic can equal the strong sword of valour?
Better than spells are the axe and the arrow,
When wielded or flung by the hand of MacCaura!

From that hour a MacCaura had reigned in his pride
O'er Desmond's green valleys and rivers so wide,
From thy waters, Lismore, to the torrents and rills
That are leaping for ever down Brandon's brown hills;
The billows of Bantry, the meadows of Bear,
The wilds of Evaugh, and the groves of Glancare,
From the Shannon's soft shores to the banks of the Barrow,
All owned the proud sway of the princely MacCaura!

In the house of Miodchuart,[25] by princes surrounded,
How noble his step when the trumpet was sounded,
And his clansmen bore proudly his broad shield before him,
And hung it on high in that bright palace o'er him;
On the left of the monarch the chieftain was seated,
And happy was he whom his proud glances greeted:
'Mid monarchs and chiefs at the great Fes of Tara,
Oh! none was to rival the princely MacCaura!

To the halls of the Red Branch,[26] when the conquest was o'er,
The champions their rich spoils of victory bore,
And the sword of the Briton, the shield of the Dane,
Flashed bright as the sun on the walls of Eamhain;
There Dathy and Niall bore trophies of war,
From the peaks of the Alps and the waves of Loire;
But no knight ever bore from the hills of Ivaragh
The breast-plate or axe of a conquered MacCaura!

In chasing the red deer what step was the fleetest?--
In singing the love song what voice was the sweetest?--
What breast was the foremost in courting the danger?--
What door was the widest to shelter the stranger?--
In friendship the truest, in battle the bravest,
In revel the gayest, in council the gravest?--
A hunter to-day and a victor to-morrow?--
Oh! who but a chief of the princely MacCaura!

But, oh! proud MacCaura, what anguish to touch on
The fatal stain of thy princely escutcheon;
In thy story's bright garden the one spot of bleakness,
Through ages of valour the one hour of weakness!
Thou, the heir of a thousand chiefs, sceptred and royal--
Thou to kneel to the Norman and swear to be loyal!
Oh! a long night of horror, and outrage, and sorrow,
Have we wept for thy treason, base Diarmid MacCaura![27]

Oh! why ere you thus to the foreigner pandered,
Did you not bravely call round your emerald standard,
The chiefs of your house of Lough Lene and Clan Awley
O'Donogh, MacPatrick, O'Driscoll, MacAwley,
O'Sullivan More, from the towers of Dunkerron,
And O'Mahon, the chieftain of green Ardinterran?
As the sling sends the stone or the bent bow the arrow,
Every chief would have come at the call of MacCaura.

Soon, soon didst thou pay for that error in woe,
Thy life to the Butler, thy crown to the foe,
Thy castles dismantled, and strewn on the sod,
And the homes of the weak, and the abbeyes of God!
No more in thy halls is the wayfarer fed,
Nor the rich mead sent round, nor the soft heather spread,
Nor the *clairsech's* sweet notes, now in mirth, now in sorrow,
All, all have gone by, but the name of MacCaura!

MacCaura, the pride of thy house is gone by,
But its name cannot fade, and its fame cannot die,

Though the Arigideen, with its silver waves, shine
Around no green forests or castles of thine--
Though the shrines that you founded no incense doth hallow,
Nor hymns float in peace down the echoing Allo,
One treasure thou keepest, one hope for the morrow--
True hearts yet beat of the clan of MacCaura!

²¹ MacCarthaig, or MacCarthy.

²² The eldest son of Milesius, King of Spain, in the legendary history of Ireland.

²³ The Round Towers.

²⁴ The Tuatha Dedannans, so called, says Keating, from their skill in necromancy, for which some were so famous as to be called gods.

²⁵ See Keating's "History of Ireland" and Petrie's "Tara."

²⁶ In the palace of Emania, in Ulster.

²⁷ Diarmid MacCaura, King of Desmond, and Daniel O'Brien, King of Thomond, were the first of the Irish princes to swear fealty to Henry II.

THE WINDOW.

At my window, late and early,
In the sunshine and the rain,
When the jocund beams of morning
Come to wake me from my napping,
With their golden fingers tapping
At my window pane:
From my troubled slumbers flitting,
From the dreamings fond and vain,
From the fever intermitting,
Up I start, and take my sitting
At my window pane:--

Through the morning, through the noontide,
Fettered by a diamond chain,
Through the early hours of evening,
When the stars begin to tremble,
As their shining ranks assemble
O'er the azure plain:
When the thousand lamps are blazing
Through the street and lane--
Mimic stars of man's upraising--
Still I linger, fondly gazing
From my window pane!

For, amid the crowds slow passing,
Surging like the main,
Like a sunbeam among shadows,
Through the storm-swept cloudy masses,
Sometimes one bright being passes
'Neath my window pane:
Thus a moment's joy I borrow
From a day of pain.
See, she comes! but--bitter sorrow!
Not until the slow to-morrow,
Will she come again.

AUTUMN FEARS.

The weary, dreary, dripping rain,
From morn till night, from night till morn,
Along the hills and o'er the plain,
Strikes down the green and yellow corn;
The flood lies deep upon the ground,
No ripening heat the cold sun yields,
And rank and rotting lies around
The glory of the summer fields!

How full of fears, how racked with pain,
How torn with care the heart must be,
Of him who sees his golden grain
Laid prostrate thus o'er lawn and lea;
For all that nature doth desire,
All that the shivering mortal shields,

The Christmas fare, the winter's fire,
All comes from out the summer fields.

I too have strayed in pleasing toil
Along youth's and fertile meads;
I too within Hope's genial soil
Have, trusting, placed Love's golden seeds;
I too have feared the chilling dew,
The heavy rain when thunder pealed,
Lest Fate might blight the flower that grew
For me in Hope's green summer field.

Ah! who can paint that beauteous flower,
Thus nourished by celestial dew,
Thus growing fairer, hour by hour,
Delighting more, the more it grew;
Bright'ning, not burdening the ground,
Nor proud with inward worth concealed,
But scattering all its fragrance round
Its own sweet sphere, its summer field!

At morn the gentle flower awoke,
And raised its happy face to God;
At evening, when the starlight broke,
It bending sought the dewy sod;
And thus at morn, and thus at even,
In fragrant sighs its heart revealed,
Thus seeking heaven, and making heaven
Within its own sweet summer field!

Oh! joy beyond all human joy!
Oh! bliss beyond all earthly bliss!
If pitying Fate will not destroy
My hopes of such a flower as this!
How happy, fond, and heaven-possessed,
My heart will be to tend and shield,
And guard upon my grateful breast
The pride of that sweet summer field!

FATAL GIFTS.

The poet's heart is a fatal boon,
And fatal his wondrous eye,
And the delicate ear,
So quick to hear,
Over the earth and sky,
Creation's mystic tune!
Soon, soon, but not too soon,
Does that ear grow deaf and that eye grow dim,
And nature becometh a waste for him,
Whom, born for another sphere,
Misery hath shipwrecked here!

For what availeth his sensitive heart
For the struggle and stormy strife
That the mariner-man,
Since the world began
Has braved on the sea of life?
With fearful wonder his eye doth start,
When it should be fixed on the outspread chart
That pointeth the way to golden shores--
Rent are his sails and broken his oars,
And he sinks without hope or plan,
With his floating caravan.

And love, that should be his strength and stay,
Becometh his bane full soon,
Like flowers that are born
Of the beams at morn,
But die of their heat ere noon.
Far better the heart were the sterile clay
Where the shining sands of the desert play,
And where never the perishing flow'ret gleams
Than the heart that is fed with its wither'd dreams,
And whose love is repelled with scorn,
Like the bee by the rose's thorn.

SWEET MAY.

The summer is come!--the summer is come!

With its flowers and its branches green,
Where the young birds chirp on the blossoming boughs,
And the sunlight struggles between:
And, like children, over the earth and sky
The flowers and the light clouds play;
But never before to my heart or eye
Came there ever so sweet a May
As this--
Sweet May! sweet May!

Oh! many a time have I wandered out
In the youth of the opening year,
When Nature's face was fair to my eye,
And her voice was sweet to my ear!
When I numbered the daisies, so few and shy,
That I met in my lonely way;
But never before to my heart or eye,
Came there ever so sweet a May
As this--
Sweet May! sweet May!

If the flowers delayed, or the beams were cold,
Or the blossoming trees were bare,
I had but to look in the poet's book,
For the summer is always there!
But the sunny page I now put by,
And joy in the darkest day!
For never before to my heart or eye,
Came there ever so sweet a May
As this--
Sweet May! sweet May!

For, ah! the beloved at length has come,
Like the breath of May from afar;
And my heart is lit with gentle eyes,
As the heavens by the evening star.
'Tis this that brightens the darkest sky,
And lengthens the faintest ray,
And makes me feel that to the heart or eye
There was never so sweet a May
As this--
Sweet May! sweet May!

FERDIAH;²⁸

OR, THE FIGHT AT THE FORD.

*An Episode from the Ancient Irish Epic Romance,
"The Tain Bó Cuailgné; or, the Cattle Prey of Cuailgné."*

["*The Tain Bó Cuailgné*" says the late Professor O'Curry, "is to Irish what the Argonautic Expedition, or the Seven against Thebes, is to Grecian history." For an account of this, perhaps the earliest epic romance of Western Europe, see the Professor's "Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Irish History."]

The Fight of Cuchullin with Ferdiah took place in the modern county of Louth, at the ford of Ardee, which still preserves the name of the departed champion, Ardee being the softened form of *Ath Ferdíah*, or Ferdiah's Ford.

The circumstances under which this famous combat took place are thus succinctly mentioned by O'Curry, in his description of the *Tain Bó Cuailgné*:—

"Cuchulainn confronts the invaders of his province, demands single combat, and conjures his opponents by the laws of Irish chivalry (the *Fir comhlainn*) not to advance farther until they had conquered *him*. This demand, in accordance with the Irish laws of warfare, is granted; and then the whole contest is resolved into a succession of single combats, in each of which Cuchulainn was victorious."—"Lectures," p. 37.

The original Irish text of this episode, with a literal translation, on which the present metrical version is founded, may be consulted in the appendix to the second series of the Lectures by O'Curry, vol. ii., p. 413.

The date assigned to the famous expedition of the *Tain Bó Cuailgné*, and consequently to the episode which forms the subject of the present poem, is the close of the century immediately preceding the commencement of the Christian era. This will account for the complete absence of all Christian allusions, so remarkable throughout the poem: an additional proof, if that were required, of its extreme antiquity.]

Cuchullin the great chief had pitched his tent,
From Samhain[29] time, till now 'twas budding spring,
Fast by the Ford, and held the land at bay.
All Erin, save the fragment that he led,
His sword held back, nor dared a man to cross
The rippling Ford without Cuchullin's leave:

Chief after chief had fallen in the attempt;
And now the men of Erin through the night
Asked in dismay, "Oh! who shall be the next
To face the northern hound[30] and free the Ford?"
"Let it now be," with one accord they cried,
"Ferdiah, son of Dâman Dâré's son,
Of Domnann[31] lord, and all its warrior men."
The chiefs thus fated now to meet as foes
In early life were friends--had both been taught
All feats of arms by the same skilful hands
In Scatha's[32] school beneath the peaks of Skye,
Which still preserve Cuchullin's glorious name.
One feat of arms alone Cuchullin knew
Ferdiah knew not of--the fatal cast--
The dread expanding force of the gaebulg[33]
Flung from the foot resistless on the foe.
But, on the other hand, Ferdiah wore
A skin-protecting suit of flashing steel[34]
Surpassing all in Erin known till then.
At length the council closed, and to the chief
Heralds were sent to tell them that the choice
That night had fallen on him; but he within
His tent retired, received them not, nor went.
For well he knew the purport of their suit
Was this--that he should fight beside the Ford
His former fellow-pupil and his friend.
Then Mave,[35] the queen, her powerful druids sent,
Armed not alone with satire's scorpion stings,
But with the magic power even on the face,
By their malevolent taunts and biting sneers,
To raise three blistering blots[36] that typified
Disgrace, dishonour, and a coward's shame,
Which with their mortal venom him would kill,
Or on the hour, or ere nine days had sped,
If he declined the combat, and refused
Upon the instant to come forth with them,
And so, for honour's sake, Ferdiah came.
For he preferred to die a warrior's death,
Pierced to the heart by a proud foeman's spear,
Than by the serpent sting of slanderous tongues--
By satire and abuse, and foul reproach.
When to the court he came, where the great queen
Held revel, he received all due respect:
The sweet intoxicating cup went round,
And soon Ferdiah felt the power of wine.
Great were the rich rewards then promised him
For going forth to battle with the Hound:
A chariot worth seven cumals four times told,[37]
The outfit then of twelve well-chosen men
Made of more colours than the rainbow knows,
His own broad plains of level fair Magh Aie,[38]
To him and his assured till time was o'er
Free of all tribute, without fee or fine;
The golden brooch, too, from the queen's own cloak,
And, above all, fair Finavair[39] for wife.
But doubtful was Ferdiah of the queen,
And half excited by the fiery cup,
And half distrustful, knowing wily Mave,
He asked for more assurance of her faith.
Then she to him, in rhythmic rise of song,
And he in measured ranns to her replied.

MAVE.[40]

A rich reward of golden rings
I'll give to thee, Ferdiah fair,
The forest, where the wild bird sings,
the broad green plain, with me thou'lt share;
Thy children and thy children's seed,
for ever, until time is o'er,
Shall be from every service freed
within the sea-surrounding shore.
Oh, Daman's son, Ferdiah fair,
oh, champion of the wounds renowned,
For thou a charmed life dost bear,
since ever by the victories crowned,
Oh! why the proffered gifts decline,
oh! why reject the nobler fame,
Which many an arm less brave than thine,
which many a heart less bold, would claim?

FERDIAH.

Without a guarantee, O queen!
without assurance made most sure,
Thy grassy plains, thy woodlands green,
thy golden rings are but a lure.
The champion's place is not for me
until thou art most firmly bound,
For dreadful will the battle be
between me and Emania's Hound.
For such is Chuland's name,
O queen, and such is Chuland's nature, too,
The noble Hound, the Hound of fame,
the noble heart to dare and do,
The fearful fangs that never yield,
the agile spring so swift and light:
Ah! dread the fortune of the field!
ah! fierce will be the impending fight!

MAVE.

I'll give a champion's guarantee,
and with thee here a compact make,
That in the assemblies thou shalt be
no longer bound thy place to take;
Rich silver-bitted bridles fair--
for such each noble neck demands--
And gallant steeds that paw the air,
shall all be given into thy hands.
For thou, Ferdiah, art indeed
a truly brave and valorous man,
The first of all the chiefs I lead,
the foremost hero in the van;
My chosen champion now thou art,
my dearest friend henceforth thou'lt be,
The very closest to my heart,
from every toll and tribute free.

FERDIAH.

Without securities, I say,
united with thy royal word,
I will not go, when breaks the day,
to seek the combat at the Ford.
That contest, while time runs its course,
and fame records what ne'er should die,
Shall live for ever in full force,
until the judgment day draws nigh.
I will not go, though death ensue,
though thou through some demoniac rite,
Even as thy druid sorcerers do,
canst kill me with thy words of might:
I will not go the Ford to free,
until, O queen! thou here dost swear
By sun and moon,[41] by land and sea,
by all the powers of earth and air.

MAVE.

Thou shalt have all; do *thou* decide.
I'll give thee an unbounded claim;
Until thy doubts are satisfied,
oh! bind us by each sacred name;--
Bind us upon the hands of kings,
upon the hands of princes bind;
Bind us by every act that brings
assurance to the doubting mind.
Ask what thou wilt, and do not fear
that what thou wouldst cannot be wrought;
Ask what thou wilt, there standeth here
one who will ne'er refuse thee aught;
Ask what thou wilt, thy wildest wish
be certain thou shalt have this night,
For well I know that thou wilt kill this
man who meets thee in the fight.

FERDIAH.

I will have six securities,
no less will I accept from thee;
Be some our country's deities,
the lords of earth, and sky, and sea;
Be some thy dearest ones, O queen!
the darlings of thy heart and eye,
Before my fatal fall is seen

to-morrow, when the hosts draw nigh.
Do this, and though I lose my fame--
do this, and though my life I lose,
The glorious championship I'll claim,
the glorious risk will not refuse.
On, on, in equal strength and might
shall I advance, O queenly Mave,
And Uladh's hero meet in fight,
and battle with Cuchullin brave.

MAVE.

Though Domnal[42] it should be, the sun,
swift-speeding in his fiery car;
Though Niaman's[43] dread name be one,
the consort of the God of War;
These, even these I'll give, though hard
to lure them from their realms serene,
For though they list to lowliest bard,[44]
they may be deaf unto a queen.
Bind it on Morand, if thou wilt,
to make assurance doubly sure;
Bind it, nor dream that dream of guilt
that such a pact will not endure.
By spirits of the wave and wind,
by every spell, by every art,
Bind Carpri Min of Manand,
bind my sons, the darlings of my heart.

FERDIAH.

O Mave! with venom of deceit
that adder tongue of thine o'erflows,
Nor is thy temper over-sweet,
as well thine earlier consort knows.
Thou'rt truly worthy of thy fame
for boastful speech and lust of power,
And well dost thou deserve thy name--
the Brachail of Rathcroghan's tower.[45]
Thy words are fair and soft, O queen!
but still I crave one further proof--
Give me the scarf of silken sheen,
give me the speckled satin woof,
Give from thy cloak's empurpled fold
the golden brooch so fair to see,
And when the glorious gift I hold,
for ever am I bound to thee.

MAVE.

Oh! art thou not my chosen chief,
my foremost champion, sure to win,
My tower, my fortress of relief,
to whom I give this twisted pin?
These, and a thousand gifts more rare,
the treasures of the earth and sea,
Jewels a queen herself might wear,
my grateful hands will give to thee.
And when at length beneath thy sword
the Hound of Ulster shall lie low,
When thou hast ope'd the long-locked Ford,
and let the unguarded water flow,
Then shall I give my daughter's hand,
then my own child shall be thy bride--
She, the fair daughter of the land
where western Elgga's[46] waters glide.

And thus did Mave Ferdiah bind to fight
Six chosen champions on the morrow morn,
Or combat with Cuchullin all alone,
Whichever might to him the easier seem.
And he, by the gods' names and by her sons,
Bound *her* the promise she had made to keep,
The rich reward to pay to him in full,
If by his hand Cuchullin should be slain.
For Fergus, young Cuchullin's early friend,
The steeds that night were harnessed, and he flew
Swift in his chariot to the hero's tent.
"Glad am I at thy coming, O my friend!"
Cuchullin said: "My pupil, I accept
With joy thy welcome," Fergus quick replied:
"But what I come for is to give thee news
Of him who here will fight thee in the morn."

"I listen," said Cuchullin, "do thou speak."
"Thine own companion is it, thine own peer,
Thy rival in all daring feats of arms,
Ferdiah, son of Dáman, Daré's son,
Of Domnand lord and all its warrior men."
"Be sure of this," Cuchullin made reply,
"That never wish of mine it could have been
A friend should thus come forth with me to fight."
"It therefore doth behove thee now, my son,"
Fergus replied, "to be upon thy guard,
Prepared at every point; for not like those
Who hitherto have come to fight with thee
Upon the *Tain Bó Cuailgne*, is the chief,
Ferdiah, son of Dáman, Daré's son."
"Here I have been," Cuchullin proudly said,
"From Samhain up to Imbule--from the first
Of winter days even to the first of spring--
Holding the four great provinces in check
That make up Erin, not one foot have I
Yielded to any man in all that time,
Nor even to him shall I a foot give way."
And thus the parley went: first Fergus spoke,
Cuchullin then to him in turn replied:

FERGUS.

Time is it, O Cuchullin, to arise,
Time for the fearful combat to prepare;
For hither with the anger in his eyes,
To fight thee comes Ferdiah called the Fair.

CUCHULLIN.

Here I have been, nor has the task been light,
Holding all Erin's warriors at bay:
No foot of ground have I in recreant flight
Yielded to any man or shunned the fray.

FERGUS.

When roused to rage, resistless in his might,
Fearless the man is, for his sword ne'er fails:
A skin-protecting coat of armour bright
He wears, 'gainst which no valour e'er prevails.

CUCHULLIN.

Oh! brave in arms, my Fergus, say not so,
Urge not thy story further on the night:--
On any friend, or facing any foe
I never was behind him in the fight.

FERGUS.

Brave is the man, I say, in battles fierce,
Him it will not be easy to subdue,
Swords cut him not, nor can the sharp spear pierce,
Strong as a hundred men to dare and do.

CUCHULLIN.

Well, should we chance to meet beside the Ford,
I and this chief whose valour ne'er has failed,
Story shall tell the fortune of each sword,
And who succumbed and who it was prevailed.

FERGUS.

Ah! liefer than a royal recompense
To me it were, O champion of the sword,
That thine it were to carry eastward hence
The proud Ferdiah's purple from the Ford.

CUCHULLIN.

I pledge my word, I vow, and not in vain,
Though in the combat we may be as one,
That it is I who shall the victory gain
Over the son of Dáman, Daré's son.

FERGUS.

'Twas I that gathered eastward all the bands,

Revening the foul wrong upon me wrought
By the Ultonians. Hither from their lands
The chiefs, the battle-warriors I have brought.

CUCHULLIN.

If Conor's royal strength had not decayed,
Hard would have been the strife on either side:
Mave of the Plain of Champions had not made
A foray then of so much boastful pride.

FERGUS.

To-day awaits thy hand a greater deed,
To battle with Ferdiah, Dáman's son.
Hard, bloody weapons with sharp points thou'lt need,
Cuchullin, ere the victory be won.

Then Fergus to the court and camp went back,
While to his people and his tent repaired
Ferdiah, and he told them of the pact
Made that same night between him and the queen.

The dwellers in Ferdiah's tent that night
Were scant of comfort, a foreboding fear
Fell on their spirits and their hearts weighed down;
Because they knew in whatsoever fight
The mighty chiefs, the hundred-slaying two
Met face to face, that one of them must fall,
Or both, perhaps, or if but only one,
Certain were they it would their own lord be,
Since on the *Tain Bó Cuailgne*, it was plain
That no one with Cuchullin could contend.

Nor was their chief less troubled; but at first
The fumes of the late revel overpowered
His senses, and he slept a heavy sleep.
Later he woke, the intoxicating steam
Had left his brain, and now in sober calm
All the anxieties of the impending fight
Pressed on his soul and made him grave.[47] He rose
From off his couch, and bade his charioteer
Harness his pawing horses to the car.
The boy would fain persuade his lord to stay,
Because he loved his master, and he felt
He went but to his death; but he repelled
The youth's advice, and spoke to him these words--
"Oh! cease, my servant. I will not be turned
By any youth from what I have resolved."
And thus in speech and answer spoke the two--

FERDIAH.

Let us go to this challenge,
Let us fly to the Ford,
When the raven shall croak
O'er my blood-dripping sword.
Oh, woe for Cuchullin!
That sword will be red;
Oh, woe! for to-morrow
The hero lies dead.

CHARIOTEER.

Thy words are not gentle,
Yet rest where thou art,
'Twill be dreadful to meet,
And distressful to part.
The champion of Ulster!
Oh! think what a foe!
In that meeting there's grief,
In that journey there's woe!

FERDIAH.

Thy counsel is craven,
Thy caution I slight,
No brave-hearted champion
Should shrink from the fight.
The blood I inherit
Doth prompt me to do--
Let us go to the challenge,
To the Ford let us go!

Then were the horses of Ferdiah yoked
Unto the chariot, and he rode full speed
Unto the Ford of battle, and the day
Began to break, and all the east grew red.

Beside the Ford he halted. "Good, my friend,"
He said unto his servant, "Spread for me
The skins and cushions of my chariot here
Beneath me, that I may a full deep sleep
Enjoy before the hour of fight arrives;
For in the latter portion of the night
I slept not, thinking of the fight to come."
Unharnessed were the horses, and the boy
Spread out the cushions and the chariot's skins,
And heavy sleep fell on Ferdiah's lids.

Now of Cuchullin will I speak. He rose
Not until day with all its light had come,
In order that the men of Erin ne'er
Should say of him that it was fear or dread
That made him from a restless couch arise.
When in the fulness of its light at length
Shone forth the day, he bade his charioteer
Harness his horses and his chariot yoke.
"Harness my horses, good, my servant," said
Cuchullin, "and my chariot yoke for me,
For lo! an early-rising champion comes
To meet us here beside the Ford to-day--
Ferdiah, son of Daman, Daré's son."
"My lord, the steeds are ready to thy hand;
Thy chariot stands here yoked, do thou step in;
The noble car will not disgrace its lord."

Into the chariot, then, the dextrous, bold,
Red-sworded, battle-winning hero sprang
Cuchullin, son of Sualtam, at a bound.
Invisible Bocanachs and Bananachs,
And Geniti Glindi[48] shouted round the car,
And demons of the earth and of the air.
For thus the Tuatha de Danaans used
By sorceries to raise those fearful cries
Around him, that the terror and the fear
Of him should be the greater, as he swept
On with his staff of spirits to the war.

Soon was it when Ferdiah's charioteer
Heard the approaching clamour and the shout,
The rattle and the clatter, and the roar,
The whistle, and the thunder, and the tramp,
The clanking discord of the missive shields,
The clang of swords, the hissing sound of spears,
The tinkling of the helmet, the sharp crash
Of armour and of arms, the straining ropes,
The dangling bucklers, the resounding wheels,
The creaking chariot, and the proud approach
Of the triumphant champion of the Ford.

Clutching his master's robe, the charioteer
Cried out, "Ferdiah, rise! for lo, thy foes
Are on thee!" Then the Spirit of Insight fell
Prophetic on the youth, and thus he sang.

CHARIOTEER.

I hear the rushing of a car,
Near and more near its proud wheels run
A chariot for the God of War
Bursts--as from clouds the sun!
Over Bregg-Ross it speeds along,
Hark! its thunders peal afar!
Oh! its steeds are swift and strong,
And the Victories guide that car.

The Hound of Ulster shaketh the reins,
And white with foam is each courser's mouth;
The Hawk of Ulster swoops o'er the plains
To his quarry here in the south.
Like wintry storm that warrior's form,
Slaughter and Death beside him rush;
The groaning air is dark and warm,
And the low clouds bleed and blush.[49]

Oh, woe to him that is here on the hill,

Who is here on the hillock awaiting the Hound;
Last year it was in a vision of ill
I saw this sight and I heard this sound.
Methought Emania's Hound drew nigh,
Methought the Hound of Battle drew near,
I heard his steps and I saw his eye,
And again I see and I hear.

Then answer made Ferdiah in this wise:
"Why dost thou chafe me, talking of this man?
For thou hast never ceased to sing his praise
Since from his home he came. Thou surely art
Not without wage for this: but nathless know
Ailill and Mave have both foretold--by me
This man shall fall, shall fall for a reward
Just as the deed: This day he shall be slain,
For it is fated that I free the Ford.
'Tis time for the relief."--And thus they spake:

FERDIAH.

Yes, it is time for the relief;
Be silent then, nor speak his praise,
For prophecy forebodes this chief
Shall pass not the predestined days;
Does fate for this forego its claim,
That Cuailgné's champion here should come
In all his pride and pomp of fame?--
Be sure he comes but to his doom.

CHARIOTEER.

If Cuailgné's champion here I see
In all his pride and pomp of fame,
He little heeds the prophecy,
So swift his course, so straight his aim.
Towards us he flies, as flies the gleam
Of lightning, or as waters flow
From some high cliff o'er which the stream
Drops in the foaming depths below.

FERDIAH.

Highly rewarded thou must be,
For much reward thou sure canst claim,
Else why with such persistency
Thus sing his praises since he came?
And now that he approacheth nigh,
And now that he doth draw more near,
It seems it is to glorify
And not to attack him thou art here.

Not long Ferdiah's charioteer had gazed
With wondering look on the majestic car,
When, as with thunder-speed it wheeled more near,
He saw its whole construction and its plan:
A fair, flesh-seeking, four-peaked front it had,
And for its body a magnificent creit
Fashioned for war, in which the hero stood
Full-armed and brandishing a mighty spear,
While o'er his head a green pavilion hung;
Beneath, two fleetly-bounding, large-eared, fierce,
Whale-bellied, lively-hearted, high-flanked, proud,
Slender-legged, wide-hoofed, broad-buttocked, prancing steeds,
Exulting leaped and bore the car along:
Under one yoke, the broad-backed steed was gray,
Under the other, black the long-maned steed.

Like to a hawk swooping from off a cliff,
Upon a day of harsh and biting wind,
Or like a spring gust on a wild March morn
Rushing resistless o'er a level plain,
Or like the fleetness of a stag when first
'Tis started by the hounds in its first field--
So swept the horses of Cuchullin's car,
Bounding as if o'er fiery flags they flew,
Making the earth to shake beneath their tread,
And tremble 'neath the fleetness of their speed.

At length, upon the north side of the Ford,
Cuchullin stopped. Upon the southern bank
Ferdiah stood, and thus addressed the chief:
"Glad am I, O Cuchullin, thou hast come."

"Up to this day," Cuchullin made reply,
"Thy welcome would by me have been received
As coming from a friend, but not to-day.
Besides, 'twere fitter that I welcomed thee,
Than that to me thou shouldst the welcome give;
'Tis I that should go forth to fight with thee,
Not thou to me, because before thee are
My women and my children, and my youths,
My herds and flocks, my horses and my steeds."

Ferdiah, half in scorn, spake then these words--
And then Cuchullin answered in his turn.

"Good, O Cuchullin, what untoward fate
Has brought thee here to measure swords with me?
For when we two with Scatha lived, in Skye,
With Uatha, and with Aifé, thou wert then
My page to spread my couch for me at night,
Or tie my spears together for the chase."

"True hast thou spoken," said Cuchullin; "yes,
I then was young, thy junior, and I did
For thee the services thou dost recall;
A different story shall be told of us
From this day forth, for on this day I feel
Earth holds no champion that I dare not fight!"
And thus invectives bitter, sharp and cold,
Between the two were uttered, and first spake
Ferdiah, then alternate each with each.

FERDIAH.

What has brought thee here, O Hound,
To encounter a strong foe?
O'er the trappings of thy steeds
Crimson-red thy blood shall flow.
Woe is in thy journey, woe;
Let the cunning leech prepare;
Shouldst thou ever reach thy home,
Thou shalt need his care.

CUCHULLIN.

I, who here with warriors fought,
With the lordly chiefs of hosts,
With a hundred men at once,
Little heed thy empty boasts.
Thee beneath the wave to place,
Thee to strike and thee to slay
In the first path of our fight
Am I here to-day.

FERDIAH.

Thy reproach in me behold,
For 'tis I that deed will do,
'Tis of me that Fame shall tell
He the Ultonian's champion slew.
Yes, in spite of all their hosts,
Yes, in spite of all their prayers:
So it shall long be told
That the loss was theirs.

CUCHULLIN.

How, then, shall we first engage--
Is it with the hard-edged sword?
In what order shall we go
To the battle of the Ford?
Shall we in our chariots ride?
Shall we wield the bloody spear?
How am I to hew thee down
With thy proud hosts here?

FERDIAH.

Ere the setting of the sun,
Ere shall come the darksome night,
If again thou must be told,
With a mountain thou shalt fight:
Thee the Ultonians will extol,
Thence impetuous wilt thou grow,
Oh! their grief, when through their ranks
Will thy spectre go!

CUCHULLIN.

Thou hast fallen in danger's gap,
Yes, thy end of life is nigh;
Sharp spears shall be plied on thee
Fairly 'neath the open sky:
Pompous thou wilt be and vain
Till the time for talk is o'er,
From this day a battle-chief
Thou shalt be no more.

FERDIAH.

Cease thy boastings, for the world
Sure no braggart hath like thee:
Thou art not the chosen chief--
Thou hast not the champion's fee!--
Without action, without force,
Thou art but a giggling page;
Yes, thou trembler, with thy heart
Like a bird's in cage.

CUCHULLIN.

When we were with Scatha once,
It but seemed our valour's due
That we should together fight,
Both as one our sports pursue.
Thou wert then my dearest friend,
Comrade, kinsman, thou wert all,--
Ah, how sad, if by my hand
Thou at last should fall.

FERDIAH.

Much of honour shalt thou lose,
We may then mere words forego:--
On a stake thy head shall be
Ere the early cock shall crow.
O Cuchullin, Cuailgné's pride,
Grief and madness round thee twine;
I will do thee every ill,
For the fault is thine.

"Good, O Ferdiah, 'twas no knightly act,"
Cuchullin said, "to have come meanly here,
To combat and to fight with an old friend,
Through instigation of the wily Mave,
Through intermeddling of Ailill the king;
To none of those who here before thee came
Was victory given, for they all fell by me:--
Thou too shalt win nor victory, nor increase
Of fame in this encounter thou dost dare,
For as they fell, so thou by me shall fall."
Thus was he saying and he spake these words,
To which Ferdiah listened, not unmoved.

CUCHULLIN.

Come not to me, O champion of the host,
Come not to me, Ferdiah, as my foe,
For though it is thy fate to suffer most,
All, all must feel the universal woe.

Come not to me defying what is right,
Come not to me, thy life is in my power;
Ah, the dread issue of each former fight
Why hast thou not remembered ere this hour?

Art thou not bright with diverse dainty arms,
A purple girdle and a coat of mail?
And yet to win the maid of peerless charms
For whom thou dar'st the battle thou shalt fail.

Yes, Finavair, the daughter of the queen,
The faultless form, the gold without alloy,
The glorious virgin of majestic mien,
Shalt not be thine, Ferdiah, to enjoy.

No, the great prize shall not by thee be won,--
A fatal lure, a false, false light is she,
To numbers promised and yet given to none,
And wounding many as she now wounds thee.

Break not thy vow, never with me to fight,
Break not the bond that once thy young heart gave,
Break not the truth we both so loved to plight,
Come not to me, O champion bold and brave!

To fifty champions by her smiles made slaves
The maid was proffered, and not slight the gift;
By me they have been sent into their graves,
From me they met destruction sure and swift.

Though vauntingly Ferbaeth my arms defied,
He of a house of heroes prince and peer,
Short was the time until I tamed his pride
With one swift cast of my true battle-spear.

Strub Dairé's valour too had swift decline:
Hundreds of women's secrets he possessed,
Great at one time was his renown as thine,
In cloth of gold, not silver, was he dressed.

Though 'twas to me the woman was betrothed
On whom the chiefs of the fair province smile,
To shed thy blood my spirit would have loathed
East, west, or north, or south of all the isle.

"Good, O Ferdiah," still continuing, spoke
Cuchullin, "thus it is that thou shouldst not
Have come with me to combat and to fight;
For when we were with Scatha, long ago,
With Uatha and with Aifé, we were wont
To go together to each battle-field,
To every combat and to every fight,
Through every forest, every wilderness,
Through every darksome path and dangerous way."
And thus he said and thus he spake these words:

CUCHULLIN.

We were heart-comrades then,--
Comrades in crowds of men,
In the same bed have lain,
When slumber sought us;
In countries far and near,
Hurling the battle spear,
Chasing the forest deer,
As Scatha taught us.

"O Cuchullin of the beautiful feats,"
Replied Ferdiah, "though we have pursued
Together thus the arts of war and peace,
And though the bonds of friendship that we swore
Thou hast recalled to mind, from me shall come
Thy first of wounds. O Hound, remember not
Our old companionship, which shall not now
Avail thee, shall avail thee not, O Hound!"
"Too long here have we waited in this way,"
Again resumed Ferdiah. "To what arms,
Say then, Cuchullin, shall we now resort?"
"The choice of arms is thine until the night,"
Cuchullin made reply; "for so it chanced
That thou shouldst be the first to reach the Ford."
"Dost thou at all remember," then rejoined
Ferdiah, "those swift missive spears with which
We practised oft with Scatha in our youth,
With Uatha and with Aifé, and our friends?"
"Them I, indeed, remember well," replied
Cuchullin. "If thou dost remember well,
Let us to them resort," Ferdiah said.
Their missive weapons then on either side
They both resorted to. Upon their arms
They braced two emblematic missive shields,
And their eight well-turned-handled lances took,
Their eight quill-javelins also, and their eight
White ivory-hilted swords, and their eight spears,
Sharp, ivory-hafted, with hard points of steel.
Betwixt the twain the darts went to and fro,
Like bees upon the wing on a fine day;
No cast was made that was not sure to hit.
From morn to nigh mid-day the missiles flew,
Till on the bosses of the brazen shields
Their points were blunted, but though true the aim,
And excellent the shooting, the defence
Was so complete that not a wound was given,

And neither champion drew the other's blood.
"'Tis time to drop these feats," Ferdiah said,
"For not by such as these shall we decide
Our battle here this day." "Let us desist,"
Cuchullin answered, "if the time hath come."
They ceased, and threw their missile shafts aside
Into the hands of their two charioteers.
"What weapons, O Cuchullin, shall we now
Resort to?" said Ferdiah. "Unto thee,"
Cuchullin answered, "doth belong the choice
Of arms until the night, because thou wert
The first that reached the Ford." "Well, let us, then,"
Ferdiah said, "resume our straight, smooth, hard,
Well-polished spears with their hard flaxen strings."
"Let us resume them, then," Cuchullin said.
They braced upon their arms two stouter shields,
And then resorted to their straight, smooth, hard,
Well-polished spears, with their hard flaxen strings.[50]
'Twas now mid-day, and thus 'till eventide
They shot against each other with the spears.
But though the guard was good on either side,
The shooting was so perfect that the blood
Ran from the wounds of each, by each made red.
"Let us now, O Cuchullin," interposed
Ferdiah, "for the present time desist."
"Let us indeed desist," Cuchullin said
"If, O Ferdiah, the fit time hath come."
They ceased, and laid their gory weapons down,
Their faithful charioteers' attendant care.
Each to the other gently then approached,
Each round the other's neck his hands entwined,
And gave him three fond kisses on the cheek.
Their horses fed in the same field that night,
Their charioteers were warmed at the same fire,
Their charioteers beneath their bodies spread
Green rushes, and beneath the heads the down
Of wounded men's soft pillows. Then the skilled
Professors of the art of healing came
With herbs, which to the scars of all their wounds
They put. Of every herb and healing plant
That to Cuchullin's wound they did apply,
He would an equal portion westward send
Over the Ford, Ferdiah's wounds to heal.
So that the men of Erin could not say,
If it should chance Ferdiah fell by him,
That it was through superior skill and care
Cuchullin was enabled him to slay.

Of each kind, too, of palatable food
And sweet, intoxicating, pleasant drink,
The men of Erin to Ferdiah sent,
He a fair moiety across the Ford
Sent northward to Cuchullin, where he lay;
Because his own purveyors far surpassed
In numbers those the Ulster chief retained:
For all the federate hosts of Erin were
Purveyors to Ferdiah, with the hope
That he would beat Cuchullin from the Ford.
The Bregians[51] only were Cuchullin's friends,
His sole purveyors, and their wont it was
To come to him and talk to him at night.

That night they rested there. Next morn they rose
And to the Ford of battle early came.
"What weapons shall we use to-day?" inquired
Cuchullin. "Until night the choice is thine,"
Replied Ferdiah; "for the choice of arms
Has hitherto been mine." "Then let us take
Our great broad spears to-day," Cuchullin said,
"And may the thrusting bring us to an end
Sooner than yesterday's less powerful darts.
Let then our charioteers our horses yoke
Beneath our chariots, so that we to-day
May from our horses and our chariots fight."
Ferdiah answered: "Let it so be done."
And then they braced their two broad, full-firm shields
Upon their arms that day, and in their hands
That day they took their great broad-bladed spears.
And thus from early morn to evening's close
They smote each other with such dread effect
That both were pierced, and both made red with gore,--
Such wounds, such hideous clefts in either breast
Lay open to the back, that if the birds

Cared ever through men's wounded frames to pass,
They might have passed that day, and with them borne
Pieces of quivering flesh into the air.
When evening came, their very steeds were tired,
Their charioteers depressed, and they themselves
Worn out--even they the champions bold and brave.
"Let us from this, Ferdiah, now desist,"
Cuchullin said; "for see, our charioteers
Droop, and our very horses flag and fail,
And when fatigued they yield, so well may we."
And further thus he spoke, persuading rest:--

CUCHULLIN.

Not with the obstinate rage and spite
With which Fomorian pirates fight
Let us, since now has fallen the night,
Continue thus our feud;
In brief abeyance it may rest,
Now that a calm comes o'er each breast:--
When with new light the world is blest,
Be it again renewed."

"Let us desist, indeed," Ferdiah said,
"If the fit time hath come."--And so they ceased.
From them they threw their arms into the hands
Of their two charioteers. Each of them came
Forward to meet the other. Each his hands
Put round the other's neck, and thus embraced,
Gave to him three fond kisses on the cheek.
Their horses fed in the same field that night;
Their charioteers were warmed by the same fire.
Their charioteers beneath their bodies spread
Green rushes, and beneath their heads the down
Of wounded men's soft pillows. Then the skilled
Professors of the art of healing came
To tend them and to cure them through the night.
But they for all their skill could do no more,
So numerous and so dangerous were the wounds,
The cuts, and clefts, and scars so large and deep,
But to apply to them the potent charms
Of witchcraft, incantations, and barb spells,
As sorcerers use, to stanch the blood and stay
The life that else would through the wounds escape:--
Of every charm of witchcraft, every spell,
Of every incantation that was used
To heal Cuchullin's wounds, a full fair half
Over the Ford was westward sent to heal
Ferdiah's hurts: of every sort of food,
And sweet, intoxicating, pleasant drink
The men of Erin to Ferdiah sent,
He a fair moiety across the Ford
Sent northward to Cuchullin where he lay,
Because his own purveyors far surpassed
In number those the Ulster chief retained.
For all the federate hosts of Erin were
Purveyors to Ferdiah, with the hope
That he would beat Cuchullin from the Ford.
The Bregians only were Cuchullin's friends--
His sole purveyors--and their wont it was
To come to him, and talk with him at night.

They rested there that night. Next morn they rose,
And to the Ford of battle forward came.
That day a great, ill-favoured, lowering cloud
Upon Ferdiah's face Cuchullin saw.
"Badly," said he, "dost thou appear this day,
Ferdiah, for thy hair has duskier grown
This day, and a dull stupour dims thine eyes,
And thine own face and form, and what thou wert
In outward seeming have deserted thee."
"'Tis not through fear of thee that I am so,"
Ferdiah said, "for Erin doth not hold
This day a champion I could not subdue."
And thus betwixt the twain this speech arose,
And thus Cuchullin mourned and he replied:

CUCHULLIN.

O Ferdiah, if it be thou,
Certain am I that on thy brow
The blush should burn and the shame should rise,
Degraded man whom the gods despise,

Here at a woman's bidding to wend
To fight thy fellow-pupil and friend.

FERDIAH.

O Cuchullin, O valiant man,
Inflicter of wounds since the war began,
O true champion, a man must come
To the fated spot of his final home,--
To the sod predestined by fate's decree
His resting-place and his grave to be.

CUCHULLIN.

Finavair, the daughter of Mave,
Although thou art her willing slave,
Not for thy long-felt love has been
Promised to thee by the wily queen,--
No, it was but to test thy might
That thou wert lured into this fatal fight.

FERDIAH.

My might was tested long ago
In many a battle, as thou dost know,
Long, O Hound of the gentle rule,
Since we fought together in Scatha's school:
Never a braver man have I seen,
Never, I feel, hath a braver been.

CUCHULLIN.

Thou art the cause of what has been done,
O son of Dáman, Daré's son,
Of all that has happened thou art the cause,
Whom hither a woman's counsel draws--
Whom hither a wily woman doth send
To measure swords with thy earliest friend.

FERDIAH.

If I forsook the field, O Hound,
If I had turned from the battleground--
This battleground without fight with thee,
Hard, oh, hard had it gone with me;
Bad should my name and fame have been
With King Ailill and with Mave the queen.

CUCHULLIN.

Though Mave of Croghan had given me food,
Even from her lips, though all of good
That the heart can wish or wealth can give
Were offered to me, there does not live
A king or queen on the earth for whom
I would do thee ill or provoke thy doom.

FERDIAH.

O Cuchullin, thou victor in fight,
Of battle triumphs the foremost knight;
To what result the fight may lead,
'Twas Mave alone that prompted the deed;
Not thine the fault, not thine the blame,
Take thou the victory and the fame.

CUCHULLIN.

My faithful heart is a clot of blood,
A feud thus forced cannot end in good;
Oh, woe to him who is here to be slain!
Oh, grief to him who his life will gain!
For feats of valour no strength have I
To fight the fight where my friend must die.

"A truce to these invectives," then broke in
Ferdiah; "we far other work this day
Have yet to do than rail with woman's words.
Say, what shall be our arms in this day's fight?"
"Till night," Cuchullin said, "the choice is thine,
For yester morn the choice was given to me."
"Let us," Ferdiah answered, "then resort
Unto our heavy, sharp, hard-smiting swords,

For we are nearer to the end to-day
Of this our fight, by hewing, than we were
On yesterday by thrusting of the spears."
"So let us do, indeed," Cuchullin said.
Then on their arms two long great shields they took,
And in their hands their sharp, hard-smiting swords.
Each hewed the other with such furious strokes
That pieces larger than an infant's head
Of four weeks' old were cut from out the thighs
And great broad shoulder-blades of each brave chief.
And thus they persevered from early morn
Till evening's close in hewing with the swords.
"Let us desist," at length Ferdiah said.
"Let us indeed desist, if the fit time
Hath come," Cuchullin said; and so they ceased.
From them they cast their arms into the hands
Of their two charioteers; and though that morn
Their meeting was of two high-spirited men,
Their separation, now that night had come,
Was of two men dispirited and sad.
Their horses were not in one field that night,
Their charioteers were warmed not at one fire.
That night they rested there, and in the morn
Ferdiah early rose and sought alone
The Ford of battle, for he knew that day
Would end the fight, and that the hour drew nigh
When one or both of them should surely fall.

Then was it for the first time he put on
His battle suit of battle and of fight,
Before Cuchullin came unto the Ford.
That battle suit of battle and of fight
Was this: His apron of white silk, with fringe
Of spangled gold around it, he put on
Next his white skin. A leather apron then,
Well sewn, upon his body's lower part
He placed, and over it a mighty stone
As large as any mill-stone was secured.
His firm, deep, iron apron then he braced
Over the mighty stone--an apron made
Of iron purified from every dross--
Such dread had he that day of the Gaebulg.
His crested helm of battle on his head
He last put on--a helmet all ablaze
From forty gems in each compartment set,
Cruan, and crystal, carbuncles of fire,
And brilliant rubies of the Eastern world.
In his right hand a mighty spear he seized,
Destructive, sharply-pointed, straight and strong--
On his left side his sword of battle swung,
Curved, with its hilt and pommel of red gold.
Upon the slope of his broad back he placed
His dazzling shield, around whose margin rose
Fifty huge bosses, each of such a size
That on it might a full-grown hog recline,
Exclusive of the larger central boss
That raised its prominent round of pure red gold.

Full many noble, varied, wondrous feats
Ferdiah on that day displayed, which he
Had never learned at any tutor's hand,
From Uatha, or from Aifé, or from her,
Scatha, his early nurse--in lonely Skye--
But which were all invented by himself
That day, to bring about Cuchullin's fall.

Cuchullin to the Ford approached and saw
The many noble, varied, wondrous feats
Ferdiah on that day displayed on high.
"O Laegh, my friend," Cuchullin thus addressed
His charioteer, "I see the wondrous feats
Ferdiah doth display on high to-day:
All these on me in turn shall soon be tried,
And therefore note, that if it so should chance
I shall be first to yield, be sure to taunt,
Excite, revile me, and reproach me so,
That wrath and rage in me may rise the more--
If I prevail, then let thy words be praise,
Laud me, congratulate me, do thy best
To stimulate my courage to its height."
"It shall be done, Cuchullin," Laegh replied.

Then was it that Cuchullin first assumed

His battle suit of battle: then he tried
Full many, various, noble, wondrous feats
He never learned from any tutor's hands,
From Uatha, or from Aifé, or from her,
Scatha, his early nurse in lonely Skye.
Ferdiah saw these various feats, and knew
Against himself they soon would be applied.

"Say, O Ferdiah, to what arms shall we
Resort in this day's fight?" Cuchullin said.
Ferdiah answered, "Unto thee belongs
The choice of weapons now until the night."
"Let us then try the Ford Feat on this day,"
Replied Cuchullin. "Let us then, indeed,"
Rejoined Ferdiah, with a careless air
Consenting, though in truth it was to him
The cause of grief to say so, since he knew
That in the Ford Feat lay Cuchullin's strength,
And that he never failed to overthrow
Champion or hero in that last appeal.

Great was the feat that was performed that day
In and beside the Ford: the mighty two,
The two great heroes, warriors, champions, chiefs
Of western Europe--the two open hands
Laden with gifts of the north-western world,--
The two beloved pillars that upheld
The valour of the Gaels--the two strong keys
That kept the bravery of the Gaels secure--
Thus to be brought together from afar
To fight each other through the meddling schemes
Of Ailill and his wily partner Mave.

From each to each the missive weapons flew
From dawn of early morning to mid-day;
And when mid-day had come, the ire of both
Became more furious, and they drew more near.
Then was it that Cuchullin made a spring
From the Ford's brink, and came upon the boss
Of the great shield Ferdiah's arm upheld,
That thus he might, above the broad shield's rim,
Strike at his head. Ferdiah with a touch
Of his left elbow, gave the shield a shake
And cast Cuchullin from him like a bird,
Back to the brink of the Ford. Again he sprang
From the Ford's brink, and came upon the boss
Of the great shield once more, to strike his head
Over the rim. Ferdiah with a stroke
Of his left knee made the great shield to ring,
And cast Cuchullin back upon the brink,
As if he only were a little child.

Laegh saw the act. "Alas! indeed," said Laegh,
"The warrior casts thee from him in the way
That an abandoned woman would her child.
He flings thee as a river flings its foam;
He grinds thee as a mill would grind fresh malt;
He fells thee as the axe does fell the oak;
He binds thee as the woodbine binds the tree;
He darts upon thee as a hawk doth dart
Upon small birds, so that from this hour forth
Until the end of time, thou hast no claim
Or title to be called a valorous man:
Thou little puny phantom form," said Laegh.

Then with the rapid motion of the wind,
The fleetness of a swallow on the wing,
The fierceness of a dragon, and the strength
Of a roused lion, once again up sprang
Cuchullin, high into the troubled air,
And lighted for the third time on the boss
Of the broad shield, to strike Ferdiah's head
Over the rim. The warrior shook the shield,
And cast Cuchullin mid-way in the Ford,
With such an easy effort that it seemed
As if he scarcely deigned to shake him off.

Then, as he lay, a strange distortion came
Upon Cuchullin; as a bladder swells
Inflated by the breath, to such a size
And fulness did he grow, that he became
A fearful, many-coloured, wondrous Tuaig--
Gigantic shape, as big as a man of the sea,
Or monstrous Fomor, so that now his form
In perfect height over Ferdiah stood.

So close the fight was now, that their heads met
Above, their feet below, their arms half-way
Over the rims and bosses of their shields:--
So close the fight was now, that from their rims
Unto their centres were their shields cut through,
And loosed was every rivet from its hold;
So close the fight was now, that their strong spears
Were turned and bent and shivered point and haft;
Such was the closeness of the fight they made
That the invisible and unearthly hosts
Of Spirits, Bocanachs and Bananachs,
And the wild wizard people of the glen
And of the air the demons, shrieked and screamed
From their broad shields' reverberating rim,
From their sword-hilts and their long-shafted spears:
Such was the closeness of the fight they made,
They forced the river from its natural course,
Out of its bed, so that it might have been
A couch whereon a king or queen might lie,
For not a drop of water it retained,
Except what came from the great tramp and splash
Of the two heroes fighting in its midst.
Such was the fierceness of the fight they waged,
That a wild fury seized upon the steeds
The Gaels had gathered with them; in affright
They burst their traces and their binding ropes,
Nay even their chains, and panting fled away.
The women, too, and youths, by equal fears
Inspired and scared, and all the varied crowd
Of followers and non-combatants who there
Were with the men of Erin, from the camp
South-westward broke away, and fled the Ford.

At the edge-feat of swords they were engaged
When this surprise occurred, and it was then
Ferdiah an unguarded moment found
Upon Cuchullin, and he struck him deep,
Plunging his straight-edged sword up to the hilt
Within his body, till his girdle filled
With blood, and all the Ford ran red with gore
From the brave battle-warrior's veins outshed.
This could Cuchullin now no longer bear
Because Ferdiah still the unguarded spot
Struck and re-struck with quick, strong, stubborn strokes;
And so he called aloud to Laegh, the son
Of Rianganabra, for the dread Gaebulg.
The manner of that fearful feat was this:
Adown the current was it sent, and caught
Between the toes: a single spear would make
The wound it made when entering, but once lodged
Within the body, thirty barbs outsprung,
So that it could not be withdrawn until
The body was cut open where it lay.
And when of the Gaebulg Ferdiah heard
The name, he made a downward stroke of his shield,
To guard his body. Then Cuchullin thrust
The unerring thorny spear straight o'er the rim,
And through the breast-plate of his coat of mail,
So that its farther half was seen beyond
His body, after passing through his heart.

Ferdiah gave an upward stroke of his shield,
His breast to cover, though it was "the relief
After the danger." Then the servant set
The dread Gaebulg adown the flowing stream;
Cuchullin caught it firmly 'twixt his toes,
And from his foot a fearful cast he threw
Upon Ferdiah with unerring aim.
Swift through the well-wrought iron apron guard
It passed, and through the stone which was as large
As a huge mill-stone, cracking it in three,
And so into his body, every part
Of which was filled with the expanding barbs
"That is enough: by that one blow I fall,"
Ferdiah said. "Indeed, I now may own
That I am sickly after thee this day,
Though it behoved not thee that I should fall
By stroke of thine;" and then these dying words
He added, tottering back upon the bank:

FERDIAH.

O Hound, so famed for deeds of valour doing,

'Twas not thy place my death to give to me;
Thine is the fault of my most certain ruin,
And yet 'tis best to have my blood on thee.

The wretch escapes not from his false position,
Who to the gap of his destruction goes;
Alas! my death-sick voice needs no physician,
My end hath come--my life's stream seaward flows.

The natural ramparts of my breast are broken,
In its own gore my struggling heart is drowned:--
Alas! I have not fought as I have spoken,
For thou hast killed me in the fight, O Hound!

Cuchullin towards him ran, and his two arms
Clasping about him, lifted him and bore
The body in its armour and its clothes
Across the Ford unto the northern bank,
In order that the slain should thus be placed
Upon the north bank of the Ford, and not
Among the men of Erin, on the west.
Cuchullin laid Ferdiah down, and then
A sudden trance, a faintness on him came
When bending o'er the body of his friend.
Laegh saw the weakness, which was seen as well
By all the men of Erin, who arose
Upon the moment to attack him there.
"Good, O Cuchullin," Laegh exclaimed, "arise,
For all the men of Erin hither come.
It is no single combat they will give,
Since fair Ferdiah, Dáman's son, the son
Of Daré, by thy hands has here been slain."
"O servant, what availeth me to rise,"
Cuchullin said, "since he hath fallen by me?"
And so the servant said, and so replied
Cuchullin, in his turn, unto the end;

LAEGH.

Arise, Emania's slaughter-hound, arise,
Exultant pride should be thy mood this day:--
Ferdiah of the hosts before thee lies--
Hard was the fight and dreadful was the fray.

CUCHULLIN.

Ah, what availeth me a hero's pride?
Madness and grief are in my heart and brain,
For the dear blood with which my hand is dyed--
For the dear body that I here have slain.

LAEGH.

It suits thee ill to shed these idle tears,
Fitter by far for thee a fiercer mood--
At thee he flung the flying pointed spears,
Malicious, wounding, dripping, dyed with blood.

CUCHULLIN.

Even though he left me crippled, maimed, and lame,
Even though I lost this arm that now but bleeds,
All would I bear, but now the fields of fame
No more shall see Ferdiah mount his steeds.

LAEGH.

More pleasing is the victory thou hast gained,
More pleasing to the women of Creeve Rue,
He to have died and thou to have remained,
To them the brave who fell here are too few.

From that black day in brilliant Mave's long reign
Thou camest out of Cuailgné it has been--
Her people slaughtered and her champions slain--
A time of desolation to the queen.

When thy great plundered flock was borne away,
Thou didst not lie with slumber-sealèd eyes,--
Then 'twas thy boast to rise before the day:--
Arise again, Emania's Hound, arise!

So Laegh addressed the hero, though he seemed

To hear him not, but mourned his friend the more.
And thus he spoke these words, and thus he moaned:

"Alas! Ferdiah, an unhappy chance
It was for thee that thou didst not consult
Some of the heroes who my prowess knew,
Before thou camest forth to meet me here,
In the hard battle combat by the Ford.
Unhappy was it that it was not Laegh,
The son of Riangabra, thou didst ask
About our fellow-pupilship--a bond
That might the unnatural combat so have stayed;
Unhappy was it that thou didst not ask
Honest advice from Fergus, son of Roy;
Or that it was not battle-winning, proud,
Exulting, ruddy Connall thou didst ask
About our fellow-pupilship of old.
For well do these men know there will not be
A being born among the Conacians who
Shall do the deeds of valour thou hast done
From this day forth until the end of time.
For if thou hadst consulted these brave men
About the places where the assemblies meet,
About the plightings and the broken vows
Uttered too oft by Connaught's fair-haired dames;
If thou hadst asked about the games and sports
Played with the targe and shield, the sword and spear,
If of backgammon or the moves of chess,
Or races with the chariots and the steeds,
They never would have found a champion's arm
As strong to pierce a hero's flesh as thine,
O rose-cloud hued Ferdiah! None to raise
The red-mouthed vulture's hoarse, inviting croak
Unto the many-coloured flocks, nor one
Who will for Croghan combat like to thee,
O red-cheeked son of Dáman!" Thus he said,
Then standing o'er Ferdiah he resumed:
"Oh! great has been the treachery and fraud
The men of Erin practised upon thee,
Ferdiah, thus to bring thee here to fight
With me, 'gainst whom it is no easy task
Upon the *Tain Bó Cuailgne* to contend."
And thus he said, and thus again he spake:

CUCHULLIN.

O my Ferdiah, O my friend, forgive:
'Tis not my hand but treachery lays thee low:--
Thou doomed to die and I condemned to live,
Both doomed for ever to be severed so!

When we were far away in our young prime,
With Scatha, dread Buánnan's chosen friend,
A vow we made, that till the end of time,
With hostile arms we never should contend.

Dear was thy lovely ruddiness to me,
Dear was thy gray-blue eye, so bright and clear,--
Thy comely, perfect form how sweet to see!
Thy wisdom and thy eloquence how dear!

In body-cutting combat, on the field
Of spears, when all is lost or all is won,
None braver ever yet held up a shield,
Than thou, Ferdiah, Dáman's ruddy son.

Never since Aifé's only son I slew,
Not knowing who the gallant youth might be,--
Ah! hapless deed, that still my heart doth rue!--
None have I found, Ferdiah, like to thee.

Thy dream it was to win fair Finavair,
From Mave her beauteous daughter's hand to gain;
As soon might'st thou in the wide fields of air
The glancing sunbeam's swift-winged flight restrain.

He paused awhile, still gazing on the dead,
Then to his charioteer he spoke: "Friend Laegh,
Strip now Ferdiah, take his armour off,
That I may see the golden brooch of Mave,
For which he undertook the fatal fight."
Laegh took the armour then from off his breast,
And then Cuchullin saw the golden pin

That cost so dear, and then these words he spake:

CUCHULLIN.

Alas! O brooch of gold!
O chief, whose fame each poet knows,
O hero of stout slaughtering blows,
Thy arm was brave and bold.

Thy yellow flowing hair,
Thy purple girdle's silken fold
Still even in death around thee rolled,--
Thy twisted jewel rare.

Thy noble beaming eyes,
Now closed in death, make mine grow dim,
Thy dazzling shield with golden rim,
Thy chess a king might prize.

Oh! piteous to behold,
My fellow-pupil falls by me:
It was an end that should not be,
Alas! O brooch of gold!

After another pause Cuchullin spoke:--
"O Laegh, my friend, open Ferdiah now,
And from his body the Gaebulg take out,
For I without my weapon cannot be."

Laegh then approached, and with a strong, sharp knife
Opened Ferdiah's body, and drew out
The dread Gaebulg. And when Cuchullin saw
His bloody weapon lying red beside
Ferdiah on the ground, again he thought
Of all their past career, and thus he said:

CUCHULLIN.

Sad is my fate that I should see thee lying,
Sad is the fate, Ferdiah, I deplore,--
I with my weapon which thy blood is dyeing,
Thou on the ground a mass of streaming gore.

When we were young, where Scatha's eye hath seen us
Fond fellow-pupils in her schools of Skye,
Never was heard the angry word between us,
Never was seen the angry spear to fly.

Scatha, with words of eloquent persuading,
Roused us in many a glorious feat to join;
"Go," she exclaimed, "each other bravely aiding,
Go forth to battle with the dread Germain."

I to Ferdiah said: "Oh, come, my brother,"
I to the ever-generous Luaigh said,
I to fair Baetan's son, and many another:
"Come, let us go and fight this foe so dread."

Crossing the sea in ships of peaceful traders,
All of us came to lone Lind Formairt's lake,
With us we brought four hundred brave invaders
Out of the islands of the Athisech.

I and Ferdiah were the first to enter,
Where he himself, the dread Germain, held rule,
Rind, Nial's son, I clove from head to centre,
Ruad I killed, the son of Finniule.

First on the shore, as swift our fleet ships flew there,
Bláth, son of Calba of red swords, was slain;
Struck by Ferdiah, Luaigh also slew there
Fierce rude Mugarne of the Torrian main.

Bravely we battled against that court enchanted,
Full four times fifty heroes fell by me:
He, by their savage onslaught nothing daunted,
Slew ox-like monsters clambering from the sea.

Wily Germain, amid so many slaughters,
We took alive as trophy of the field,
Him o'er the broad, bright sea of spangled waters
We bore to Scatha of the bright broad shield.

She, our famed tutoress, with kind endeavour,
Bound us from that day forth with heart and hand,
When met fair Elgga's tribes, that we should never
In hostile ranks before each other stand.

Oh, day of woe! oh, day without a morrow!
Oh, fatal Tuesday morning, when the bud
Of his young life was scattered! Oh! the sorrow,
To give the friend I loved a drink of blood!

Ah, if I saw thee among heroes lying
Dead on some glorious battlefield of Greece,
Soon would I follow thee, and proudly dying,
Sleep with my friend triumphant and at peace.

We, Scatha's pupils, ah, how sad the story!
Thou to be dead and I to be alive:
I to be wounded here, all gashed and gory,
Thou never more thy chariot's steeds to drive.

We, Scatha's pupils, ah! how sad the story;
Sad is the fate to which we both are led:
I to be wounded here, all gashed and gory,
And thou, alas! my friend, to lie here dead.

We, Scatha's pupils, ah, how sad the story!
Sad is the deed and sorrowful the wrong:
Thou to be dead without thy meed of glory,
And I, oh! shame, to be alive and strong!

Laegh interposed at length, and thus he said:
"Good, O Cuchullin, let us leave the Ford,
For long have we been here, by far too long."
"Let us then leave it now," Cuchullin said,
"O Laegh, my friend, but know that every fight
In which I hitherto have drawn my sword,
Has been but as a pastime and a sport
Compared with this one with Ferdiah fought."
And he was saying, and he spake these words:

CUCHULLIN.

Until Ferdiah sought the Ford,
I played but with the spear and sword:
Alike the teaching we received,
Alike were glad, alike were grieved,
Alike were we by Scatha's grace
Deemed worthy of the highest place.

Until Ferdiah sought the Ford,
I played but with the spear and sword:
Alike our habits and our ways,
Alike our prowess and our praise,
Alike the trophies of the brave,
The glittering shields that Scatha gave.

Until Ferdiah sought the Ford,
I played but with the spear and sword:
How dear to me, ah! who can know?
This golden pillar here laid low,
This mighty tree so strong and tall,
The chief, the champion of us all!

Until Ferdiah sought the Ford,
I played but with the spear and sword:
The lion rushing with a roar,
The wave that swallows up the shore,
When storm-winds blow and heaven is dim,
Could only be compared to him.

Until Ferdiah sought the Ford,
I played but with the spear and sword:
Through me the friend I loved is dead,
A cloud is ever on my head--
The mountain form, the giant frame,
Is now a shadow and a name.

The countless legions of the *Tain*,
Those hands of mine have turned and slain:
Their men and steeds before me died,
Their flocks and herds on either side,
Though numerous were the hosts that came
From Croghan's Rath of fatal fame.

Though less than half the foes I led,
Before me soon my foes lay dead:
Never to gory battle pressed,
Never was nursed on Bamba's breast,
Never from sons of kings there came
A hero of more glorious fame.[52]

²⁸ This poem is now published for the first time in its complete state.

²⁹ Autumn; strictly the last night in October. (See O'Curry's "Sick Bed of Cuchullin," *Atlantis*, i., p. 370).

³⁰ Culann was the name of Conor MacNessa's smith, and it was from him that Setanta derived the name of Cu-Chulainn, or Culann's Hound.

³¹ Iorrus Domnann, now Erris, in the county of Mayo. It derived its name ("Bay of the Domnanns," or "Deep-diggers,") from the party of the Firbolgs, so called, having settled there, under their chiefs Genann and Rudhraighe. (See "The Fate of the Children of Lir," by O'Curry, *Atlantis*, iv., p. 123; Dr. Reeve's "Adamnan's Life of St. Columba," note 6, p. 31; O'Flaherty's "Ogygia," p. 280; and Hardiman's "West Connaught," by O'Flaherty, published by the Irish Archæological Society.)

³² The name of Scatha, the Amazonian instructress of Ferdiah and Cuchullin, is still preserved in Dun Sciath, in the island of Skye, where great Cuchullin's name and glory yet linger. The Cuchullin Mountains, named after him, "those thunder-smitten, jagged, Cuchullin peaks of Skye," the grandest mountain range in Great Britain, attract to that remote island of the Hebrides many worshippers of the sublime and beautiful in nature, whose enjoyments would be largely enhanced if they knew the heroic legends which are connected with the glorious scenes they have travelled so far to witness. Cuchullin is one of the foremost characters in MacPherson's "Ossian," but the quasi-translator of Gaelic poems places him more than two centuries later than the period at which he really lived. (Lady Ferguson's "The Irish before the Conquest," pp. 57, 58.)

³³ For a description of this mysterious instrument, see Dr. Todd's "Additional Notes to the Irish version of Nennius," p. 12.

³⁴ On the use of mail armour by the ancient Irish, see Dr. O'Donovan's "Introduction and Notes to the Battle of Magh-Rath," edited for the Archæological Society.

³⁵ For an interesting account of this sovereign, so famous in Irish story, see O'Curry's "Lectures," pp. 33, 34. Her Father, according to the chronology of the "Four Masters," is supposed to have reigned as monarch of Erin about a century before the Christian era. "Of all the children of the monarch Eochaidh Fiedloch," says O'Donovan (cited in O'Mahony's translation of Keating's "History," p. 276) "by far the most celebrated was Meadbh or Mab, who is still remembered as the fairy queen of the Irish, the 'Queen Mab' of Spenser."

³⁶ "The belief that a *ferb* or ulcer could be produced," says Mr. Stokes, in his preface to 'Cormac's Glossary,' "forms the groundwork of the tale of Nède mac Adnae and his uncle, Caier." The names of the three blisters (Stain, Blemish, and Defect) are almost identical with those Ferdiah is threatened with in the present poem.

³⁷ A *cumal* was three cows, or their value. On the use of chariots, see "The Sick Bed of Cuchullin," *Atlantis*, i., p. 375.

³⁸ "The plains of Aie" (son of Allghuba the Druid), in Roscommon. Here stood the palace of Cruachain (O'Curry's "Lectures," p. 35; "Battle of Magh Leana," p. 61).

³⁹ "Fair-brow" (O'Curry, "Exile of the Children of Uisnech," *Atlantis*, ii., p. 386).

⁴⁰ Here in the original there is a sudden change from prose to verse. "It is generally supposed that these stories were recited by the ancient Irish poets for the amusement of their chieftains at their public feasts, and that the portions given in metre were sung" ("Battle of Magh Rath," p. 12). The prose portions of this tale are represented in the translation by blank verse, and the lyrical portions by rhymed verse.

⁴¹ "Ugainè Mor exacted oaths by the sun and moon, the sea, the dew, and colours . . . that the sovereignty of Erin should be invested in his descendants for ever" (*Ib.* p. 3).

⁴² The high dignity of Domnal may be inferred from the following lines, quoted from MacLenini, in the preface to "Cormac's Glossary," p. 51:—

"As blackbirds to swans, as an ounce to a mass of gold,
As the forms of peasant women to the forms of queens,
As a king to Domnal . . .
As a taper to a candle, so is a sword to *my* sword."

⁴³ She was the wife of Néd, the war-god. See O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," vol. i., p. 24.

⁴⁴ Etán is said to have been *muime na filed*, nurse of the poets ("Three Irish Glossaries," preface, p. 33).

⁴⁵ At Rathcroghan was the palace of the Kings of Connacht.

⁴⁶ A name of Ireland ("Battle of Magh Leana," p. 79).

⁴⁷ So the night before the battle of Magh Rath, "the monarch, grandson of Ainmire, slept not, in consequence of the weight of the battle and the anxiety of the conflict pressing on his mind; for he was certain that his own beloved foster-son would, on the morrow, meet his last fate."

⁴⁸ In the "Battle of Magh Leana" these mysterious beings are called "the Women of the Valley" (p. 120).

⁴⁹ For this line and for many valuable suggestions throughout the poem I am indebted to the deep poetical insight and correct judgment of my friend, Aubrey de Vere.

⁵⁰ "Derg Dian Scothach saw this order, and he put his forefinger into the string of the spear." "Fate of the Children of Tuireann," by O'Curry, *Atlantis*, iv., p. 233. See also "Battle of Magh Rath," pp. 140, 141, 152.

⁵¹ Bregia was the ancient name of the plain watered by the Boyne.

⁵² According to the marginal note of the learned editor, the last four lines appear to be a sort of epilogue, in which the poet extols the victor.

THE VOYAGE OF ST. BRENDAN.

A.D. 545.

[We are informed that Brendan, hearing of the previous voyage of his cousin, Barinthus, in the western ocean, and obtaining an account from him of the happy isles he had landed on in the far west, determined, under the strong desire of winning heathen souls to Christ, to undertake a voyage of discovery himself. And aware that all along the western coast of Ireland there were many traditions respecting the existence of a western land, he proceeded to the islands of Arran, and there remained for some time, holding communication with the venerable St. Enda, and obtaining from him much information relating to his voyage. Having prosecuted his inquiries with diligence, Brendan returned to his native Kerry; and from a bay sheltered by the lofty mountain that is now known by his name, he set sail for the Atlantic land; and, directing his course towards the south-west, in order to meet the summer solstice, or what we should call the tropic, after a long and rough voyage, his little bark being well provisioned, he came to summer seas, where he was carried along, without the aid of sail or oar, for many a long day. This, which it is to be presumed was the great gulf-stream, brought his vessel to shore somewhere about the Virginian capes, or where the American coast tends eastward, and forms the New England States. Here landing, he and his companions marched steadily into the interior for fifteen days, and then came to a large river, flowing from east to west: this, evidently, was the river Ohio. And this the holy adventurer was about to cross, when he was accosted by a person of noble presence—but whether a real or visionary man does not appear—who told him he had gone far enough; that further discoveries were reserved for other men, who would, in due time, come and Christianise all that pleasant land. It is said he remained seven years away, and returned to set up a college of three thousand monks, at Clonfert.—*Cæsar Otway's Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley*, note, pp. 98, 99.]

THE VOCATION.

[When St. Brendan was an infant, says Colgan, he was placed under the care of St. Ita, and remained with her five years, after which period he was led away by Bishop Ercus in order to receive from him the more solid instruction necessary for his advancing years. Brendan always retained the greatest respect and affection for his foster-mother, and he is represented, after his seven years' voyage, amusing St. Ita with an account of his adventures in the ocean.]

O Ita, mother of my heart and mind--
My nourisher, my fosterer, my friend,
Who taught me first to God's great will resigned,
Before his shining altar-steps to bend;
Who poured his word upon my soul like balm,
And on mine eyes what pious fancy paints--
And on mine ear the sweetly swelling psalm,
And all the sacred knowledge of the saints;

To whom but thee, dear mother, should be told
Of all the wonders I have seen afar?--
Islands more green and suns of brighter gold
Than this dear land or yonder blazing star;
Of hills that bear the fruit-trees on their tops,
And seas that dimple with eternal smiles;
Of airs from heaven that fan the golden crops,
O'er the great ocean 'mid the blessed isles!

Thou knowest, O my mother! how to thee
The blessed Ercus led me when a boy,
And how within thine arms and at thine knee,
I learned the lore that death cannot destroy;
And how I parted hence with bitter tears,
And felt, when turning from thy friendly door,
In the reality of ripening years,
My paradise of childhood was no more.

I wept--but not with sin such tear-drops flow;--
I sighed--for earthly things with heaven entwine;
Tears make the harvest of the heart to grow,
And love though human is almost divine.
The heart that loves not knows not how to pray;
The eye can never smile that never weeps:
'Tis through our sighs hope's kindling sunbeams play
And through our tears the bow of promise peeps.

I grew to manhood by the western wave,
Among the mighty mountains on the shore:
My bed the rock within some natural cave,
My food whate'er the seas or seasons bore:
My occupation, morn and noon and night:
The only dream my hasty slumbers gave,
Was Time's unheeding, unreturning flight,
And the great world that lies beyond the grave.

And thus, where'er I went, all things to me
Assumed the one deep colour of my mind;
Great nature's prayer rose from the murmuring sea,
And sinful man sighed in the wintry wind.
The thick-veiled clouds by shedding many a tear,
Like penitents, grew purified and bright,
And, bravely struggling through earth's atmosphere,
Passed to the regions of eternal light.

I loved to watch the clouds now dark and dun,
In long procession and funeral line,
Pass with slow pace across the glorious sun,
Like hooded monks before a dazzling shrine.
And now with gentler beauty as they rolled
Along the azure vault in gladsome May,
Gleaming pure white, and edged with broidered gold,
Like snowy vestments on the Virgin's day.

And then I saw the mighty sea expand
Like Time's unmeasured and unfathomed waves,
One with its tide-marks on the ridgy sand,
The other with its line of weedy graves;
And as beyond the outstretched wave of time,
The eye of Faith a brighter land may meet,
So did I dream of some more sunny clime
Beyond the waste of waters at my feet.

Some clime where man, unknowing and unknown,
For God's refreshing word still gasps and faints;
Or happier rather some Elysian zone,
Made for the habitation of his saints:
Where Nature's love the sweat of labour spares,
Nor turns to usury the wealth it lends,
Where the rich soil spontaneous harvest bears,
And the tall tree with milk-filled clusters bends.

The thought grew stronger with my growing days,
Even like to manhood's strengthening mind and limb,
And often now amid the purple haze
That evening breathed upon the horizon's rim--
Methought, as there I sought my wished-for home,
I could descry amid the waters green,
Full many a diamond shrine and golden dome,
And crystal palaces of dazzling sheen.

And then I longed, with impotent desire,
Even for the bow whereby the Python bled,
That I might send on dart of the living fire
Into that land, before the vision fled,
And thus at length fix the enchanted shore,
Hy-Brasail, Eden of the western wave!
That thou again wouldst fade away no more,
Buried and lost within thy azure grave.

But angels came and whispered as I dreamt,
"This is no phantom of a frenzied brain--
God shows this land from time to time to tempt
Some daring mariner across the main:
By thee the mighty venture must be made,
By thee shall myriad souls to Christ be won!
Arise, depart, and trust to God for aid!"
I woke, and kneeling, cried, "His will be done!"

Hearing how blessed Enda lived apart,
Amid the sacred caves of Ara-mhor,
And how beneath his eye, spread like a chart,
Lay all the isles of that remotest shore;
And how he had collected in his mind
All that was known to man of the Old Sea,[54]
I left the Hill of Miracles[55] behind,
And sailed from out the shallow, sandy Leigh.

Betwixt the Samphire Isles swam my light skiff,
And like an arrow flew through Fenor Sound,
Swept by the pleasant strand, and the tall cliff,
Whereon the pale rose amethysts are found.
Rounded Moyferta's rocky point, and crossed
The mouth of stream-streaked Erin's mightiest tide,
Whose troubled waves break o'er the City lost,
Chafed by the marble turrets that they hide.

Beneath Ibrickan's hills, moory and tame,
And Inniscaorach's caves, so wild and dark,
I sailed along. The white-faced otter came,
And gazed in wonder on my floating bark.
The soaring gannet, perched upon my mast,
And the proud bird, that flies but o'er the sea,
Wheeled o'er my head: and the girrinna passed
Upon the branch of some life-giving tree.[56]

Leaving the awful cliffs of Corcomroe,
I sought the rocky eastern isle, that bears
The name of blessed Coemhan, who doth show
Pity unto the storm-tossed seaman's prayers;
Then crossing Bealach-na-fearbach's treacherous sound,
I reached the middle isle, whose citadel
Looks like a monarch from its throne around;
And there I rested by St. Kennerg's well.

Again I sailed, and crossed the stormy sound
That lies beneath Binn-Aite's rocky height--
And there, upon the shore, the Saint I found
Waiting my coming though the tardy night.
He led me to his home beside the wave,
Where, with his monks, the pious father dwelled,
And to my listening ear he freely gave
The sacred knowledge that his bosom held.

When I proclaimed the project that I nursed,
How 'twas for this that I his blessing sought,
An irrepressible cry of joy outburst
From his pure lips, that blessed me for the thought.
He said that he, too, had in visions strayed
Over the untracked ocean's billowy foam;
Bid me have hope, that God would give me aid,
And bring me safe back to my native home.

Oft, as we paced that marble-covered land,
Would blessed Enda tell me wondrous tales--
How, for the children of his love, the hand
Of the Omnipotent Father never fails--
How his own sister,[57] standing by the side
Of the great sea, which bore no human bark,
Spread her light cloak upon the conscious tide,
And sailed thereon securely as an ark.

And how the winds become the willing slaves
Of those who labour in the work of God;
And how Scothinus walked upon the waves,
Which seemed to him the meadow's verdant sod.
How he himself came hither with his flock,
To teach the infidels from Corcomroe,
Upon the floating breast of the hard rock,
Which lay upon the glistening sands below.

But not alone of miracles and joys
Would Enda speak--he told me of his dream;
When blessed Kieran went to Clonmacnois,
To found the sacred churches by the stream--
How he did weep to see the angels flee
Away from Arran as a place accursed;
And men tear up the island-shading tree,
Out of the soil from which it sprung at first.

At length I tore me from the good man's sight,
And o'er Loch Lurgan's mouth[58] took my lone way,

Which, in the sunny morning's golden light,
Shone like the burning lake of Lassaræ;
Now 'neath heaven's frown--and now, beneath its smile--
Borne on the tide, or driven before the gale;
And, as I passed MacDara's sacred Isle,
Thrice bowed my mast, and thrice let down my sail.

Westward of Arran as I sailed away;
I saw the fairest sight eye can behold--
Rocks which, illumined by the morning's ray,
Seemed like a glorious city built of gold.
Men moved along each sunny shining street,
Fires seemed to blaze, and curling smoke to rise,
When lo! the city vanished, and a fleet,
With snowy sails, rose on my ravished eyes.

Thus having sought for knowledge and for strength,
For the unheard-of voyage that I planned,
I left these myriad isles, and turned at length
Southward my bark, and sought my native land.
There made I all things ready, day by day,
The wicker-boat, with ox-skins covered o'er--
Chose the good monks companions of my way,
And waited for the wind to leave the shore.

THE VOYAGE.

At length the long-expected morning came,
When from the opening arms of that wild bay,
Beneath the hill that bears my humble name,
Over the waves we took our untracked way;
Sweetly the morning lay on tarn and rill,
Gladly the waves played in its golden light,
And the proud top of the majestic hill
Shone in the azure air, serene and bright.

Over the sea we flew that sunny morn,
Not without natural tears and human sighs:
For who can leave the land where he was born,
And where, perchance, a buried mother lies;
Where all the friends of riper manhood dwell,
And where the playmates of his childhood sleep:
Who can depart, and breathe a cold farewell,
Nor let his eyes their honest tribute weep?

Our little bark, kissing the dimpled smiles
On ocean's cheek, flew like a wanton bird,
And then the land, with all its hundred isles,
Faded away, and yet we spoke no word.
Each silent tongue held converse with the past,
Each moistened eye looked round the circling wave,
And, save the spot where stood our trembling mast,
Saw all things hid within one mighty grave.

We were alone, on the wide watery waste--
Nought broke its bright monotony of blue,
Save where the breeze the flying billows chased,
Or where the clouds their purple shadows threw.
We were alone--the pilgrims of the sea--
One boundless azure desert round us spread;
No hope, no trust, no strength, except in THEE,
Father, who once the pilgrim-people led.

And when the bright-faced sun resigned his throne
Unto the Ethiop queen, who rules the night,
Who with her pearly crown and starry zone,
Fills the dark dome of heaven with silvery light;--
As on we sailed, beneath her milder sway,
And felt within our hearts her holier power,
We ceased from toil, and humbly knelt to pray,
And hailed with vesper hymns the tranquil hour!

For then, indeed, the vaulted heavens appeared
A fitting shrine to hear their Maker's praise,
Such as no human architect has reared,
Where gems, and gold, and precious marbles blaze.
What earthly temple such a roof can boast?--
What flickering lamp with the rich starlight vies,
When the round moon rests, like the sacred Host,
Upon the azure altar of the skies?

We breathed aloud the Christian's filial prayer,
Which makes us brothers even with the Lord;

Our Father, cried we, in the midnight air,
In heaven and earth be thy great name adored;
May thy bright kingdom, where the angels are,
Replace this fleeting world, so dark and dim.
And then, with eyes fixed on some glorious star,
We sang the Virgin-Mother's vesper hymn!

Hail, brightest star! that o'er life's troubled sea
Shines pitying down from heaven's elysian blue!
Mother and Maid, we fondly look to thee,
Fair gate of bliss, where heaven beams brightly through.
Star of the morning! guide our youthful days,
Shine on our infant steps in life's long race,
Star of the evening! with thy tranquil rays,
Gladden the aged eyes that seek thy face.

Hail, sacred Maid! thou brighter, better Eve,
Take from our eyes the blinding scales of sin;
Within our hearts no selfish poison leave,
For thou the heavenly antidote canst win.
O sacred Mother! 'tis to thee we run--
Poor children, from this world's oppressive strife;
Ask all we need from thy immortal Son,
Who drank of death, that we might taste of life.

Hail, spotless Virgin! mildest, meekest maid--
Hail! purest Pearl that time's great sea hath borne--
May our white souls, in purity arrayed,
Shine, as if they thy vestal robes had worn;
Make our hearts pure, as thou thyself art pure,
Make safe the rugged pathway of our lives,
And make us pass to joys that will endure
When the dark term of mortal life arrives.[59]

'Twas thus, in hymns, and prayers, and holy psalms,
Day tracking day, and night succeeding night,
Now driven by tempests, now delayed by calms,
Along the sea we winged our varied flight.
Oh! how we longed and pined for sight of land!
Oh! how we sighed for the green pleasant fields!
Compared with the cold waves, the barest strand--
The bleakest rock--a crop of comfort yields.

Sometimes, indeed, when the exhausted gale,
In search of rest, beneath the waves would flee,
Like some poor wretch who, when his strength doth fail,
Sinks in the smooth and unsupporting sea:
Then would the Brothers draw from memory's store
Some chapter of life's misery or bliss,
Some trial that some saintly spirit bore,
Or else some tale of passion, such as this:

THE BURIED CITY.

[The peasants who live near the mouth of the Shannon point to a part of the river within the headlands over which the tides rush with extraordinary rapidity and violence. They say it is the site of a lost city, long buried beneath the waves. —See Hall's "Ireland," vol. iii. p. 436.]

Beside that giant stream that foams and swells
Betwixt Hy-Conaill and Moyarta's shore,
And guards the isle where good Senanus dwells,
A gentle maiden dwelt in days of yore.
She long has passed out of Time's aching womb,
And breathes Eternity's favonian air;
Yet fond Tradition lingers o'er her tomb,
And paints her glorious features as they were:--

Her smile was Eden's pure and stainless light,
Which never cloud nor earthly vapour mars;
Her lustrous eyes were like the noon of night--
Black, but yet brightened by a thousand stars;
Her tender form, moulded in modest grace,
Shrank from the gazer's eye, and moved apart;
Heaven shone reflected in her angel face,
And God reposed within her virgin heart.

She dwelt in green Moyarta's pleasant land,
Beneath the graceful hills of Clonderlaw,--
Sweet sunny hills, whose triple summits stand,
One vast tiara over stream and shaw.
Almost in solitude the maiden grew,
And reached her early budding woman's prime;

And all so noiselessly the swift time flew,
She knew not of the name or flight of Time.

And thus, within her modest mountain nest,
This gentle maiden nestled like a dove,
Offering to God from her pure innocent breast
The sweet and silent incense of her love.
No selfish feeling nor presumptuous pride
In her calm bosom waged unnatural strife;
Saint of her home and hearth, she sanctified
The thousand trivial common cares of life.

Upon the opposite shore there dwelt a youth,
Whose nature's woof was woven of good and ill--
Whose stream of life flowed to the sea of truth,
But in a devious course, round many a hill--
Now lingering through a valley of delight,
Where sweet flowers bloomed, and summer songbirds sung,
Now hurled along the dark, tempestuous night,
With gloomy, treeless mountains overhung.

He sought the soul of Beauty throughout space,
Knowledge he tracked through many a vanished age:
For one he scanned fair Nature's radiant face,
And for the other, Learning's shrivelled page.
If Beauty sent some fair apostle down,
Or Knowledge some great teacher of her lore,
Bearing the wreath of rapture and the crown,
He knelt to love, to learn, and to adore.

Full many a time he spread his little sail,
How rough the river, or how dark the skies,
Gave his light corrach to the angry gale,
And crossed the stream to gaze on Ethna's eyes.
As yet 'twas worship, more than human love,
That hopeless adoration that we pay
Unto some glorious planet throned above,
Through severed from its crystal sphere for aye.

But warmer love an easy conquest won,
The more he came to green Moyarta's bowers;
Even as the earth, by gazing on the sun,
In summer-time puts forth her myriad flowers.
The yearnings of his heart--vague, undefined--
Wakened and solaced by ideal gleams,
Took everlasting shape, and intertwined
Around this incarnation of his dreams.

Some strange fatality restrained his tongue--
He spoke not of the love that filled his breast;
The thread of hope, on which his whole life hung,
Was far too weak to bear so strong a test.
He trusted to the future--time, or chance--
His constant homage and assiduous care;
Preferred to dream, and lengthen out his trance,
Rather than wake to knowledge and despair.

And thus she knew not, when the youth would look
Upon some pictured chronicle of eld,
In every blazoned letter of the book
One fairest face was all that he beheld:
And where the limner, with consummate art,
Drew flowing lines and quaint devices rare,
The wildered youth, by looking from the heart,
Saw nought but lustrous eyes and waving hair.

He soon was startled from his dreams, for now--
'Twas said, obedient to a heavenly call--
His life of life would take the vestal vow,
In one short month, within a convent's wall.
He heard the tidings with a sickening fear,
But quickly had the sudden faintness flown,
And vowed, though heaven or hell should interfere,
Ethna--his Ethna--should be his alone!

He sought his boat, and snatched the feathery oar--
It was the first and brightest morn of May:
The white-winged clouds, that sought the northern shore,
Seemed but Love's guides, to point him out the way.
The great old river heaved its mighty heart,
And, with a solemn sigh, went calmly on;
As if of all his griefs it felt a part,
But know they should be borne, and so had gone.

Slowly his boat the languid breeze obeyed,
Although the stream that that light burden bore
Was like the level path the angels made,
Through the rough sea, to Arran's blessed shore;
And from the rosy clouds the light airs fanned,
And from the rich reflection that they gave,
Like good Scotchus, had he reached his hand,
He might have plucked a garland from the wave.

And now the noon in purple splendour blazed,
The gorgeous clouds in slow procession filed;
The youth leaned o'er with listless eyes and gazed
Down through the waves on which the blue heavens smiled:
What sudden fear his gasping breath doth drown!
What hidden wonder fires his startled eyes!
Down in the deep, full many a fathom down,
A great and glorious city buried lies.

Not like those villages with rude-built walls,
That raise their humble roofs round every coast,
But holding marble basilics and halls,
Such as imperial Rome herself might boast.
There was the palace and the poor man's home,
And upstart glitter and old-fashioned gloom,
The spacious porch, the nicely rounded dome,
The hero's column, and the martyr's tomb.

There was the cromleach with its circling stones;
There the green rath and the round narrow tower;
There was the prison whence the captive's groans
Had many a time moaned in the midnight hour.
Beneath the graceful arch the river flowed,
Around the walls the sparkling waters ran,
The golden chariot rolled along the road--
All, all was there except the face of man.

The wondering youth had neither thought nor word,
He felt alone the power and will to die;
His little bark seemed like an outstretched bird,
Floating along that city's azure sky.
It joyed that youth the battle's storm to brave,
And yet he would have perished with affright,
Had not the breeze, rippling the lucid wave,
Concealed the buried city from his sight.

He reached the shore; the rumour was too true--
Ethna--his Ethna--would be God's alone
In one brief month; for which the maid withdrew,
To seek for strength before his blessed throne.
Was it the fire that on his bosom preyed,
Or the temptation of the Fiend abhorred,
That made him vow to snatch the white-veiled maid
Even from the very altar of her Lord?

The first of June, that festival of flowers,
Came, like a goddess, o'er the meadows green!
And all the children of the spring-tide showers
Rose from their grassy beds to hail their Queen.
A song of joy, a pæan of delight,
Rose from the myriad life in the tall grass,
When the young Dawn, fresh from the sleep of night,
Glanced at her blushing face in Ocean's glass.

Ethna awoke--a second--brighter dawn--
Her mother's fondling voice breathed in her ear;
Quick from her couch she started as a fawn
Bounds from the heather when her dam is near.
Each clasped the other in a long embrace--
Each knew the other's heart did beat and bleed--
Each kissed the warm tears from the other's face,
And gave the consolation she did need.

Oh! bitterest sacrifice the heart can make--
That of a mother of her darling child--
That of a child, who, for her Saviour's sake,
Leaves the fond face that o'er her cradle smiled.
They who may think that God doth never need
So great, so sad a sacrifice as this,
While they take glory in their easier creed,
Will feel and own the sacrifice it is.

All is prepared--the sisters in the choir--

The mitred abbot on his crimson throne--
The waxen tapers, with their pallid fire
Poured o'er the sacred cup and altar-stone--
The upturned eyes, glistening with pious tears--
The censer's fragrant vapour floating o'er;
Now all is hushed, for, lo! the maid appears,
Entering with solemn step the sacred door.

She moved as moves the moon, radiant and pale,
Through the calm night, wrapped in a silvery cloud;
The jewels of her dress shone through her veil,
As shine the stars through their thin vaporous shroud;
The brighter jewels of her eyes were hid
Beneath their smooth white caskets arching o'er,
Which, by the trembling of each ivory lid,
Seemed conscious of the treasures that they bore.

She reached the narrow porch and the tall door,
Her trembling foot upon the sill was placed--
Her snowy veil swept the smooth-sanded floor--
Her cold hands chilled the bosom they embraced.
Who is this youth, whose forehead, like a book,
Bears many a deep-traced character of pain?
Who looks for pardon as the damned may look--
That ever pray, and know they pray in vain.

'Tis he, the wretched youth--the Demon's prey;
One sudden bound, and he is at her side--
One piercing shriek, and she has swooned away,
Dim are her eyes, and cold her heart's warm tide.
Horror and terror seize the startled crowd;
The sinewy hands are nerveless with affright;
When, as the wind beareth a summer cloud,
The youth bears off the maiden from their sight.

Close to the place the stream rushed roaring by,
His little boat lay moored beneath the bank,
Hid from the shore, and from the gazer's eye,
By waving reeds and water-willows dank.
Hither, with flying feet and glowing brow,
He fled, as quick as fancies in a dream--
Placed the insensate maiden in the prow--
Pushed from the shore, and gained the open stream.

Scarce had he left the river's foamy edge,
When sudden darkness fell on hill and plain;
The angry sun, shocked at the sacrilege,
Fled from the heavens with all his golden train;
The stream rushed quicker, like a man afeared;
Down swept the storm and clove its breast of green,
And though the calm and brightness reappeared
The youth and maiden never more were seen.

Whether the current in its strong arms bore
Their bark to green Hy-Brasail's fairy halls,
Or whether, as is told along that shore,
They sunk within the buried city's walls;
Whether through some Elysian clime they stray,
Or o'er their whitened bones the river rolls;--
Whate'er their fate, my brothers, let us pray
To God for peace and pardon to their souls.

Such was the brother's tale of earthly love--
He ceased, and sadly bowed his reverend head:
For us, we wept, and raised our eyes above,
And sang the *De Profundis* for the dead.
A freshening breeze played on our moistened cheeks,
The far horizon oped its walls of light,
And lo! with purple hills and sun-bright peaks
A glorious isle gleamed on our gladdened sight,

THE PARADISE OF BIRDS.

"Post resurrectionis diem dominicæ navigabitis ad altam insulam ad occidentalem plagam, quæ vocatur PARADISUS AVIUM."—"Life of St. Brendan," in Capgrave, fol. 45.

It was the fairest and the sweetest scene--
The freshest, sunniest, smiling land that e'er
Held o'er the waves its arms of sheltering green
Unto the sea and storm-vexed mariner:--
No barren waste its gentle bosom scarred,
Nor suns that burn, nor breezes winged with ice,
Nor jagged rocks (Nature's grey ruins) marred

The perfect features of that Paradise.

The verdant turf spreads from the crystal marge
Of the clear stream, up the soft-swelling hill,
Rose-bearing shrubs and stately cedars large
All o'er the land the pleasant prospect fill.
Unnumbered birds their glorious colours fling
Among the boughs that rustle in the breeze,
As if the meadow-flowers had taken wing
And settled on the green o'er-arching trees.

Oh! Ita, Ita, 'tis a grievous wrong,
That man commits who uninspired presumes
To sing the heavenly sweetness of their song--
To paint the glorious tinting of their plumes--
Plumes bright as jewels that from diadems
Fling over golden thrones their diamond rays--
Bright, even as bright as those three mystic gems,
The angel bore thee in thy childhood's days.[60]

There dwells the bird that to the farther west
Bears the sweet message of the coming spring;[61]
June's blushing roses paint his prophet breast,
And summer skies gleam from his azure wing.
While winter prowls around the neighbouring seas,
The happy bird dwells in his cedar nest,
Then flies away, and leaves his favourite trees
Unto this brother of the graceful crest.[62]

Birds that with us are clothed in modest brown,
There wear a splendour words cannot express;
The sweet-voiced thrush beareth a golden crown,[63]
And even the sparrow boasts a scarlet dress.[64]
There partial nature fondles and illumines
The plainest offspring that her bosom bears;
The golden robin flies on fiery plumes,[65]
And the small wren a purple ruby wears.[66]

Birds, too, that even in our sunniest hours,
Ne'er to this cloudy land one moment stray,
Whose brilliant plumes, fleeting and fair as flowers,
Come with the flowers, and with the flowers decay.[67]
The Indian bird, with hundred eyes, that throws
From his blue neck the azure of the skies,
And his pale brother of the northern snows,
Bearing white plumes, mirrored with brilliant eyes.[68]

Oft in the sunny mornings have I seen
Bright-yellow birds, of a rich lemon hue,
Meeting in crowds upon the branches green,
And sweetly singing all the morning through.[69]
And others, with their heads greyish and dark,
Pressing their cinnamon cheeks to the old trees,
And striking on the hard, rough, shrivelled bark,
Like conscience on a bosom ill at ease.[70]

And diamond birds chirping their single notes,
Now 'mid the trumpet-flower's deep blossoms seen,
Now floating brightly on with fiery throats,
Small-winged emeralds of golden green;[71]
And other larger birds with orange cheeks,
A many-colour-painted chattering crowd,
Prattling for ever with their curved beaks,
And through the silent woods screaming aloud.[72]

Colour and form may be conveyed in words,
But words are weak to tell the heavenly strains
That from the throats of these celestial birds
Rang through the woods and o'er the echoing plains.
There was the meadow-lark, with voice as sweet,
But robed in richer raiment than our own;
And as the moon smiled on his green retreat,
The painted nightingale sang out alone.[73]

Words cannot echo music's winged note,
One bird alone exhausts their utmost power;
'Tis that strange bird whose many-voiced throat
Mocks all his brethren of the woodland bower;
To whom indeed the gift of tongues is given,
The musical rich tongues that fill the grove,
Now like the lark dropping his notes from heaven,
Now cooing the soft earth-notes of the dove.[74]

Oft have I seen him, scorning all control,
Winging his arrow flight rapid and strong,
As if in search of his vanished soul,
Lost in the gushing ecstasy of song;
And as I wandered on, and upward gazed,
Half lost in admiration, half in fear,
I left the brothers wondering and amazed,
Thinking that all the choir of heaven was near.

Was it a revelation or a dream?--

That these bright birds as angels once did dwell
In heaven with starry Lucifer supreme,
Half sinned with him, and with him partly fell;
That in this lesser paradise they stray.
Float through its air, and glide its streams along,
And that the strains they sing each happy day
Rise up to God like morn and even song.[75]

THE PROMISED LAND.

[The earlier stanzas of this description of Paradise are principally founded upon the Anglo-Saxon version of the poem *De Phenice*, ascribed to Lactantius, and which is at least as old as the earlier part of the eleventh century.]

As on this world the young man turns his eyes,
When forced to try the dark sea of the grave,
Thus did we gaze upon that Paradise,
Fading, as we were borne across the wave.
And, as a brighter world dawns by degrees
Upon Eternity's serenest strand,
Thus, having passed through dark and gloomy seas,
At length we reached the long-sought Promised Land.

The wind had died upon the Ocean's breast,
When, like a silvery vein through the dark ore,
A smooth bright current, gliding to the west,
Bore our light bark to that enchanted shore.
It was a lovely plain--spacious and fair,
And bless'd with all delights that earth can hold,
Celestial odours filled the fragrant air
That breathed around that green and pleasant wold.

There may not rage of frost, nor snow, nor rain,
Injure the smallest and most delicate flower,
Nor fall of hail wound the fair, healthful plain,
Nor the warm weather, nor the winter's shower.
That noble land is all with blossoms flowered,
Shed by the summer breezes as they pass;
Less leaves than blossoms on the trees are showered,
And flowers grow thicker in the fields than grass.

Nor hills, nor mountains, there stand high and steep,
Nor stony cliffs tower o'er the frightened waves,
Nor hollow dells, where stagnant waters sleep,
Nor hilly risings, nor dark mountain caves;
Nothing deformed upon its bosom lies,
Nor on its level breast rests aught unsmooth,
But the noble field flourishes 'neath the skies,
Blooming for ever in perpetual youth.

That glorious land stands higher o'er the sea,
By twelve-fold fathom measure, than we deem
The highest hills beneath the heavens to be.
There the bower glitters, and the green woods gleam.
All o'er that pleasant plain, calm and serene,
The fruits ne'er fall, but, hung by God's own hand,
Cling to the trees that stand for ever green,
Obedient to their Maker's first command.

Summer and winter are the woods the same,
Hung with bright fruits and leaves that never fade;
Such will they be, beyond the reach of flame,
Till Heaven, and Earth, and Time, shall have decayed.
Here might Iduna in her fond pursuit,
As fabled by the northern sea-born men,
Gather her golden and immortal fruit,
That brings their youth back to the gods again.

Of old, when God, to punish sinful pride,
Sent round the deluged world the ocean flood,
When all the earth lay 'neath the vengeful tide,
This glorious land above the waters stood.
Such shall it be at last, even as at first,
Until the coming of the final doom,

When the dark chambers--men's death homes shall burst,
And man shall rise to judgment from the tomb.

There there is never enmity, nor rage,
Nor poisoned calumny, nor envy's breath,
Nor shivering poverty, nor decrepit age,
Nor loss of vigour, nor the narrow death;
Nor idiot laughter, nor the tears men weep,
Nor painful exile from one's native soil,
Nor sin, nor pain, nor weariness, nor sleep,
Nor lust of riches, nor the poor man's toil.

There never falls the rain-cloud as with us,
Nor gapes the earth with the dry summer's thirst,
But liquid streams, wondrously curious,
Out of the ground with fresh fair bubbling burst.
Sea-cold and bright the pleasant waters glide
Over the soil, and through the shady bowers;
Flowers fling their coloured radiance o'er the tide,
And the bright streams their crystal o'er the flowers.

Such was the land for man's enjoyment made,
When from this troubled life his soul doth wend:
Such was the land through which entranced we strayed,
For fifteen days, nor reached its bound nor end.
Onward we wandered in a blissful dream,
Nor thought of food, nor needed earthly rest;
Until, at length, we reached a mighty stream,
Whose broad bright waves flowed from the east to west.

We were about to cross its placid tide,
When, lo! an angel on our vision broke,
Clothed in white, upon the further side
He stood majestic, and thus sweetly spoke:
"Father, return, thy mission now is o'er;
God, who did call thee here, now bids thee go,
Return in peace unto thy native shore,
And tell the mighty secrets thou dost know.

"In after years, in God's own fitting time,
This pleasant land again shall re-appear;
And other men shall preach the truths sublime,
To the benighted people dwelling here.
But ere that hour this land shall all be made,
For mortal man, a fitting, natural home,
Then shall the giant mountain fling its shade,
And the strong rock stem the white torrent's foam.

"Seek thy own isle--Christ's newly-bought domain,
Which Nature with an emerald pencil paints:
Such as it is, long, long shall it remain,
The school of Truth, the College of the Saints,
The student's bower, the hermit's calm retreat,
The stranger's home, the hospitable hearth,
The shrine to which shall wander pilgrim feet
From all the neighbouring nations of the earth.

"But in the end upon that land shall fall
A bitter scourge, a lasting flood of tears,
When ruthless tyranny shall level all
The pious trophies of its early years:
Then shall this land prove thy poor country's friend,
And shine a second Eden in the west;
Then shall this shore its friendly arms extend,
And clasp the outcast exile to its breast."

He ceased and vanished from our dazzled sight,
While harps and sacred hymns rang sweetly o'er
For us again we winged our homeward flight
O'er the great ocean to our native shore;
And as a proof of God's protecting hand,
And of the wondrous tidings that we bear,
The fragrant perfume of that heavenly land
Clings to the very garments that we wear.[76]

⁵³ So called from the number of holy men and women formerly inhabiting it.

⁵⁴ The Atlantic was so named by the ancient Irish.

⁵⁵ Ardfert.

⁵⁶ The puffin (*Anas leucopsis*), called in Irish *girrinnna*. It was the popular belief that these birds grew out of driftwood.

57 St. Fanchea.

58 Galway Bay.

59 These stanzas are a paraphrase of the hymn "Ave Maris Stella."

60 An angel was said to have presented her with three precious stones, which, he explained, were emblematic of the Blessed Trinity, by whom she would be always visited and protected.

61 The blue bird.

62 The cedar bird.

63 The golden-crowned thrush.

64 The scarlet sparrow or tanager.

65 The Baltimore oriole or fire-bird.

66 The ruby-crowned wren.

67 Peacocks.

68 The white peacock.

69 The yellow bird or goldfinch.

70 The gold-winged woodpecker.

71 Humming birds.

72 The Carolina parrot.

73 The grosbeak or red bird, sometimes called the Virginia nightingale.

74 The mocking-bird.

75 See the "Lyfe of Saynt Brandon" in the Golden Legend, published by Wynkyn de Worde, 1483; fol. 357.

76 "Nonne cognoscitis in odore vestimentorum nostrorum quod in Paradiso Domini fuimus."—*Colgan*.

THE FORAY OF CON O'DONNELL.

A.D. 1495.

[Con, the son of Hugh Roe O'Donnell, with his small-powerful force,—and the reason Con's force was called the small-powerful force was, because he was always in the habit of mustering a force which did not exceed twelve score of well-equipped and experienced battle-axe-men, and sixty chosen active horsemen, fit for battle,—marched with the forementioned force to the residence of MacJohn of the Glynnes (in the county of Antrim); for Con had been informed that MacJohn had in possession the finest woman, steed, and hound, of any other person in his neighbourhood. He sent a messenger for the steed before that time, and was refused, although Con had, at the same time, promised it to one of his own people. Con did not delay, and got over every difficult pass with his small-powerful force, without battle or obstruction, until he arrived in the night at the house of MacJohn, whom he, in the first place, took prisoner, and his wife, steed, and hound, and all his property, were under Con's control, for he found the same steed, with sixteen others, in the town on that occasion. All the Glynnes were plundered on the following day by Con's people, but he afterwards, however, made perfect restitution of all property, to whomsoever it belonged, to MacJohn's wife, and he set her husband free to her after he had passed the Bann westward. He brought with him the steed and great booty and spoils, into Tirhugh, and ordered the cattle-prey to be let out on the pasturage.—*Annals of the Four Masters*, translated by Owen Connellan, Esq., p. 331-2. This poem, founded upon the foregoing passage (and in which the hero acts with more generosity than the Annals warrant) was written and published in the Dublin University Magazine before the appearance of Mr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland,"—the magnificent work published in 1848 by Messrs. Hodges and Smith, of this city. For Mr. O'Donovan's version of this passage, which differs from that of the former translator in two or three important particulars, see the second volume of his work, p. 1219. The principal castle of the O'Donnell's was at Donegal. The building, of which some portions still exist, was erected in the twelfth century. The banqueting-hall, which is the scene of the opening portion of this ballad, is still preserved, and commands some beautiful views.]

The evening shadows sweetly fall
Along the hills of Donegal,
Sweetly the rising moonbeams play
Along the shores of Inver Bay,[77]
As smooth and white Lough Eask[78] expands
As Rosapenna's[79] silvery sands,

And quiet reigns all o'er thy fields,
Clan Dalaigh[80] of the golden shields.

The fairy gun[81] is heard no more
To boom within the cavern'd shore,
With smoother roll the torrents flow
Adown the rocks of Assaroe;[82]
Securely, till the coming day,
The red deer couch in far Glenvay,
And all is peace and calm around
O'Donnell's castled moat and mound.

But in the hall there feast to-night
Full many a kern and many a knight,
And gentle dames, and clansmen strong,
And wandering bards, with store of song:
The board is piled with smoking kine,
And smooth bright cups of Spanish wine,
And fish and fowl from stream and shaw,
And fragrant mead and usquebaugh.

The chief is at the table's head--
'Tis Con, the son of Hugh the Red--
The heir of Conal Golban's line;[83]
With pleasure flushed, with pride and wine,
He cries, "Our dames adjudge it wrong,
To end our feast without the song;
Have we no bard the strain to raise?
No foe to taunt, no maid to praise?"

"Where beauty dwells the bard should dwell,
What sweet lips speak the bard should tell;
'Tis he should look for starry eyes,
And tell love's watchers where they rise:
To-night, if lips and eyes could do,
Bards were not wanting in Tirhugh;
For where have lips a rosier light,
And where are eyes more starry bright?"

Then young hearts beat along the board,
To praise the maid that each adored,
And lips as young would fain disclose
The love within; but one arose,
Gray as the rocks beside the main,--
Gray as the mist upon the plain,--
A thoughtful, wandering, minstrel man,
And thus the aged bard began:--

"O Con, benevolent hand of peace!
O tower of valour firm and true!
Like mountain fawns, like snowy fleece,
Move the sweet maidens of Tirhugh.
Yet though through all thy realm I've strayed,
Where green hills rise and white waves fall,
I have not seen so fair a maid
As once I saw by Cushendall.[84]

"O Con, thou hospitable Prince!
Thou, of the open heart and hand,
Full oft I've seen the crimson tints
Of evening on the western land.
I've wandered north, I've wandered south,
Throughout Tirhugh in hut and hall,
But never saw so sweet a mouth
As whispered love by Cushendall.

"O Con, munificent gifts!
I've seen the full round harvest moon
Gleam through the shadowy autumn drifts
Upon thy royal rock of Doune.[85]
I've seen the stars that glittering lie
O'er all the night's dark mourning pall,
But never saw so bright an eye
As lit the glens of Cushendall.

"I've wandered with a pleasant toil,
And still I wander in my dreams;
Even from the white-stoned beach, Loch Foyle,
To Desmond of the flowing streams.
I've crossed the fair green plains of Meath,
To Dublin, held in Saxon thrall;
But never saw such pearly teeth,
As her's that smiled by Cushendall.

"O Con! thou'rt rich in yellow gold,
Thy fields are filled with lowing kine,
Within they castles wealth untold,
Within thy harbours fleets of wine;
But yield not, Con, to worldly pride
Thou may'st be rich, but hast not all;
Far richer he who for his bride
Has won fair Anne of Cushendall.

"She leans upon a husband's arm,
Surrounded by a valiant clan,
In Antrim's Glynnnes, by fair Glenarm,
Beyond the pearly-paven Bann;
'Mid hazel woods no stately tree
Looks up to heaven more graceful-tall,
When summer clothes its boughs, than she,
MacDonnell's wife of Cushendall!"

The bard retires amid the throng,
No sweet applause rewards his song,
No friendly lip that guerdon breathes,
To bard more sweet than golden wreaths.
It might have been the minstrel's art
Had lost the power to move the heart,
It might have been his harp had grown
Too old to yield its wonted tone.

But no, if hearts were cold and hard,
'Twas not the fault of harp or bard;
It was no false or broken sound
That failed to move the clansmen round.
Not these the men, nor these the times,
To nicely weigh the worth of rhymes;
'Twas what he said that made them chill,
And not his singing well or ill.

Already had the stranger band
Of Saxons swept the weakened land,
Already on the neighbouring hills
They named anew a thousand rills,
"Our fairest castles," pondered Con,
"Already to the foe are gone,
Our noblest forests feed the flame,
And now we lose our fairest dame."

But though his cheek was white with rage,
He seemed to smile, and cried--"O Sage!
O honey-spoken bard of truth!
MacDonnell is a valiant youth.
We long have been the Saxon's prey--
Why not the Scot as well as they?
He's of as good a robber line
As any a Burke or Geraldine.

"From Insi Gall,[86] so speaketh fame,
From Insi Gall his people came;
From Insi Gall, where storm winds roar
Beyond the gray Albin's icy shore.
His grandsire and his grandsire's son,
Full soon fat herds and pastures won;
But, by Columba! were we men,
We'd send the whole brood back again!

"Oh! had we iron hands to dare,
As we have waxen hearts to bear,
Oh! had we manly blood to shed,
Or even to tinge our cheeks with red,
No bard could say as you have said,
One of the race of Somerled--
A base intruder from the Isles--
Basks in our island's sunniest smiles!

"But, not to mar our feast to-night
With what to-morrow's sword may right,
O Bard of many songs! again
Awake thy sweet harp's silvery strain.
If beauty decks with peerless charm
MacDonnell's wife in fair Glenarm,
Say does there bound in Antrim's meads
A steed to match O'Donnell's steeds?"

Submissive doth the bard incline

His reverend head, and cries, "O Con,
Thou heir of Conal Golban's line,
I've sang the fair wife of MacJohn;
You'll frown again as late you frowned,
But truth will out when lips are freed;
There's not a steed on Irish ground
To stand beside MacDonnell's steed!

"Thy horses o'er Eargals' plains,
Like meteors stars their red eyes gleam;
With silver hoofs and broidered reins,
They mount the hill and swim the stream;
But like the wind through Barnesmore,
Or white-maned wave through Carrig-Rede,[87]
Or like a sea-bird to the shore,
Thus swiftly sweeps MacDonnell's steed!

"A thousand graceful steeds had Fin,
Within lost Almhaim's fairy hall,
A thousand steeds as sleek of skin
As ever graced a chieftain's stall.
With gilded bridles oft they flew,
Young eagles in their lightning speed,
Strong as the cataract of Hugh,[88]
So swift and strong MacDonnell's steed!"

Without the hearty word of praise,
Without the kindly smiling gaze,
Without the friendly hand to greet,
The daring bard resumes his seat.
Even in the hospitable face
Of Con, the anger you could trace.
But generous Con his wrath suppressed,
For Owen was Clan Dalaigh's guest.

"Now, by Columba!" Con exclaimed,
"Methinks this Scot should be ashamed
To snatch at once, in sateless greed,
The fairest maid and finest steed;
My realm is dwindled in mine eyes,
I know not what to praise or prize,
And even my noble dog, O Bard,
Now seems unworthy my regard!"

"When comes the raven of the sea
To nestle on an alien strand,
Oh! ever, ever will he be
The master of the subject land.
The fairest dame, he holdeth *her*--
For him the noblest steed doth bound--;
Your dog is but a household cur,
Compared to John MacDonnell's hound!

"As fly the shadows o'er the grass,
He flies with step as light and sure,
He hunts the wolf through Trosstan pass,
And starts the deer by Lisànoure!
The music of the Sabbath bells,
O Con, has not a sweeter sound
Than when along the valley swells
The cry of John MacDonnell's hound.

"His stature tall, his body long,
His back like night, his breast like snow,
His fore-leg pillar-like and strong,
His hind-leg like a bended bow;
Rough, curling hair, head long and thin,
His ear a leaf so small and round:
Not Bran, the favourite hound of Fin,
Could rival John MacDonnell's hound.

"O Con! thy bard will sing no more,
There is a fearful time at hand;
The Scot is on the northern shore,
The Saxon in the eastern land;
The hour comes on with quicker flight,
When all who live on Irish ground
Must render to the stranger's might
Both maid and wife, and steed and hound!"

The trembling bard again retires,
But now he lights a thousand fires;
The pent-up flame bursts out at length,

In all its burning, tameless strength.
You'd think each clansman's foe was by,
So sternly flashed each angry eye;
You'd think 'twas in the battle's clang
O'Donnell's thundering accents rang!

"No! by my sainted kinsman,[89] no!
This foul disgrace must not be so;
No, by the Shrines of Hy, I've sworn,
This foulest wrong must not be borne.
A better steed!--a fairer wife!
Was ever truer cause of strife?
A swifter hound!--a better steed!
Columba! these are cause indeed!"

Again, like spray from mountain rill,
Up started Con: "By Collum Kille,
And by the blessed light of day,
This matter brooketh no delay.
The moon is down, the morn is up,
Come, kinsmen, drain a parting cup,
And swear to hold our next carouse,
With John MacJohn MacDonnell's spouse!

"We've heard the song the bard has sung,
And as a healing herb among
Most poisonous weeds may oft be found,
So of this woman, steed, and hound;
The song has burned into our hearts,
And yet a lesson it imparts,
Had we but sense to read aright
The galling words we heard to-night.

"What lesson does the good hound teach?
Oh, to be faithful each to each!
What lesson gives the noble steed?
Oh! to be swift in thought and deed!
What lesson gives the peerless wife?
Oh! there is victory after strife;
Sweet is the triumph, rich the spoil,
Pleasant the slumber after toil!"

They drain the cup, they leave the hall,
They seek the armoury and stall,
The shield re-echoing to the spear
Proclaims the foray far and near;
And soon around the castles gate
Full sixty steeds impatient wait,
And every steed a knight upon,
The strong, small-powerful force of Con!

Their lances in the red dawn flash,
As down by Easky's side they dash;
Their quilted jackets shine the more,
From gilded leather broidered o'er;
With silver spurs, and silken rein,
And costly riding-shoes from Spain;
Ah! much thou hast to fear, MacJohn,
The strong, small-powerful force of Con!

As borne upon autumnal gales,
Wild whirring gannets pierce the sails
Of barks that sweep by Arran's shore,[90]
Thus swept the train through Barnesmore.
Through many a varied scene they ran,
By Castle Fin, and fair Strabane,
By many a hill, and many a clan,
Across the Foyle and o'er the Bann:--

Then stopping in their eagle flight,
They waited for the coming night,
And then, as Antrim's rivers rush
Straight from their founts with sudden gush,
Nor turn their strong, brief streams aside,
Until the sea receives their tide;
Thus rushed upon the doomed MacJohn
The swift, small-powerful force of Con.

They took the castle by surprise,
No star was in the angry skies,
The moon lay dead within her shroud
Of thickly-folded ashen cloud;
They found the steed within his stall,

The hound within the oaken hall,
The peerless wife of thousand charms,
Within her slumbering husband's arms:

The bard had pictured to the life
The beauty of MacDonnell's wife;
Not Eivir[91] could with her compare
For snowy hand and shining hair;
The glorious banner morn unfurls
Were dark beside her golden curls;
And yet the blackness of her eye
Was darker than the moonless sky!

If lovers listen to my lay,
Description is but thrown away;
If lovers read this antique tale,
What need I speak of red or pale?
The fairest form and brightest eye
Are simply those for which they sigh;
The truest picture is but faint
To what a lover's heart can paint.

Well, she was fair, and Con was bold,
But in the strange, wild days of old;
To one rough hand was oft decreed
The noblest and the blackest deed.
'Twas pride that spurred O'Donnell on,
But still a generous heart had Con;
He wished to show that he was strong,
And not to do a bootless wrong.

But now there's neither thought nor time
For generous act or bootless crime;
For other cares the thoughts demand
Of the small-powerful victor band.
They tramp along the old oak floors,
They burst the strong-bound chamber doors;
In all the pride of lawless power,
Some seek the vault, and some the tower.

And some from out the postern pass,
And find upon the dew-wet grass
Full many a head of dappled deer,
And many a full-ey'd brown-back'd steer,
And heifers of the fragrant skins,
The pride of Antrim's grassy glynns,
Which with their spears they drive along,
A numerous, startled, bellowing throng.

They leave the castle stripped and bare,
Each has his labour, each his share;
For some have cups, and some have plate,
And some have scarlet cloaks of state,
And some have wine, and some have ale,
And some have coats of iron mail,
And some have helms, and some have spears,
And all have lowing cows and steers!

Away! away! the morning breaks
O'er Antrim's hundred hills and lakes;
Away! away! the dawn begins
To gild gray Antrim's deepest glynns;
The rosy steeds of morning stop,
As if to gaze on Collin top;
Ere they have left it bare and gray,
O'Donnell must be far away!

The chieftain on a raven steed,
Himself the peerless dame doth lead,
Now like a pallid, icy corse,
And lifts her on her husband's horse;
His left hand holds his captive's rein,
His right is on the black steed's mane,
And from the bridle to the ground
Hangs the long leash that binds the hound.

And thus before his victor clan,
Rides Con O'Donnell in the van;
Upon his left the drooping dame,
Upon his right, in wrath and shame,
With one hand free and one hand tied,
And eyes firm fixed upon his bride,
Vowing dread vengeance yet on Con,

Rides scowling, silent, stern MacJohn.

They move with steps as swift as still,
'Twixt Collin mount and Slemish hill,
They glide along the misty plain,
And ford the sullen muttering Maine;
Some drive the cattle o'er the hills,
And some along the dried-up rills;
But still a strong force doth surround
The chiefs, the dame, the steed, and hound.

Thus ere the bright-faced day arose,
The Bann lay broad between the foes.
But how to paint the inward scorn,
The self-reproach of those that morn,
Who waking found their chieftain gone,
The cattle swept from field and bawn,
The chieftain's castle stormed and drained,
And, worse than all, their honour stained!

But when the women heard that Anne,
The queen, the glory of the clan
Was carried off by midnight foes,
Heavens! such despairing screams arose,
Such shrieks of agony and fright,
As only can be heard at night,
When Clough-i-Stookan's mystic rock
The wail of drowning men doth mock.[92]

But thirty steeds are in the town,
And some are like the ripe heath, brown,
Some like the alder-berries, black,
Some like the vessel's foamy track;
But be they black, or brown, or white,
They are as swift as fawns in flight,
No quicker speed the sea gull hath
When sailing through the Gray Man's Path.[93]

Soon are they saddled, soon they stand,
Ready to own the rider's hand,
Ready to dash with loosened rein
Up the steep hill, and o'er the plain;
Ready, without the prick of spurs,
To strike the gold cups from the furze:
And now they start with winged pace,
God speed them in their noble chase!

By this time, on Ben Bradagh's height,
Brave Con had rested in his flight,
Beneath him, in the horizon's blue,
Lay his own valleys of Tirhugh.
It may have been the thought of home,
While resting on that mossy dome,
It may have been his native trees
That woke his mind to thoughts like these.

"The race is o'er, the spoil is won,
And yet what boots it all I've done?
What boots it to have snatched away
This steed, and hound, and cattle-prey?
What boots it, with an iron hand
To tear a chieftain from his land,
And dim that sweetest light that lies
In a fond wife's adoring eyes?

"If thus I madly teach my clan,
What can I hope from beast or man?
Fidelity a crime is found,
Or else why chain this faithful hound?
Obedience, too, a crime must be,
Or else this steed were roaming free;
And woman's love the worst of sins,
Or Anne were queen of Antrim's Glynnnes!

"If, when I reach my home to-night,
I see the yellow moonbeam's light
Gleam through the broken gate and wall
Of my strong fort of Donegal;
If I behold my kinsmen slain,
My barns devoid of golden grain,
How can I curse the pirate crew
For doing what this hour I do?

"Well, in Columba's blessed name,
This day shall be a day of fame,--
A day when Con in victory's hour
Gave up the untasted sweets of power;
Gave up the fairest dame on earth,
The noblest steed that e'er wore girth,
The noblest hound of Irish breed,
And all to do a generous deed."

He turned and loosed MacDonnell's hand,
And led him where his steed doth stand;
He placed the bride of peerless charms
Within his longing, outstretched arms;
He freed the hound from chain and band,
Which, leaping, licked his master's hand;
And thus, while wonder held the crowd,
The generous chieftain spoke aloud:--

"MacJohn, I heard in wrathful hour
That thou in Antrim's glynnes possessed
The fairest pearl, the sweetest flower
That ever bloomed on Erin's breast.
I burned to think such prize should fall
To any Scotch or Saxon man,
But find that Nature makes us all
The children of one world-spread clan.

"Within thy arms thou now dost hold
A treasure of more worth and cost
Than all the thrones and crowns of gold
That valour ever won or lost;
Thine is that outward perfect form,
Thine, too, the subtler inner life,
The love that doth that bright shape warm:
Take back, MacJohn, thy peerless wife!"

"They praised thy steed. With wrath and grief
I felt my heart within me bleed,
That any but an Irish chief
Should press the back of such a steed;
I might to yonder smiling land
The noble beast reluctant lead;
But, no!--he'd miss thy guiding hand--
Take back, MacJohn, thy noble steed.

"The praises of thy matchless hound,
Burned in my breast like acrid wine;
I swore no chief on Irish ground
Should own a nobler hound than mine;
'Twas rashly sworn, and must not be,
He'd pine to hear the well-known sound,
With which thou call'st him to thy knee,
Take back, MacJohn, thy matchless hound.

"MacJohn, I stretch to yours and you
This hand beneath God's blessed sun,
And for the wrong that I might do
Forgive the wrong that I have done;
To-morrow all that we have ta'en
Shall doubly, trebly be restored:
The cattle to the grassy plain,
The goblets to the oaken board.

"My people from our richest meads
Shall drive the best our broad lands hold
For every steed a hundred steeds,
For every steer a hundred-fold;
For every scarlet cloak of state
A hundred cloaks all stiff with gold;
And may we be with hearts elate
Still older friends as we grow old.

"Thou'st bravely won an Irish bride--
An Irish bride of grace and worth--
Oh! let the Irish nature glide
Into thy heart from this hour forth;
An Irish home thy sword has won,
A new-found mother blessed the strife;
Oh! be that mother's fondest son,
And love the land that gives you life!

"Betwixt the Isles and Antrim's coast,
The Scotch and Irish waters blend;

But who shall tell, with idle boast,
Where one begins and one doth end?
Ah! when shall that glad moment gleam,
When all our hearts such spell shall feel?
And blend in one broad Irish stream,
On Irish ground for Ireland's weal?

"Love the dear land in which you live,
Live in the land you ought to love;
Take root, and let your branches give
Fruits to the soil they wave above;
No matter what your foreign name,
No matter what your sires have done,
No matter whence or when you came,
The land shall claim you as a son!"

As in the azure fields on high,
When Spring lights up the April sky,
The thick battalions dusky clouds
Fly o'er the plain like routed crowds
Before the sun's resistless might!
Where all was dark, now all is bright;
The very clouds have turned to light,
And with the conquering beams unite!

Thus o'er the face of John MacJohn
A thousand varying shades have gone;
Jealousy, anger, rage, disdain,
Sweep o'er his brow--a dusky train;
But nature, like the beam of spring,
Chaseth the crowd on sunny wing;
Joy warms his heart, hope lights his eye,
And the dark passions routed fly!

The hands are clasped--the hound is freed,
Gone is MacJohn with wife and steed,
He meets his spearsmen some few miles,
And turns their scowling frowns to smiles:
At morn the crowded march begins
Of steeds and cattle for the glynnes;
Well for poor Erin's wrongs and griefs,
If thus would join her severed chiefs!

⁷⁷ A beautiful inlet, about six miles west of Donegal.

⁷⁸ Lough Eask is about two miles from Donegal. Inglis describes it as being as pretty a lake, on a small scale, as can well be imagined.

⁷⁹ The sands of Rosapenna are described as being composed of "hills and dales, and undulating swells, smooth, solitary, and desolate, reflecting the sun from their polished surface," &c.

⁸⁰ "Clan Dalaigh" is a name frequently given by Irish writers to the Clan O'Donnell.

⁸¹ The "Fairy Gun" is an orifice in a cliff near Bundoran (four miles S.W. of Ballyshannon), into which the sea rushes with a noise like that of artillery, and from which mist, and a chanting sound, issue in stormy weather.

⁸² The waterfall at Ballyshannon.

⁸³ The O'Donnells are descended from Conal Golban, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages.

⁸⁴ Cushendall is very prettily situated on the eastern coast of the county Antrim. This, with all the territory known as the *Glynnes* (so called from the intersection of its surface by many rocky dells), from Glenarm to Ballycastle, was at this time in the possession of the MacDonnells, a clan of Scotch descent. The principal castle of the MacDonnells was at Glenarm.

⁸⁵ The Rock of Doune, in Kilmacrenan, where the O'Donnells were inaugurated.

⁸⁶ The Hebrides.

⁸⁷ Carrick-a-rede (Carraig-a-Ramhad)—the Rock in the Road lies off the coast, between Ballycastle and Portrush; a chasm sixty feet in breadth, and very deep, separates it from the coast.

⁸⁸ The waterfall of Assaroe, at Ballyshannon.

⁸⁹ St. Columba, who was an O'Donnell.

⁹⁰ "This bird (the Gannet) flies through the ship's sails, piercing them with his beak."—O'Flaherty's "H-Iar Connaught," p. 12, published by the Irish Archæological Society.

⁹¹ She was the wife of Oisín, the bard, who is said to have lived and sung for some time at Cushendall, and to have been buried at Donegal.

⁹² The Rock of Clough-i-Stookan lies on the shore between Glenarm and Cushendall; it has some resemblance to a gigantic human figure.—"The winds whistle through its crevices like the wailing of mariners in distress."—Hall's "Ireland," vol. iii., p. 133.

⁹³ "The Gray Man's Path" (*Casan an fir Leith*) is a deep and remarkable chasm, dividing the promontory of Fairhead (or Benmore) in two.

THE BELL-FOUNDER.

PART I.—LABOUR AND HOPE.

In that land where the heaven-tinted pencil giveth shape to the splendour of
dreams,
Near Florence, the fairest of cities, and Arno, the sweetest of streams,
'Neath those hills^[94] whence the race of the Geraldine wandered in ages long
since,
For ever to rule over Desmond and Erin as martyr and prince,
Lived Paolo, the young Campanaro,^[95] the pride of his own little vale--
Hope changed the hot breath of his furnace as into a sea-wafted gale;
Peace, the child of Employment, was with him, with prattle so soothing and
sweet,
And Love, while revealing the future, strewed the sweet roses under his feet.

Ah! little they know of true happiness, they whom satiety fills,
Who, flung on the rich breast of luxury, eat of the rankness that kills.
Ah! little they know of the blessedness toil-purchased slumber enjoys,
Who, stretched on the hard rack of indolence, taste of the sleep that destroys,
Nothing to hope for, or labour for; nothing to sigh for, or gain;
Nothing to light in its vividness, lightning-like, bosom and brain;
Nothing to break life's monotony, rippling it o'er with its breath:
Nothing but dulness and lethargy, weariness, sorrow, and death!

But blessed that child of humanity, happiest man among men,
Who, with hammer, or chisel, or pencil, with rudder, or ploughshare, or pen,
Laboureth ever and ever with hope through the morning of life,
Winning home and its darling divinities--love-worshipped children and wife,
Round swings the hammer of industry, quickly the sharp chisel rings,
And the heart of the toiler has throbbings that stir not the bosom of kings;
He the true ruler and conqueror, he the true king of his race,
Who nerveth his arm for life's combat, and looks the strong world in the face.

And such was young Paolo! The morning, ere yet the faint starlight had gone,
To the loud-ringing workshop beheld him move joyfully light-footed on.
In the glare and the roar of the furnace he toiled till the evening star
burned,
And then back again through that valley, as glad but more weary returned.
One moment at morning he lingers by that cottage that stands by the stream,
Many moments at evening he tarries by that casement that woos the moon's beam;
For the light of his life and his labours, like a lamp from that casement
shines
In the heart-lighted face that looks out from that purple-clad trellis of
vines.

Francesca! sweet, innocent maiden! 'tis not that thy young cheek is fair,
Or thy sun-lighted eyes glance like stars through the curls of thy wind-woven
hair;
'Tis not for thy rich lips of coral, or even thy white breast of snow,
That my song shall recall thee, Francesca! but more for the good heart below.
Goodness is beauty's best portion, a dower that no time can reduce,
A wand of enchantment and happiness, brightening and strengthening with use.
One the long-sigh'd-for nectar that earthliness bitterly tinctures and taints:
One the fading mirage of the fancy, and one the elysium it paints.

Long ago, when thy father would kiss thee, the tears in his old eyes would
start,
For thy face--like a dream of his boyhood--renewed the fresh youth of his
heart;
He is gone; but thy mother remaineth, and kneeleth each night-time and morn,
And blesses the Mother of Blessings for the hour her Francesca was born.
There are proud stately dwellings in Florence, and mothers and maidens are
there,
And bright eyes as bright as Francesca's, and fair cheeks as brilliantly fair;
And hearts, too, as warm and as innocent, there where the rich paintings gleam,
But what proud mother blesses her daughter like the mother by Arno's sweet
stream?

It was not alone when that mother grew aged and feeble to hear,

That thy voice like the whisper of angels still fell on the old woman's ear,
Or even that thy face, when the darkness of time overshadowed her sight,
Shone calm through the blank of her mind, like the moon in the midst of the
night.

But thine was the duty, Francesca, and the love-lightened labour was thine,
To treasure the white-curling wool and the warm-flowing milk of the kine,
And the fruits, and the clusters of purple, and the flock's tender yearly
increase,
That *she* might have rest in life's evening, and go to her Father in
peace.

Francesca and Paolo are plighted, and they wait but a few happy days,
Ere they walk forth together in trustfulness out on Life's wonderful ways;
Ere, clasping the hands of each other, they move through the stillness and
noise,
Dividing the cares of existence, but doubling its hopes and its joys.
Sweet days of betrothment, which brighten so slowly to love's burning noon,
Like the days of the spring which grow longer, the nearer the fulness of June,
Though ye move to the noon and the summer of Love with a slow-moving wing,
Ye are lit with the light of the morning, and decked with the blossoms of
spring.

The days of betrothment are over, for now when the evening star shines,
Two faces look joyfully out from that purple-clad trellis of vines;
The light-hearted laughter is doubled, two voices steal forth on the air,
And blend in the light notes of song, or the sweet solemn cadence of prayer.
At morning when Paolo departeth, 'tis out of that sweet cottage door,
At evening he comes to that casement, but passes that casement no more;
And the old feeble mother at night-time, when saying, "The Lord's will be
done,"
While blessing the name of a daughter, now blendeth the name of a son.

PART II.—TRIUMPH AND REWARD.

In the furnace the dry branches crackle, the crucible shines as with gold,
As they carry the hot flaming metal in haste from the fire to the mould;
Loud roars the bellows, and louder the flames as they shrieking escape,
And loud is the song of the workmen who watch o'er the fast-filling shape;
To and fro in the red-glaring chamber the proud master anxiously moves,
And the quick and the skilful he praiseth, and the dull and the laggard
reproves;
And the heart in his bosom expandeth, as the thick bubbling metal up swells,
For like to the birth of his children he watcheth the birth of the bells.

Peace had guarded the door of young Paolo, success on his industry smiled,
And the dark wing of Time had passed quicker than grief from the face of a
child;
Broader lands lay around that sweet cottage, younger footsteps tripped lightly
around,
And the sweet silent stillness was broken by the hum of a still sweeter sound.
At evening when homeward returning how many dear hands must he press,
Where of old at that vine-covered wicket he lingered but one to caress;
And *that* dearest one is still with him, to counsel, to strengthen, and
calm,
And to pour over Life's needful wounds the healing of Love's blessed balm.

But age will come on with its winter, though happiness hideth its snows;
And if youth has its duty of labour, the birthright of age is repose:
And thus from that love-sweetened toil, which the heavens had so prospered and
blest,
The old Campanaro will go to that vine-covered cottage to rest;
But Paolo is pious and grateful, and vows as he kneels at her shrine,
To offer some fruit of his labour to Mary the Mother benign--
Eight silver-toned bells will he offer, to toll for the quick and the dead,
From the tower of the church of her convent that stands on the cliff overhead.

'Tis for this that the bellows are blowing, that the workmen their
sledge-hammers wield,
That the firm sandy moulds are now broken, and the dark-shining bells are
revealed;
The cars with their streamers are ready, and the flower-harnessed necks of the
steers,
And the bells from their cold silent workshop are borne amid blessings and
tears.
By the white-blossom'd, sweet-scented myrtles, by the olive-trees fringing the
plain,
By the corn-fields and vineyards is winding that gift-bearing, festival train;
And the hum of their voices is blending with the music that streams on the
gale,
As they wend to the Church of our Lady that stands at the head of the vale.

Now they enter, and now more divinely the saints' painted effigies smile,
Now the acolytes bearing lit tapers move solemnly down through the aisle,

Now the thurifer swings the rich censer, and the white curling vapour
up-floats,
And hangs round the deep-pealing organ, and blends with the tremulous notes.
In a white shining alb comes the abbot, and he circles the bells round about,
And with oil, and with salt, and with water, they are purified inside and out;
They are marked with Christ's mystical symbol, while the priests and the
choristers sing,
And are bless'd in the name of that God to whose honour they ever shall ring.

Toll, toll! with a rapid vibration, with a melody silv'ry and strong,
The bells from the sound-shaken belfry are singing their first maiden song;
Not now for the dead or the living, or the triumphs of peace or of strife,
But a quick joyous outburst of jubilee full of their newly-felt life;
Rapid, more rapid, the clapper rebounds from the round of the bells--
Far and more far through the valley the intertwined melody swells--
Quivering and broken the atmosphere trembles and twinkles around,
Like the eyes and the hearts of the hearers that glisten and beat to the sound.

But how to express all his rapture when echo the deep cadence bore
To the old Campanaro reclining in the shade of his vine-covered door,
How to tell of the bliss that came o'er him as he gazed on the fair evening
star,
And heard the faint toll of the vesper bell steal o'er the vale from afar--
Ah! it was not alone the brief ecstasy music doth ever impart
When Sorrow and Joy at its bidding come together and dwell in the heart;
But it was that delicious sensation with which the young mother is blest,
As she lists to the laugh of her child as it falleth asleep on her breast.

From a sweet night of slumber he woke; but it was not that morn had unroll'd
O'er the pale, cloudy tents of the Orient, her banners of purple and gold:
It was not the song of the skylark that rose from the green pastures near,
But the sound of his bells that fell softly, as dew on the slumberer's ear.
At that sound he awoke and arose, and went forth on the bead-bearing grass--
At that sound, with his loving Francesca, he piously knelt at the Mass.
If the sun shone in splendour around him, and that certain music were dumb,
He would deem it a dream of the night-time, and doubt if the morning had come.

At noon, as he lay in the sultriness, under his broad-leafy limes,
Far sweeter than murmuring waters came the tone of the Angelus chimes.
Pious and tranquil he rose, and uncovered his reverend head,
And thrice was the Ave Maria and thrice was the Angelus said,
Sweet custom the South still retaineth, to turn for a moment away
From the pleasures and pains of existence, from the trouble and turmoil of day,
From the tumult within and without, to the peace that abideth on high,
When the deep, solemn sound from the belfry comes down like a voice from the
sky.

And thus round the heart of the old man, at morning, at noon, and at eve,
The bells, with their rich woof of music, the net-work of happiness weave,
They ring in the clear, tranquil evening, and lo! all the air is alive,
As the sweet-laden thoughts come, like bees, to abide in the heart as a hive.
They blend with his moments of joy, as the odour doth blend with the flower--
They blend with his light-falling tears, as the sunshine doth blend with the
shower.
As their music is mirthful or mournful, his pulse beateth sluggish or fast,
And his breast takes its hue, like the ocean, as the sunshine or shadows are
cast.

Thus adding new zest to enjoyment, and drawing the sharp sting from pain,
The heart of the old man grew young, as it drank the sweet musical strain.
Again at the altar he stands, with Francesca the fair at his side,
As the bells ring a quick peal of gladness, to welcome some happy young bride.
'Tis true, when the death bells are tolling, the wounds of his heart bleed
anew,
When he thinks of his old loving mother, and the darlings that destiny slew;
But the tower in whose shade they are sleeping seems the emblem of hope and of
love--
There is silence and death at its base, but there's life in the belfry above.

Was it the sound of his bells, as they swung in the purified air,
That drove from the bosom of Paolo the dark-winged demons of care?
Was it their magical tone that for many a shadowless day
(So faith once believed) swept the clouds and the black-boding tempests away?
Ah! never may Fate with their music a harsh-grating dissonance blend!
Sure an evening so calm and so bright will glide peacefully on to the end.
Sure the course of his life, to its close, like his own native river must be,
Flowing on through the valley of flowers to its home in the bright summer sea!

PART III.—VICISSITUDE AND REST.

O Erin! thou broad-spreading valley--thou well-watered land of fresh streams,
When I gaze on thy hills greenly sloping, where the light of such loveliness
beams,

When I rest by the rim of thy fountains, or stray where thy streams disembogue,
Then I think that the fairies have brought me to dwell in the bright
Tir-na-n-oge.[96]

But when on the face of thy children I look, and behold the big tears
Still stream down their grief-eaten channels, which widen and deepen with
years,
I fear that some dark blight for ever will fall on thy harvests of peace,
And that, like thy lakes and thy rivers, thy sorrows must ever increase.[97]

O land! which the heavens made for joy, but where wretchedness buildeth its
throne--

O prodigal spendthrift of sorrow! and hast thou not heirs of thine own?
Thus to lavish thy sons' only portion, and bring one sad claimant the more,
From the sweet sunny lands of the south, to thy crowded and sorrowful shore?
For this proud bark that cleaveth thy waters, she is not a corrach of thine,
And the broad purple sails that spread o'er her seem dyed in the juice of the
vine.
Not thine is that flag, backward floating, nor the olive-cheek'd seamen who
guide,
Nor that heart-broken old man who gazes so listlessly over the tide.

Accurs'd be the monster, who selfishly draweth his sword from its sheath;
Let his garland be twined by the furies, and the upas tree furnish the wreath;
Let the blood he has shed steam around him, through the length of eternity's
years,
And the anguish-wrung screams of his victims for ever resound in his ears.
For all that makes life worth possessing must yield to his self-seeking lust:
He trampleth on home and on love, as his war-horses trample the dust;
He loosens the red streams of ruin, which wildly, though partially, stray--
They but chafe round the rock-bastion'd castle, while they sweep the frail
cottage away.

Feuds fell like a plague upon Florence, and rage from without and within;
Peace turned her mild eyes from the havoc, and Mercy grew deaf in the din;
Fear strengthened the dove-wings of happiness, tremblingly borne on the gale;
And the angel Security vanished, as the war-demon swept o'er the vale.
Is it for the Mass or the Angelus new that the bells ever ring?
Or is it the red trickling mist such a purple reflection doth fling?
Ah, no: 'tis the tocsin of terror that tolls from the desolate shrine;
And the down-trodden vineyards are flowing, but not with the blood of the vine.

Deadly and dark was the tempest that swept o'er that vine-cover'd plain;
Burning and withering, its drops fell like fire on the grass and the grain.
But the gloomiest moments must pass to their graves, as the brightest and best,
And thus once again did fair Fiesole look o'er a valley of rest.
But, oh! in that brief hour of horror, that bloody eclipse of the sun,
What hopes and what dreams have been shattered?--what ruin and wrong have been
done?
What blossoms for ever have faded, that promised a harvest so fair;
And what joys are laid low in the dust that eternity cannot repair!

Look down on that valley of sorrows, whence the land-marks of joy are removed,
Oh! where is the darling Francesca, so loving, so dearly beloved?--
And where are her children, whose voices rose music-winged once from this spot?
And why are the sweet bells now silent? and where is the vine-cover'd cot?
'Tis morning--no Mass-bell is tolling; 'tis noon, but no Angelus rings;
'Tis evening, but no drops of melody rain from her rose-coloured wings.
Ah! where have the angels, poor Paolo, that guarded thy cottage door flown?
And why have they left thee to wander thus childless and joyless alone?

His children had grown into manhood, but, ah! in that terrible night
Which had fallen on fair Florence, they perished away in the thick of the
fight;
Heart-blinded, his darling Francesca went seeking her sons through the gloom,
And found them at length, and lay down full of love by their side in the tomb,
That cottage, its vine-cover'd porch and its myrtle-bound garden of flowers,
That church whence the bells with their voices, drown'd the sound of the
fast-flying hours,
Both are levelled and laid in the dust, and the sweet-sounding bells have been
torn
From their downfallen beams, and away by the red hand of sacrilege borne.

As the smith, in the dark, sullen smithy, striketh quick on the anvil below,
Thus Fate on the heart of the old man struck rapidly blow after blow:
Wife, children, and hope passed away from the heart once so burning and bold,
As the bright shining sparks disappear when the red glowing metal grows cold.
He missed not the sound of his bells while those death-sounds struck loud in
the ears,
He missed not the church where they rang while his old eyes were blinded with
tears;
But the calmness of grief coming soon, in its sadness and silence profound,
He listened once more as of old, but in vain, for the joy-bearing sound.

When he felt indeed they had vanished, one fancy then flashed on his brain,
One wish made his heart beat anew with a throbbing it could not restrain--
'Twas to wander away from fair Florence, its memory and dream-haunted dells,
And to seek up and down through the earth for the sound of its magical bells.
They will speak of the hopes that have perished, and the joys that have faded
so fast
With the music of memory wingèd, they will seem but the voice of the past;
As, when the bright morning has vanished, and evening grows starless and dark,
The nightingale song of remembrance recalls the sweet strain of the lark.

Thus restlessly wandering through Italy, now by the Adrian sea,
In the shrine of Loreto, he bendeth his travel-tired suppliant knee;
And now by the brown troubled Tiber he taketh his desolate way,
And in many a shady basilica lingers to listen and pray.
He prays for the dear ones snatched from him, nor vainly nor hopelessly prays,
For the strong faith in union hereafter like a beam o'er his cold bosom plays;
He listens at morning and evening, when matin and vesper bells toll,
But their sweetest sounds grate on his ear, and their music is harsh to his
soul.

For though sweet are the bells that ring out from the tall campanili of Rome,
Ah! they are not the dearer and sweeter ones, tuned with the memory of home.
So leaving proud Rome and fair Tivoli, southward the old man must stray,
'Till he reaches the Eden of waters that sparkle in Napoli's bay:
He sees not the blue waves of Baiæ, nor Ischia's summits of brown,
He sees but the high campanili that rise o'er each far-gleaming town.
Driven restlessly onward, he saileth away to the bright land of Spain,
And seeketh thy shrine, Santiago, and stands by the western main.

A bark bound for Erin lay waiting, he entered like one in a dream;
Fair winds in the full purple sails led him soon to the Shannon's broad stream.
'Twas an evening that Florence might envy, so rich was the lemon-hued air,
As it lay on lone Scatterry's island, or lit the green mountains of Clare;
The wide-spreading old giant river rolled his waters as smooth and as still
As if Oonagh, with all her bright nymphs, had come down from the far fairy
hill,[98]
To fling her enchantments around on the mountains, the air, and the tide,
And to soothe the worn heart of the old man who looked from the dark vessel's
side.

Borne on the current the vessel glides smoothly but swiftly away,
By Carrigaholt, and by many a green sloping headland and bay,
'Twixt Cratloe's blue hills and green woods, and the soft sunny shores of
Tervoe,
And now the fair city of Limerick spreads out on the broad bank below;
Still nearer and nearer approaching, the mariners look o'er the town,
The old man sees nought but St. Mary's square tower, with its battlements
brown.
He listens--as yet all is silent, but now, with a sudden surprise,
A rich peal of melody rings from that tower through the clear evening skies!

One note is enough--his eye moistens, his heart, long so wither'd, outswells,
He has found them--the sons of his labours--his musical, magical bells!
At each stroke all the bright past returneth, around him the sweet Arno shines,
His children--his darling Francesca--his purple-clad trellis of vines!
Leaning forward, he listens, he gazes, he hears in that wonderful strain
The long-silent voices that murmur, "Oh, leave us not, father again!"
'Tis granted--he smiles--his eye closes--the breath from his white lips hath
fled--
The father has gone to his children--the old Campanaro is dead!

⁹⁴ The hills of Else. See Appendix to O'Daly's "History of the Geraldines," translated by the Rev. C. P. Meehan, p. 130.

⁹⁵ Bell-founder.

⁹⁶ The country of youth; the Elysium of the Pagan Irish.

⁹⁷ Camden seems to credit a tradition commonly believed in his time, of a gradual increase in the number and size of the lakes and rivers of Ireland.

⁹⁸ The beautiful hill in Lower Ormond called *Knockshegowna*, i.e., Oonagh's Hill, so called from being the fabled residence of Oonagh (or Una), the Fairy Queen of Spenser. One of the finest views of the Shannon is to be seen from this hill.

ALICE AND UNA.

A TALE OF CEIM-AN-EICH.⁹⁹

Ah! the pleasant time hath vanished, ere our wretched doubtings banished,

All the graceful spirit-people, children of the earth and sea,
Whom in days now dim and olden, when the world was fresh and golden,
Every mortal could behold in haunted rath, and tower, and tree--
They have vanished, they are banished--ah! how sad the loss for thee,
Lonely Céim-an-eich!

Still some scenes are yet enchanted by the charms that Nature granted,
Still are peopled, still are haunted, by a graceful spirit band.
Peace and beauty have their dwelling where the infant streams are welling,
Where the mournful waves are knelling on Glengariff's coral strand;
Or where, on Killarney's mountains, Grace and Terror smiling stand,
Like sisters, hand in hand!

Still we have a new romance in fire-ships through the tamed sea glancing,
And the snorting and the prancing of the mighty engine steed;
Still, Astolpho-like, we wander through the boundless azure yonder,
Realizing what seemed fonder than the magic tales we read:
Tales of wild Arabian wonder, where the fancy all is freed--
Wilder far indeed!

Now that Earth once more hath woken, and the trance of Time is broken,
And the sweet word--Hope--is spoken, soft and sure, though none know how,
Could we, could we only see all these, the glories of the Real,
Blended with the lost Ideal, happy were the old world now--
Woman in its fond believing--man with iron arm and brow--
Faith and work its vow!

Yes! the Past shines clear and pleasant, and there's glory in the Present;
And the Future, like a crescent, lights the deepening sky of Time;
And that sky will yet grow brighter, if the Worker and the Writer--
If the Sceptre and the Mitre join in sacred bonds sublime.
With two glories shining o'er them, up the coming years they'll climb,
Earth's great evening as its prime!

With a sigh for what is fading, but, O Earth! with no upbraiding,
For we feel that time is braiding newer, fresher flowers for thee,
We will speak, despite our grieving, words of loving and believing,
Tales we vowed when we were leaving awful Céim-an-eich,
Where the sever'd rocks resemble fragments of a frozen sea,
And the wild deer flee!

'Tis the hour when flowers are shrinking, when the weary sun is sinking,
And his thirsty steeds are drinking in the cooling western sea;
When young Maurice lightly goeth, where the tiny streamlet floweth
And the struggling moonlight showeth where his path must be--
Path whereon the wild goats wander fearlessly and free
Through dark Céim-an-eich.

As a hunter, danger daring, with his dogs the brown moss sharing,
Little thinking, little caring, long a wayward youth lived he;
But his bounding heart was regal, and he looked as looks the eagle,
And he flew as flies the beagle, who the panting stag doth see:
Love, who spares a fellow-archer, long had let him wander free
Through wild Céim-an-eich!

But at length the hour drew nigher when his heart should feel that fire;
Up the mountain high and higher had he hunted from the dawn;
Till the weeping fawn descended, where the earth and ocean blended,
And with hope its slow way wended to a little grassy lawn;
It is safe, for gentle Alice to her saving breast hath drawn
Her almost sister fawn.

Alice was a chieftain's daughter, and, though many suitors sought her,
She so loved Glengariff's water that she let her lovers pine;
Her eye was beauty's palace, and her cheek an ivory chalice,
Through which the blood of Alice gleamed soft as rosiest wine,
And her lips like lusmore blossoms which the fairies interwine,[100]
And her heart a golden mine.

She was gentler and shyer than the light fawn that stood by her,
And her eyes emit a fire soft and tender as her soul;
Love's dewy light doth drown her, and the braided locks that crown her
Than autumn's trees are browner, when the golden shadows roll
Through the forests in the evening, when cathedral turrets toll,
And the purple sun advanceth to its goal.

Her cottage was a dwelling all regal homes excelling,
But, ah! beyond the telling was the beauty round it spread:
The wave and sunshine playing, like sisters each arraying,
Far down the sea-plants swaying upon their coral bed,
As languid as the tresses on a sleeping maiden's head,
When the summer breeze is dead.

Need we say that Maurice loved her, and that no blush reproved her
When her throbbing bosom moved her to give the heart she gave;
That by dawnlight and by twilight, and, O blessed moon! by thy light,
When the twinkling stars on high light the wanderer o'er the wave,
His steps unconscious led him where Glengariff's waters lave
Each mossy bank and cave.

He thitherward is wending, o'er the vale is night descending,
Quick his step, but quicker sending his herald thoughts before;
By rocks and streams before him, proud and hopeful on he bore him;
One star was shining o'er him--in his heart of hearts two more--
And two other eyes, far brighter than a human head e'er wore,
Unseen were shining o'er.

These eyes are not of woman, no brightness merely human
Could, planet-like, illumine the place in which they shone;
But Nature's bright works vary--there are beings light and airy,
Whom mortal lips call fairy, and Una she is one--
Sweet sisters of the moonbeams and daughters of the sun,
Who along the curling cool waves run.

As summer lightning dances amid the heavens' expanses,
Thus shone the burning glances of those flashing fairy eyes;
Three splendours there were shining, three passions intertwining,
Despair and hope combining their deep-contrasted dyes,
With jealousy's green lustre, as troubled ocean vies
With the blue of summer skies!

She was a fairy creature, of heavenly form and feature,
Not Venus' self could teach her a newer, sweeter grace,
Not Venus' self could lend her an eye so dark and tender,
Half softness and half splendour, as lit her lily face;
And as the choral planets move harmonious throughout space,
There was music in her pace.

But when at times she started, and her blushing lips were parted,
And a pearly lustre darted from her teeth so ivory white,
You'd think you saw the gliding of two rosy clouds dividing,
And the crescent they were hiding gleam forth upon your sight
Through these lips, as though the portals of a heaven pure and bright,
Came a breathing of delight!

Though many an elf-king loved her, and elf-dames grave reproved her,
The hunter's daring moved her more wildly every hour;
Unseen she roamed beside him, to guard him and to guide him,
But now she must divide him from her human rival's power.
Ah! Alice!--gentle Alice! the storm begins to lower
That may crush Glengariff's flower!

The moon, that late was gleaming, as calm as childhood's dreaming,
Is hid, and, wildly screaming, the stormy winds arise;
And the clouds flee quick and faster before their sullen master,
And the shadows of disaster are falling from the skies;
Strange sights and sounds are rising--but, Maurice, be thou wise,
Nor heed the tempting cries.

If ever mortal needed that council, surely he did;
But the wile has now succeeded--he wanders from his path;
The cloud its lightning sendeth, and its bolt the stout oak rendeth,
And the arbutus back bendeth in the whirlwind, as a lath!
Now and then the moon looks out, but, alas! its pale face hath
A dreadful look of wrath.

In vain his strength he squanders--at each step he wider wanders--
Now he pauses--now he ponders where his present path may lead;
And, as he round is gazing, he sees--a sight amazing--
Beneath him, calmly grazing, a noble jet-black steed.
"Now, heaven be praised!" cried Maurice, "for this succour in my need--
From this labyrinth I'm freed!"

Upon its back he leapeth, but a shudder through him creepeth,
As the mighty monster sweepeth like a torrent through the dell;
His mane, so softly flowing, is now a meteor blowing,
And his burning eyes are glowing with the light of an inward hell;
And the red breath of his nostrils, like steam where the lightning fell;
And his hoofs have a thunder knell!

What words have we for painting the momentary fainting
That the rider's heart is tainting, as decay doth taint a corse?
But who will stoop to chiding, in a fancied courage priding,
When we know that he is riding the fearful Phooka Horse?[101]
Ah! his heart beats quick and faster than the smittings of remorse
As he sweepeth through the wild grass and gorse!

As the avalanche comes crashing, 'mid the scattered streamlets splashing,
Thus backward wildly dashing flew the horse through Céim-an-eich--
Through that glen so wide and narrow back he darted like an arrow--
Round, round by Gougane Barra, and the fountains of the Lee;
O'er the Giant's Grave he leapeth, and he seems to own in fee
The mountains, and the rivers, and the sea!

From his flashing hoofs who shall lock the eagle homes of Malloc,
When he bounds, as bounds the Mialloch[102] in its wild and murmuring tide?
But as winter leadeth Flora, or the night leads on Aurora,
Or as shines green Glashengloria[103] along the black hill's side,
Thus, beside that demon monster, white and gentle as a bride,
A tender fawn is seen to glide.

It is the fawn that fled him, and that late to Alice led him,
But now it does not dread him, as it feigned to do before,
When down the mountain gliding, in that sheltered meadow hiding,
It left his heart abiding by wild Glengariff's shore:
For it was a gentle fairy who the fawn's light form thus wore,
And who watched sweet Alice o'er.

But the steed is backward prancing where late it was advancing,
And his flashing eyes are glancing, like the sun upon Lough Foyle;
The hardest granite crushing, through the thickest brambles brushing,
Now like a shadow rushing up the sides of Slieve-na-goil!
And the fawn beside him gliding o'er the rough and broken soil,
Without fear and without toil.

Through woods, the sweet birds' leaf home, he rusheth to the sea foam,
Long, long the fairies' chief home, when the summer nights are cool,
And the blue sea, like a syren, with its waves the steed environ,
Which hiss like furnace iron when plunged within a pool,
Then along among the islands where the water nymphs bear rule,
Through the bay to Adragool.

Now he rises o'er Berehaven, where he hangeth like a raven--
Ah! Maurice, though no craven, how terrible for thee
To see the misty shading of the mighty mountains fading,
And thy winged fire-steed wading through the clouds as through a sea!
Now he feels the earth beneath him--he is loosen'd--he is free,
And asleep in Céim-an-eich.

Away the wild steed leapeth, while his rider calmly sleepeth
Beneath a rock which keepeth the entrance to the glen,
Which standeth like a castle, where are dwelling lord and vassal,
Where within are wind and wassail, and without are warrior men;
But save the sleeping Maurice, this castle cliff had then
No mortal denizen![104]

Now Maurice is awaking, for the solid earth is shaking,
And a sunny light is breaking through the slowly opening stone
And a fair page at the portal crieth, "Welcome, welcome! mortal,
Leave thy world (at best a short ill), for the pleasant world we own:
There are joys by thee untasted, there are glories yet unknown--
Come kneel at Una's throne."

With a sullen sound of thunder, the great rock falls asunder,
He looks around in wonder, and with ravishment awhile,
For the air his sense is chaining, with as exquisite a paining
As when summer clouds are raining o'er a flowery Indian isle;
And the faces that surround him, oh! how exquisite their smile,
So free of mortal care and guile.

These forms, oh! they are finer--these faces are diviner
Than, Phidias, even thine are, with all thy magic art;
For beyond an artist's guessing, and beyond a bard's expressing,
Is the face that truth is dressing with the feelings of the heart;
Two worlds are there together--earth and heaven have each a part--
And of such, divinest Una, thou art!

And then the dazzling lustre of the hall in which they muster--
Where the brightest diamonds cluster on the flashing walls around;
And the flying and advancing, and the sighing and the glancing.
And the music and the dancing on the flower-inwoven ground,
And the laughing and the feasting, and the quaffing and the sound,
In which their voices all are drowned.

But the murmur now is hushing--there's a pushing and a rushing,
There's a crowding and a crushing, through that golden, fairy place,
Where a snowy veil is lifting, like the slow and silent shifting
Of a shining vapour drifting across the moon's pale face--
For there sits gentle Una, fairest queen of fairy race,

In her beauty, and her majesty, and grace.

The moon by stars attended, on her pearly throne ascended,
Is not more purely splendid than this fairy-girted queen;
And when her lips had spoken, 'mid the charmed silence broken,
You'd think you had awoken in some bright Elysian scene;
For her voice than the lark's was sweeter, that sings in joy between
The heavens and the meadows green.

But her cheeks--ah! what are roses?--what are clouds where eve reposes?--
What are hues that dawn discloses?--to the blushes spreading there;
And what the sparkling motion of a star within the ocean,
To the crystal soft emotion that her lustrous dark eyes wear?
And the tresses of a moonless and a starless night are fair
To the blackness of her raven hair.

Ah! mortal hearts have panted for what to thee is granted--
To see the halls enchanted of the spirit world revealed;
And yet no glimpse assuages the feverish doubt that rages
In the hearts of bards and sages wherewith they may be healed;
For this have pilgrims wandered--for this have votaries kneeled--
For this, too, has blood bedewed the field.

"And now that thou beholdest what the wisest and the oldest,
What the bravest and the boldest, have never yet descried,
Wilt thou come and share our being, be a part of what thou'rt seeing,
And flee, as we are fleeing, through the boundless ether wide?
Or along the silver ocean, or down deep where pale pearls hide?
And I, who am a queen, will be thy bride.

"As an essence thou wilt enter the world's mysterious centre,"
And then the fairy bent her, imploring to the youth--
"Thou'lt be free of Death's cold ghastness, and, with a comet's fastness,
Thou canst wander through the vastness to the Paradise of Truth,
Each day a new joy bringing, which will never leave in sooth
The slightest stain of weariness and ruth."

As he listened to the speaker, his heart grew weak and weaker--
Ah! Memory, go seek her, that maiden by the wave,
Who with terror and amazement is looking from her casement,
Where the billows at the basement of her nestled cottage rave,
At the moon which struggles onward through the tempest, like the brave,
And which sinks within the clouds as in a grave.

All maidens will abhor us, and it's very painful for us
To tell how faithless Maurice forgot his plighted vow:
He thinks not of the breaking of the heart he late was seeking,
He but listens to her speaking, and but gazes on her brow;
And his heart has all consented, and his lips are ready now
With the awful and irrevocable vow.

While the word is there abiding, lo! the crowd is now dividing,
And, with sweet and gentle gliding, in before him came a fawn;
It was the same that fled him, and that seemed so much to dread him,
When it down in triumph led him to Glengariff's grassy lawn,
When, from rock to rock descending, to sweet Alice he was drawn,
As through Céim-an-eich he hunted from the dawn.

The magic chain is broken--no fairy vow is spoken--
From his trance he hath awoken, and once again is free;
And gone is Una's palace, and vain the wild steed's malice,
And again to gentle Alice down he wends through Céim-an-eich:
The moon is calmly shining over mountain, stream, and tree,
And the yellow sea-plants glisten through the sea.

The sun his gold is flinging, the happy birds are singing,
And bells are gaily ringing along Glengariff's sea;
And crowds in many a galley to the happy marriage rally
Of the maiden of the valley and the youth of Céim-an-eich;
Old eyes with joy are weeping, as all ask on bended knee
A blessing, gentle Alice, upon thee!

⁹⁹ The pass of Kéim-an-eigh (the path of the deer) lies to the south-west of Inchageela, in the direction of Bantry Bay.

¹⁰⁰ The lusmore (or fairy cap), literally the great herb, *Digitalis purpurea*.

¹⁰¹ The Phooka is described as belonging to the malignant class of fairy beings, and he is as wild and capricious in his character as he is changeable in his form. At one time an eagle or an *ignis fatuus*, at another a horse or a bull, while occasionally he figures as a compound of the calf and goat. When he assumes the form of a horse, his great object, according to a recent writer, seems to be to obtain a rider, and then he is in his most malignant glory.—See Croker's "Fairy Legends."

¹⁰² Mialloch, "the murmuring river" at Glengariff.—Smith's "Cork."

¹⁰³ Glashenglorra, a mountain torrent, which finds its way into the Atlantic Ocean through Glengariff, in the west of the county of Cork. The name, literally translated, signifies "the noisy green water."—Barry's "Songs of Ireland," p. 173.

¹⁰⁴ There is a great square rock, literally resembling the description in the text, which stands near the Glengariff entrance to the pass of Céim-an-eich.

National Poems and Songs.

ADVANCE!

God bade the sun with golden step sublime,
Advance!
He whispered in the listening ear of Time,
Advance!
He bade the guiding spirits of the stars,
With lightning speed, in silver shining cars,
Along the bright floor of his azure hall,
Advance!
Sun, stars, and time obey the voice, and all
Advance!

The river at its bubbling fountain cries,
Advance!
The clouds proclaim, like heralds through the skies,
Advance!
Throughout the world the mighty Master's laws
Allow not one brief moment's idle pause;
The earth is full of life, the swelling seeds
Advance!
And summer hours, like flowery harnessed steeds,
Advance!

To man's most wondrous hand the same voice cried,
Advance!
Go clear the woods, and o'er the bounding tide
Advance!
Go draw the marble from its secret bed,
And make the cedar bend its giant head;
Let domes and columns through the wondering air
Advance!
The world, O man! is thine; but, wouldst thou share,
Advance!

Unto the soul of man the same voice spoke,
Advance!
From out the chaos, thunder-like, it broke,
"Advance!
Go track the comet in its wheeling race,
And drag the lightning from its hiding-place;
From out the night of ignorance and fears,
Advance!
For Love and Hope, borne by the coming years,
Advance!"

All heard, and some obeyed the great command,
Advance!
It passed along from listening land to land,
Advance!
The strong grew stronger, and the weak grew strong,
As passed the war-cry of the world along--
Awake, ye nations, know your powers and rights--
Advance!
Through hope and work to Freedom's new delights,
Advance!

Knowledge came down and waved her steady torch,
Advance!
Sages proclaimed 'neath many a marble porch,
Advance!
As rapid lightning leaps from peak to peak,
The Gaul, the Goth, the Roman, and the Greek,
The painted Briton caught the wingèd word,
Advance!
And earth grew young, and carolled as a bird,
Advance!

O Ireland! oh, my country, wilt thou not
Advance?
Wilt thou not share the world's progressive lot?--
Advance!
Must seasons change, and countless years roll on,
And thou remain a darksome Ajalon?
And never see the crescent moon of Hope
Advance?
'Tis time thine heart and eye had wider scope--
Advance!

Dear brothers, wake! look up! be firm! be strong
Advance!
From out the starless night of fraud and wrong
Advance!
The chains have fall'n from off thy wasted hands,
And every man a seeming freedman stands;--
But, ah! 'tis in the soul that freedom dwells,--
Advance!
Proclaim that there thou wearest no manacles;--
Advance!

Advance! thou must advance or perish now;--
Advance!
Advance! Why live with wasted heart and brow?--
Advance!
Advance! or sink at once into the grave;
Be bravely free or artfully a slave!
Why fret thy master, if thou must have one?
Advance!
Advance three steps, the glorious work is done;--
Advance!

The first is COURAGE--'tis a giant stride!--
Advance!
With bounding step up Freedom's rugged side
Advance!
KNOWLEDGE will lead thee to the dazzling heights,
TOLERANCE will teach and guard thy brother's rights.
Faint not! for thee a pitying Future waits--
Advance!
Be wise, be just, with will as fixed as Fate's,--
Advance!

REMONSTRANCE.

Bless the dear old verdant land,
Brother, wert thou born of it?
As thy shadow life doth stand,
Twining round its rosy band,
Did an Irish mother's hand
Guide thee in the morn of it?
Did thy father's soft command
Teach thee love or scorn of it?

Thou who tread'st its fertile breast,
Dost thou feel a glow for it?
Thou, of all its charms possesst,
Living on its first and best,
Art thou but a thankless guest,
Or a traitor foe for it?
If thou lovest, where the test?
Wouldst thou strike a blow for it?

Has the past no goading sting
That can make thee rouse for it?
Does thy land's reviving spring,
Full of buds and blossoming,
Fail to make thy cold heart cling,
Breathing lover's vows for it?
With the circling ocean's ring
Thou wert made a spouse for it!

Hast thou kept, as thou shouldst keep,
Thy affections warm for it,
Letting no cold feeling creep,
Like the ice breath o'er the deep,
Freezing to a stony sleep
Hopes the heart would form for it--
Glories that like rainbows weep
Through the darkening storm for it?

What we seek is Nature's right--
Freedom and the aids of it;--
Freedom for the mind's strong flight
Seeking glorious shapes star-bright
Through the world's intensest night,
When the sunshine fades of it!
Truth is one, and so is light,
Yet how many shades of it!

A mirror every heart doth wear,
For heavenly shapes to shine in it;
If dim the glass or dark the air,
That Truth, the beautiful and fair,
God's glorious image, shines not there,
Or shines with nought divine in it:
A sightless lion in its lair,
The darkened soul must pine in it!

Son of this old, down-trodden land,
Then aid us in the fight for it;
We seek to make it great and grand,
Its shipless bays, its naked strand,
By canvas-swelling breezes fanned.
Oh! what a glorious sight for it!
The past expiring like a brand,
In morning's rosy light for it!

Think that this dear old land is thine,
And thou a traitor slave of it;
Think how the Switzer leads his kine,
When pale the evening star doth shine,
His song has home in every line,
Freedom in every stave of it!
Think how the German loves his Rhine,
And worships every wave of it!

Our own dear land is bright as theirs,
But, oh! our hearts are cold for it;
Awake! we are not slaves but heirs;
Our fatherland requires our cares,
Our work with man, with God our prayers.
Spurn blood-stained Judas-gold for it,
Let us do all that honour dares--
Be earnest, faithful, bold for it!

IRELAND'S VOW.

Come! Liberty, come! we are ripe for thy coming--
Come freshen the hearts where thy rival has trod--
Come, richest and rarest!--come, purest and fairest!--
Come, daughter of Science!--come, gift of the God!

Long, long have we sighed for thee, coyest of maidens--
Long, long have we worshipped thee, queen of the brave!
Steadily sought for thee, readily fought for thee,
Purpled the scaffold and glutted the grave!

On went the fight through the cycle of ages,
Never our battle-cry ceasing the while;
Forward, ye valiant ones! onward, battalioned ones!
Strike for your Erin, your own darling isle!

Still in the ranks are we, struggling with eagerness,
Still in the battle for Freedom are we!
Words may avail in it--swords if they fail in it,
What matters the weapon, if only we're free?

Oh! we are pledged in the face of the universe,
Never to falter and never to swerve;
Toil for it!--bleed for it!--if there be need for it,
Stretch every sinew and strain every nerve!

Traitors and cowards our names shall be ever,
If for a moment we turn from the chase;
For ages exhibited, scoffed at, and gibbeted,
As emblems of all that was servile and base!

Irishmen! Irishmen! think what is Liberty,
Fountain of all that is valued and dear,
Peace and security, knowledge and purity,
Hope for hereafter and happiness here.

Nourish it, treasure it deep in your inner heart--
Think of it ever by night and by day;
Pray for it!--sigh for it!--work for it!--die for it!--
What is this life and dear freedom away?

List! scarce a sound can be heard in our thoroughfares--
Look! scarce a ship can be seen on our streams;
Heart-crushed and desolate, spell-bound, irresolute,
Ireland but lives in the bygone of dreams!

Irishmen! if we be true to our promises,
Nerving our souls for more fortunate hours,
Life's choicest blessings, love's fond caressings,
Peace, home, and happiness, all shall be ours!

A DREAM.

I dreamt a dream, a dazzling dream, of a green isle far away,
Where the glowing West to the ocean's breast calleth the dying day;
And that island green was as fair a scene as ever man's eye did see,
With its chieftains bold and its temples old, and its homes and its altars
free!
No foreign foe did that green isle know, no stranger band it bore,
Save the merchant train from sunny Spain, and from Afric's golden shore!
And the young man's heart would fondly start, and the old man's eye would
smile,
As their thoughts would roam o'er the ocean foam to that lone and "holy isle!"

Years passed by, and the orient sky blazed with a newborn light,
And Bethlehem's star shone bright afar o'er the lost world's darksome night;
And the diamond shrines from plundered mines, and the golden fanes of Jove,
Melted away in the blaze of day at the simple spellword--Love!
The light serene o'er that island green played with its saving beams,
And the fires of Baal waxed dim and pale like the stars in the morning streams!
And 'twas joy to hear, in the bright air clear, from out each sunny glade,
The tinkling bell, from the quiet cell, or the cloister's tranquil shade!

A cloud of night o'er that dream so bright soon with its dark wing came,
And the happy scene of that island green was lost in blood and shame;
For its kings unjust betrayed their trust, and its queens, though fair, were
frail,
And a robber band, from a stranger land, with their war-whoops filled the gale;
A fatal spell on that green isle fell, a shadow of death and gloom
Passed withering o'er, from shore to shore, like the breath of the foul simoom;
And each green hill's side was crimson dyed, and each stream rolled red and
wild,
With the mingled blood of the brave and good--of mother and maid and child!

Dark was my dream, though many a gleam of hope through that black night broke,
Like a star's bright form through a whistling storm, or the moon through a
midnight oak!
And many a time, with its wings sublime, and its robes of saffron light,
Would the morning rise on the eastern skies, but to vanish again in night!
For, in abject prayer, the people there still raised their fettered hands,
When the sense of right and the power to smite are the spirit that commands;
For those who would sneer at the mourner's tear, and heed not the suppliant's
sigh,
Would bow in awe to that first great law, a banded nation's cry!

At length arose o'er that isle of woes a dawn with a steadier smile,
And in happy hour a voice of power awoke the slumbering isle!
And the people all obeyed the call of their chief's unseptrid hand,
Vowing to raise, as in ancient days, the name of their own dear land!
My dream grew bright as the sunbeam's light, as I watched that isle's career,
Through the varied scene and the joys serene of many a future year;
And, oh! what a thrill did my bosom fill as I gazed on a pillared pile,
Where a senate once more in power watched o'er the rights of that lone green
isle!

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM.

Man of Ireland, heir of sorrow,
Wronged, insulted, scorned, oppressed,
Wilt thou never see that morrow
When thy weary heart may rest?
Lift thine eyes, thou outraged creature;
Nay, look up, for man thou art,
Man in form, and frame, and feature,
Why not act man's god-like part?

Think, reflect, inquire, examine,
Is it for this God gave you birth--
With the spectre look of famine,
Thus to creep along the earth?
Does this world contain no treasures
Fit for thee, as man, to wear?--
Does this life abound in pleasures,
And thou askest not to share?

Look! the nations are awaking,
Every chain that bound them burst!
At the crystal fountains slaking
With parched lips their fever thirst!
Ignorance the demon, fleeing,
Leaves unlocked the fount they sip;
Wilt thou not, thou wretched being,
Stoop and cool thy burning lip?

History's lessons, if thou'lt read 'em,
All proclaim this truth to thee:
Knowledge is the price of freedom,
Know thyself, and thou art free!
Know, O man! thy proud vocation,
Stand erect, with calm, clear brow--
Happy! happy were our nation,
If thou hadst that knowledge now!

Know thy wretched, sad condition,
Know the ills that keep thee so;
Knowledge is the sole physician,
Thou wert healed if thou didst know!
Those who crush, and scorn, and slight thee,
Those to whom thou once wouldst kneel,
Were the foremost then to right thee,
Didst thou but feel as thou shouldst feel!

Not as beggars lowly bending,
Not in sighs, and groans, and tears,
But a voice of thunder sending
Through thy tyrant brother's ears!
Tell him he is not thy master,
Tell him of man's common lot,
Feel life has but one disaster,
To be a slave, and know it not!

Didst but prize what knowledge giveth,
Didst but know how blest is he
Who in Freedom's presence liveth,
Thou wouldst die, or else be free!
Round about he looks in gladness,
Joys in heaven, and earth, and sea,
Scarcely heaves a sigh of sadness,
Save in thoughts of such as thee!

THE VOICE AND PEN.

Oh! the orator's voice is a mighty power,
As it echoes from shore to shore,
And the fearless pen has more sway o'er men
Than the murderous cannon's roar!
What burst the chain far over the main,
And brighten'd the captive's den?
'Twas the fearless pen and the voice of power,
Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!
Hurrah!
Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!

The tyrant knaves who deny man's rights,
And the cowards who blanch with fear,
Exclaim with glee: "No arms have ye,
Nor cannon, nor sword, nor spear!
Your hills are ours--with our forts and towers
We are masters of mount and glen!"
Tyrants, beware! for the arms we bear
Are the Voice and the fearless Pen!
Hurrah!
Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!

Though your horsemen stand with their bridles in hand,
And your sentinels walk around!
Though your matches flare in the midnight air,
And your brazen trumpets sound!

Oh! the orator's tongue shall be heard among
These listening warrior men;
And they'll quickly say: "Why should we slay
Our friends of the Voice and Pen?"
Hurrah!
Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!

When the Lord created the earth and sea,
The stars and the glorious sun,
The Godhead spoke, and the universe woke
And the mighty work was done!
Let a word be flung from the orator's tongue,
Or a drop from the fearless pen,
And the chains accursed asunder burst
That fettered the minds of men!
Hurrah!
Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!

Oh! these are the swords with which we fight,
The arms in which we trust,
Which no tyrant hand will dare to brand,
Which time cannot dim or rust!
When these we bore we triumphed before,
With these we'll triumph again!
And the world will say no power can stay
The Voice and the fearless Pen!
Hurrah!
Hurrah! for the Voice and Pen!

"CEASE TO DO EVIL—LEARN TO DO WELL."¹⁰⁵

Oh! thou whom sacred duty hither calls,
Some glorious hours in freedom's cause to dwell,
Read the mute lesson on thy prison walls,
"Cease to do evil--learn to do well."

If haply thou art one of genius vast,
Of generous heart, of mind sublime and grand,
Who all the spring-time of thy life has pass'd
Battling with tyrants for thy native land,
If thou hast spent thy summer as thy prime,
The serpent brood of bigotry to quell,
Repent, repent thee of thy hideous crime,
"Cease to do evil--learn to do well!"

If thy great heart beat warmly in the cause
Of outraged man, whate'er his race might be,
If thou hast preached the Christian's equal laws,
And stayed the lash beyond the Indian sea!
If at thy call a nation rose sublime,
If at thy voice seven million fetters fell,--
Repent, repent thee of thy hideous crime,
"Cease to do evil--learn to do well!"

If thou hast seen thy country's quick decay,
And, like the prophet, raised thy saving hand,
And pointed out the only certain way
To stop the plague that ravaged o'er the land!
If thou hast summoned from an alien clime
Her banished senate here at home to dwell:
Repent, repent thee of thy hideous crime,
"Cease to do evil--learn to do well!"

Or if, perchance, a younger man thou art,
Whose ardent soul in throbbings doth aspire,
Come weal, come woe, to play the patriot's part
In the bright footsteps of thy glorious sire
If all the pleasures of life's youthful time
Thou hast abandoned for the martyr's cell,
Do thou repent thee of thy hideous crime,
"Cease to do evil--learn to do well!"

Or art thou one whom early science led
To walk with Newton through the immense of heaven,
Who soared with Milton, and with Mina bled,
And all thou hadst in freedom's cause hast given?
Oh! fond enthusiast--in the after time
Our children's children of thy worth shall tell--
England proclaims thy honesty a crime,
"Cease to do evil--learn to do well!"

Or art thou one whose strong and fearless pen
Roused the Young Isle, and bade it dry its tears,
And gathered round thee ardent, gifted men,
The hope of Ireland in the coming years?
Who dares in prose and heart-awakening rhyme,
Bright hopes to breathe and bitter truths to tell?
Oh! dangerous criminal, repent thy crime,
"Cease to do evil--learn to do well!"

"Cease to do evil"--ay! ye madmen, cease!
Cease to love Ireland--cease to serve her well;
Make with her foes a foul and fatal peace,
And quick will ope your darkest, dreariest cell.
"Learn to do well"--ay! learn to betray,
Learn to revile the land in which you dwell
England will bless you on your altered way
"Cease to do evil--learn to do well!"

¹⁰⁵ This inscription is on the front of Richmond Penitentiary, Dublin, in which O'Connell and the other political prisoners were confined in the year 1844.

THE LIVING LAND.

We have mourned and sighed for our buried pride,[106]
We have given what nature gives,
A manly tear o'er a brother's bier,
But now for the Land that lives!
He who passed too soon, in his glowing noon,
The hope of our youthful band,
From heaven's blue wall doth seem to call
"Think, think of your Living Land!
I dwell serene in a happier scene,
Ye dwell in a Living Land!"

Yes! yes! dear shade, thou shalt be obeyed,
We must spend the hour that flies,
In no vain regret for the sun that has set,
But in hope for another to rise;
And though it delay with its guiding ray,
We must each, with his little brand,
Like sentinels light through the dark, dark night,
The steps of our Living Land.
She needeth our care in the chilling air--
Our old, dear Living Land!

Yet our breasts will throb, and the tears will throng
To our eyes for many a day,
For an eagle in strength and a lark in song
Was the spirit that passed away.
Though his heart be still as a frozen rill,
And pulseless his glowing hand,
We must struggle the more for that old green shore
He was making a Living Land.
By him we have lost, at whatever the cost,
She must be a Living Land!

A Living Land, such as Nature plann'd,
When she hollowed our harbours deep,
When she bade the grain wave o'er the plain,
And the oak wave over the steep:
When she bade the tide roll deep and wide,
From its source to the ocean strand,
Oh! it was not to slaves she gave these waves,
But to sons of a Living Land!
Sons who have eyes and hearts to prize
The worth of a Living Land!

Oh! when shall we lose the hostile hues,
That have kept us so long apart?
Or cease from the strife, that is crushing the life
From out of our mother's heart?
Could we lay aside our doubts and our pride,
And join in a common band,
One hour would see our country free,
A young and a Living Land!
With a nation's heart and a nation's part,
A free and a Living Land!

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Davis.

THE DEAD TRIBUNE.

The awful shadow of a great man's death
Falls on this land, so sad and dark before--
Dark with the famine and the fever breath,
And mad dissensions knawing at its core.
Oh! let us hush foul discord's maniac roar,
And make a mournful truce, however brief,
Like hostile armies when the day is o'er!
And thus devote the night-time of our grief
To tears and prayers for him, the great departed chief.

In "Genoa the Superb" O'Connell dies--
That city of Columbus by the sea,
Beneath the canopy of azure skies,
As high and cloudless as his fame must be.
Is it mere chance or higher destiny
That brings these names together? One, the bold
Wanderer in ways that none had trod but he--
The other, too, exploring paths untold;
One a new world would seek, and one would save the old!

With childlike incredulity we cry,
It cannot be that great career is run,
It cannot be but in the eastern sky
Again will blaze that mighty world-watch'd sun!
Ah! fond deceit, the east is dark and dun,
Death's black, impervious cloud is on the skies;
Toll the deep bell, and fire the evening gun,
Let honest sorrow moisten manly eyes:
A glorious sun has set that never more shall rise!

Brothers, who struggle yet in Freedom's van,
Where'er your forces o'er the world are spread,
The last great champion of the rights of man--
The last great Tribune of the world is dead!
Join in our grief, and let our tears be shed
Without reserve or coldness on his bier;
Look on his life as on a map outspread--
His fight for freedom--freedom far and near--
And if a speck should rise, oh! hide it with a tear!

To speak his praises little need have we
To tell the wonders wrought within these waves
Enough, so well he taught us to be free,
That even to him we could not kneel as slaves.
Oh! let our tears be fast-destroying graves,
Where doubt and difference may for ever lie,
Buried and hid as in sepulchral caves;
And let love's fond and reverential eye
Alone behold the star new risen in the sky!

But can it be, that well-known form is stark?
Can it be true, that burning heart is chill?
Oh! can it be that twinkling eye is dark?
And that great thunder voice is hush'd and still?
Never again upon the famous hill
Will he preside as monarch of the land,
With myriad myriads subject to his will;
Never again shall raise that powerful hand,
To rouse, to warm, to check, to kindle, and command!

The twinkling eye, so full of changeful light,
Is dimmed and darkened in a dread eclipse;
The withering scowl, the smile so sunny bright,
Alike have faded from his voiceless lips.
The words of power, the mirthful, merry quips,
The mighty onslaught, and the quick reply,
The biting taunts that cut like stinging whips,
The homely truth, the lessons grave and high,
All, all are with the past, but cannot, shall not die!

A MYSTERY.

They are dying! they are dying! where the golden corn is growing,
They are dying! they are dying! where the crowded herds are lowing;
They are gasping for existence where the streams of life are flowing,
And they perish of the plague where the breeze of health is blowing!

God of Justice! God of Power!
Do we dream? Can it be?

In this land, at this hour,
With the blossom on the tree,
In the gladsome month of May,
When the young lambs play,
When Nature looks around
On her waking children now,
The seed within the ground,
The bud upon the bough?
Is it right, is it fair,
That we perish of despair
In this land, on this soil,
Where our destiny is set,
Which we cultured with our toil,
And watered with our sweat?

We have ploughed, we have sown
But the crop was not our own;
We have reaped, but harpy hands
Swept the harvest from our lands;
We were perishing for food,
When, lo! in pitying mood,
Our kindly rulers gave
The fat fluid of the slave,
While our corn filled the manger
Of the war-horse of the stranger!

God of Mercy! must this last?
Is this land preordained
For the present and the past,
And the future, to be chained,
To be ravaged, to be drained,
To be robbed, to be spoiled,
To be hushed, to be whipt,
Its soaring pinions clipt,
And its every effort foiled?

Do our numbers multiply
But to perish and to die?
Is this all our destiny below,
That our bodies, as they rot,
May fertilise the spot
Where the harvests of the stranger grow?

If this be, indeed, our fate,
Far, far better now, though late,
That we seek some other land and try some other zone;
The coldest, bleakest shore
Will surely yield us more
Than the store-house of the stranger that we dare not call our own.

Kindly brothers of the West,
Who from Liberty's full breast
Have fed us, who are orphans, beneath a step-dame's frown,
Behold our happy state,
And weep your wretched fate
That you share not in the splendours of our empire and our crown!

Kindly brothers of the East,
Thou great tiara'd priest,
Thou sanctified Rienzi of Rome and of the earth--
Or thou who bear'st control
Over golden Istambol,
Who felt for our misfortunes and helped us in our dearth,

Turn here your wondering eyes,
Call your wisest of the wise,
Your Muftis and your ministers, your men of deepest lore;
Let the sagest of your sages
Ope our island's mystic pages,
And explain unto your Highness the wonders of our shore.

A fruitful teeming soil,
Where the patient peasants toil
Beneath the summer's sun and the watery winter sky--
Where they tend the golden grain
Till it bends upon the plain,
Then reap it for the stranger, and turn aside to die.

Where they watch their flocks increase,
And store the snowy fleece,
Till they send it to their masters to be woven o'er the waves;
Where, having sent their meat
For the foreigner to eat,

Their mission is fulfilled, and they creep into their graves.

'Tis for this they are dying where the golden corn is growing,
'Tis for this they are dying where the crowded herds are lowing,
'Tis for this they are dying where the streams of life are flowing,
And they perish of the plague where the breeze of health is blowing.

Sonnets.

AFTER READING J. T. GILBERT'S "THE HISTORY OF DUBLIN."

Long have I loved the beauty of thy streets,
Fair Dublin: long, with unavailing vows,
Sigh'd to all guardian deities who rouse
The spirits of dead nations to new heats
Of life and triumph:--vain the fond conceits,
Nestling like eaves-warmed doves 'neath patriot brows!
Vain as the "Hope," that from thy Custom-House
Looks o'er the vacant bay in vain for fleets.
Genius alone brings back the days of yore:
Look! look, what life is in these quaint old shops--
The loneliest lanes are rattling with the roar
of coach and chair; fans, feathers, flambeaus, fops,
Flutter and flicker through yon open door,
Where Handel's hand moves the great organ stops.[107]

March 11th, 1856.

¹⁰⁷ It is stated that the "Messiah" was first publicly performed in Dublin. See Gilbert's "History of Dublin," vol. i. p. 75, and Townsend's "Visit of Handel to Dublin," p. 64.

TO HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

(Dedication of Calderon's "Chrysanthus and Daria.")

Pensive within the Coliseum's walls
I stood with thee, O Poet of the West!--
The day when each had been a welcome guest
In San Clemente's venerable halls:--
With what delight my memory now recalls
That hour of hours, that flower of all the rest,
When, with thy white beard falling on thy breast,
That noble head, that well might serve as Paul's
In some divinest vision of the saint
By Raffael dreamed--I heard thee mourn the dead--
The martyred host who fearless there, though faint,
Walked the rough road that up to heaven's gate led:
These were the pictures Calderon loved to paint
In golden hues that here perchance have fled.

Yet take the colder copy from my hand,
Not for its own but for the Master's sake;
Take it, as thou, returning home, wilt take
From that divinest soft Italian land
Fixed shadows of the beautiful and grand
In sunless pictures that the sun doth make--
Reflections that may pleasant memories wake
Of all that Raffael touched, or Angelo planned:--
As these may keep what memory else might lose,
So may this photograph of verse impart
An image, though without the native hues
Of Calderon's fire, and yet with Calderon's art,
Of what thou lovest through a kindred muse
That sings in heaven, yet nestles in the heart.

Dublin, August 24th, 1869.

TO KENELM HENRY DIGBY,

AUTHOR OF "MORES CATHOLICI," "THE BROADSTONE OF HONOUR," "COMPITUM," ETC.

(On being presented by him with a copy, painted by himself, of a rare Portrait of Calderon.)

How can I thank thee for this gift of thine,
Digby, the dawn and day-star of our age,

Forerunner thou of many a saint and sage
Who since have fought and conquer'd 'neath the Sign?
Thou hast left, as in a sacred shrine--
What shrine more pure than thy unspotted page?--
The priceless relics, as a heritage,
Of loftiest thoughts and lessons most divine.
Poet and teacher of sublimest lore,
Thou scornest not the painter's mimic skill,
And thus hath come, obedient to thy will
The outward form that Calderon's spirit wore.
Ah! happy canvas that two glories fill,
Where Calderon lives 'neath Digby's hand once more.

October 15th, 1878.

TO ETHNA.¹⁰⁸

Ethna, to cull sweet flowers divinely fair,
To seek for gems of such transparent light
As would not be unworthy to unite
Round thy fair brow, and through thy dark-brown hair,
I would that I had wings to cleave the air,
In search of some far region of delight,
That back to thee from that adventurous flight,
A glorious wreath my happy hands might bear;
Soon would the sweetest Persian rose be thine--
Soon would the glory of Golconda's mine
Flash on thy forehead, like a star--ah! me,
In place of these, I bring, with trembling hand,
These fading wild flowers from our native land--
These simple pebbles from the Irish Sea!

¹⁰⁸ This sonnet to the poet's wife was prefixed as a dedication to his first volume of poems.

Underglimpses.

THE ARRAYING.

The blue-eyed maidens of the sea
With trembling haste approach the lee,
So small and smooth, they seem to be
Not waves, but children of the waves,
And as each linkèd circle laves
The crescent marge of creek and bay,
Their mingled voices all repeat--
O lovely May! O long'd-for May!
We come to bathe thy snow-white feet.

We bring thee treasures rich and rare,
White pearl to deck thy golden hair,
And coral beads, so smoothly fair
And free from every flaw or speck;
That they may lie upon thy neck,
This sweetest day--this brightest day
That ever on the green world shone--
O lovely May, O long'd-for May!
As if thy neck and thee were one.

We bring thee from our distant home
Robes of the pure white-woven foam,
And many a pure, transparent comb,
Formed of the shells the tortoise plaits,
By Babelmandeb's coral-straits;
And amber vases, with inlay
Of roseate pearl time never dims--
O lovely May! O longed-for May!
Wherein to lave thine ivory limbs.

We bring, as sandals for thy feet,
Beam-broidered waves, like those that greet,
With green and golden chrysolite,
The setting sun's departing beams,
When all the western water seems
Like emeralds melted by his ray,
So softly bright, so gently warm--
O lovely May! O long'd-for May!
That thou canst trust thy tender form.

And lo! the ladies of the hill,
The rippling stream, and sparkling rill,
With rival speed, and like good will,
Come, bearing down the mountain's side
The liquid crystals of the tide,
In vitreous vessels clear as they,
And cry, from each worn, winding path:
 O lovely May! O long'd-for May!
We come to lead thee to the bath.

And we have fashioned, for thy sake,
Mirrors more bright than art could make--
The silvery-sheeted mountain lake
Hangs in its carvèd frame of rocks,
Wherein to dress thy dripping locks,
Or bind the dewy curls that stray
Thy trembling breast meandering down--
 O lovely May! O long'd-for May!
Within their self-woven crown.

Arise, O May! arise and see
Thine emerald robes are held for thee
By many a hundred-handed tree,
Who lift from all the fields around
The verdurous velvet from the ground,
And then the spotless vestments lay,
Smooth-folded o'er their outstretch'd arms--
 O lovely May! O long'd-for May!
Wherein to fold thy virgin charms.

Thy robes are stiff with golden bees,
Dotted with gems more bright than these,
And scented by each perfumed breeze
That, blown from heaven's re-open'd bowers,
Become the souls of new-born flowers,
Who thus their sacred birth betray;
Heavenly thou art, nor less should be--
 O lovely May! O long'd-for May!
The favour'd forms that wait on thee.

The moss to guard thy feet is spread,
The wreaths are woven for thy head,
The rosy curtains of thy bed
Become transparent in the blaze
Of the strong sun's resistless gaze:
Then lady, make no more delay,
The world still lives, though spring be dead--
 O lovely May! O long'd-for May!
And thou must rule and reign instead.

The lady from her bed arose,
Her bed the leaves the moss-bud blows
Herself a lily in that rose;
The maidens of the streams and sands
Bathe some her feet and some her hands:
And some the emerald robes display;
Her dewy locks were then upcurled,
 And lovely May--the long'd-for May--
Was crown'd the Queen of all the World!

THE SEARCH.

Let us seek the modest May,
 She is down in the glen,
 Hiding and abiding
 From the common gaze of men,
 Where the silver streamlet crosses
 O'er the smooth stones green with mosses,
 And glancing and dancing,
 Goes singing on its way--
We shall find the modest maiden there to-day.

Let us seek the merry May,
 She is up on the hill,
 Laughing and quaffing
 From the fountain and the rill.
 Where the southern zephyr sprinkles,
 Like bright smiles on age's wrinkles,
 O'er the edges and ledges
 Of the rocks, the wild flowers gay--
We shall find the merry maiden there to-day.

Let us seek the musing May,
She is deep in the wood,
Viewing and pursuing
The beautiful and good.
Where the grassy bank receding,
Spreads its quiet couch for reading
The pages of the sages,
And the poet's lyric lay--
We shall find the musing maiden there to-day.

Let us seek the mirthful May,
She is out on the strand
Racing and chasing
The ripples o'er the sand.
Where the warming waves discover
All the treasures that they cover,
Whitening and brightening
The pebbles for her play--
We shall find the mirthful maiden there to-day.

Let us seek the wandering May,
She is off to the plain,
Finding the winding
Of the labyrinthine lane.
She is passing through its mazes
While the hawthorn, as it gazes
With grief, lets its leaflets
Whiten all the way--
We shall find the wandering maiden there to-day.

Let us seek her in the ray--
Let us track her by the rill--
Wending ascending
The slopings of the hill.
Where the robin from the copses
Breathes a love-note, and then drops his
Trilling, till, willing,
His mate responds his lay--
We shall find the listening maiden there to-day.

But why seek her far away?
Like a young bird in its nest,
She is warming and forming
Her dwelling in her breast.
While the heart she doth repose on,
Like the down the sunwind blows on,
Gloweth, yet showeth
The trembling of the ray--
We shall find the happy maiden there to-day.

THE TIDINGS.

A bright beam came to my window frame,
This sweet May morn,
And it said to the cold, hard glass:
Oh! let me pass,
For I have good news to tell,
The queen of the dewy dell,
The beautiful May is born!

Warm with the race, through the open space,
This sweet May morn,
Came a soft wind out of the skies:
And it said to my heart--Arise!
Go forth from the winter's fire,
For the child of thy long desire,
The beautiful May is born!

The bright beam glanced and the soft wind danced,
This sweet May morn,
Over my cheek and over my eyes;
And I said with a glad surprise:
Oh! lead me forth, ye blessed twain,
Over the hill and over the plain,
Where the beautiful May is born.

Through the open door leaped the beam before
This sweet May morn,
And the soft wind floated along,
Like a poet's song,
Warm from his heart and fresh from his brain;

And they led me over the mount and plain,
To the beautiful May new-born.

My guide so bright and my guide so light,
This sweet May morn,
Led me along o'er the grassy ground,
And I knew by each joyous sight and sound,
The fields so green and the skies so gay,
That heaven and earth kept holiday,
That the beautiful May was born.

Out of the sea with their eyes of glee,
This sweet May morn,
Came the blue waves hastily on;
And they murmuring cried--Thou happy one!
Show us, O Earth! thy darling child,
For we heard far out on the ocean wild,
That the beautiful May was born.

The wingèd flame to the rosebud came,
This sweet May morn,
And it said to the flower--Prepare!
Lay thy nectarine bosom bare;
Full soon, full soon, thou must rock to rest,
And nurse and feed on thy glowing breast,
The beautiful May now born.

The gladsome breeze through the trembling trees,
This sweet May morn,
Went joyously on from bough to bough;
And it said to the red-branched plum--O thou,
Cover with mimic pearls and gems,
And with silver bells, thy coral stems,
For the beautiful May now born.

Under the eaves and through the leaves
This sweet May morn,
The soft wind whispering flew:
And it said to the listening birds--Oh, you,
Sweet choristers of the skies,
Awaken your tenderest lullabies,
For the beautiful May now born.

The white cloud flew to the uttermost blue,
This sweet May morn,
It bore, like a gentle carrier-dove,
The blessèd news to the realms above;
While its sister coo'd in the midst of the grove,
And within my heart the spirit of love,
That the beautiful May was born!

WELCOME, MAY.

Welcome, May! welcome, May!
Thou hast been too long away,
All the widow'd wintry hours
Wept for thee, gentle May;
But the fault was only ours--
We were sad when thou wert gay!

Welcome, May! welcome, May!
We are wiser far to-day--
Fonder, too, than we were then.
Gentle May! joyous May!
Now that thou art come again,
We perchance may make thee stay.

Welcome, May! welcome, May!
Everything kept holiday
Save the human heart alone.
Mirthful May! gladsome May!
We had cares and thou hadst none
When thou camest last this way!

When thou camest last this way
Blossoms bloomed on every spray,
Buds on barren boughs were born--
Fertile May! fruitful May!
Like the rose upon the thorn
Cannot grief awhile be gay?

'Tis not for the golden ray,

Or the flowers that strew thy way,
 O immortal One! thou art
Here to-day, gentle May--
 'Tis to man's ungrateful heart
That thy fairy footsteps stray.

'Tis to give that living clay
Flowers that ne'er can fade away--
 Fond remembrances of bliss;
And a foretaste, mystic May,
 Of the life that follows this,
Full of joys that last alway!

Other months are cold and gray,
Some are bright, but what are they?
 Earth may take the whole eleven--
Hopeful May--happy May!
 Thine the borrowed month of heaven
Cometh thence and points the way.

Wingèd minstrels come and play
Through the woods their roundelay;
 Who can tell but only thou,
Spirit-ear'd, inspirèd May,
 On the bud-embow'rèd bough
What the happy lyrists say?

Is the burden of their lay
Love's desire, or Love's decay?
 Are there not some fond regrets
Mix'd with these, divinest May,
 For the sun that never sets
Down the everlasting day?

But upon thy wondrous way
Mirth alone should dance and play--
 No regrets, how fond they be,
E'er should wound the ear of May--
 Bow before her, flower and tree!
Nor, my heart, do thou delay.

THE MEETING OF THE FLOWERS.

There is within this world of ours
 Full many a happy home and hearth;
What time, the Saviour's blessed birth
Makes glad the gloom of wintry hours.

When back from severed shore and shore,
 And over seas that vainly part,
The scattered embers of the heart
Glow round the parent hearth once more.

When those who now are anxious men,
 Forget their growing years and cares;
Forget the time-flakes on their hairs,
And laugh, light-hearted boys again.

When those who now are wedded wives,
 By children of their own embraced,
Recall their early joys, and taste
Anew the childhood of their lives.

And the old people--the good sire
 And kindly parent-mother--glow
To feel their children's children throw
Fresh warmth around the Christmas fire.

When in the sweet colloquial din,
 Unheard the sullen sleet-winds shout;
And though the winter rage without,
The social summer reigns within.

But in this wondrous world of ours
 Are other circling kindred chords,
Binding poor harmless beasts and birds,
And the fair family of flowers.

That family that meet to-day
 From many a foreign field and glen,
For what is Christmas-tide with men
Is with the flowers the time of May.

Back to the meadows of the West,
Back to their natal fields they come;
And as they reach their wished-for home,
The Mother folds them to her breast.

And as she breathes, with balmy sighs,
A fervent blessing over them,
The tearful, glistening dew begem
The parents' and the children's eyes.

She spreads a carpet for their feet,
And mossy pillows for their heads,
And curtains round their fairy beds
With blossom-broidered branches sweet.

She feeds them with ambrosial food,
And fills their cups with nectared wine;
And all her choristers combine
To sing their welcome from the wood:

And all that love can do is done,
As shown to them in countless ways:
She kindles to the brighter blaze
The fireside of the world--the sun.

And with her own soft, trembling hands,
In many a calm and cool retreat,
She laves the dust that soils their feet
In coming from the distant lands.

Or, leading down some sinuous path,
Where the shy stream's encircling heights
Shut out all prying eyes, invites
Her lily daughters to the bath.

There, with a mother's harmless pride,
Admires them sport the waves among:
Now lay their ivory limbs along
The buoyant bosom of the tide.

Now lift their marble shoulders o'er
The rippling glass, or sink with fear,
As if the wind approaching near
Were some wild wooer from the shore.

Or else the parent turns to these,
The younglings born beneath her eye,
And hangs the baby-buds close by,
In wind-rocked cradles from the trees.

And as the branches fall and rise,
Each leafy-folded swathe expands:
And now are spread their tiny hands,
And now are seen their starry eyes.

But soon the feast concludes the day,
And yonder in the sun-warmed dell,
The happy circle meet to tell
Their labours since the bygone May.

A bright-faced youth is first to raise
His cheerful voice above the rest,
Who bears upon his hardy breast
A golden star with silver rays:[109]

Worthily won, for he had been
A traveller in many a land,
And with his slender staff in hand
Had wandered over many a green:

Had seen the Shepherd Sun unpen
Heaven's fleecy flocks, and let them stray
Over the high-pealed Himalay,
Till night shut up the fold again:

Had sat upon a mossy ledge,
O'er Baiæ in the morning's beams,
Or where the sulphurous crater steams
Had hung suspended from the edge:

Or following its devious course
Up many a weary winding mile,

Had tracked the long, mysterious Nile
Even to its now no-fabled source:

Resting, perchance, as on he strode,
To see the herded camels pass
Upon the strips of wayside grass
That line with green the dust-white road.

Had often closed his weary lids
In oases that deck the waste,
Or in the mighty shadows traced
By the eternal pyramids.

Had slept within an Arab's tent,
Pitched for the night beneath a palm,
Or when was heard the vesper psalm,
With the pale nun in worship bent:

Or on the moonlit fields of France,
When happy village maidens trod
Lightly the fresh and verdurous sod,
There was he seen amid the dance:

Yielding with sympathizing stem
To the quick feet that round him flew,
Sprang from the ground as they would do,
Or sank unto the earth with them:

Or, childlike, played with girl and boy
By many a river's bank, and gave
His floating body to the wave,
Full many a time to give them joy.

These and a thousand other tales
The traveller told, and welcome found;
These were the simple tales went round
The happy circles in the vales.

Keeping reserved with conscious pride
His noblest act, his crowning feat,
How he had led even Humboldt's feet
Up Chimborazo's mighty side.

Guiding him through the trackless snow,
By sheltered clefts of living soil,
Sweet'ning the fearless traveller's toil,
With memories of the world below.

Such was the hardy Daisy's tale,
And then the maidens of the group--
Lilies, whose languid heads down droop
Over their pearl-white shoulders pale--

Told, when the genial glow of June
Had passed, they sought still warmer climes
And took beneath the verdurous limes
Their sweet siesta through the noon:

And seeking still, with fond pursuit,
The phantom Health, which lures and wiles
Its followers to the shores and isles
Of amber waves, and golden fruit.

There they had seen the orange grove
Enwreath its gold with buds of white,
As if themselves had taken flight,
And settled on the boughs above.

There kiss'd by every rosy mouth
And press'd to every gentle breast,
These pallid daughters of the West
Reigned in the sunshine of the South.

And thoughtful of the things divine,
Were oft by many an altar found,
Standing like white-robed angels round
The precincts of some sacred shrine.

And Violets, with dark blue eyes,
Told how they spent the winter time,
In Andalusia's Eden clime,
Or 'neath Italia's kindred skies.

Chiefly when evening's golden gloom
Veil'd Rome's serenest ether soft,
Bending in thoughtful musings oft,
Above the lost Alastor's tomb;

Or the twin-poet's; he who sings
"A thing of beauty never dies,"
Paying them back in fragrant sighs,
The love they bore all loveliest things.

The flower[110] whose bronzed cheeks recalls
The incessant beat of wind and sun,
Spoke of the lore his search had won
Upon Pompeii's rescued walls.

How, in his antiquarian march,
He crossed the tomb-strewn plain of Rome,
Sat on some prostrate plinth, or clomb
The Coliseum's topmost arch.

And thence beheld in glad amaze
What Nero's guilty eyes, aloof,
Drank in from off his golden roof--
The sun-bright city all ablaze:

Ablaze by day with solar fires--
Ablaze by night with lunar beams,
With lambent lustre on its streams,
And golden glories round its spires!

Thence he beheld that wondrous dome,
That, rising o'er the radiant town,
Circles, with Art's eternal crown,
The still imperial brow of Rome.

Nor was the Marigold remiss,
But told how in her crown of gold
She sat, like Persia's king of old,
High o'er the shores of Salamis;

And saw, against the morning sky,
The white-sailed fleets their wings display;
And ere the tranquil close of day,
Fade, like the Persian's from her eye.

Fleets, with their white flags all unfurl'd,
Inscribed with "Commerce," and with "Peace,"
Bearing no threatened ill to Greece,
But mutual good to all the world.

And various other flowers were seen:
Cowslip and Oxlip, and the tall
Tulip, whose grateful hearts recall
The winter homes where they had been.

Some in the sunny vales, beneath
The sheltering hills; and some, whose eyes
Were gladdened by the southern skies,
High up amid the blooming heath.

Meek, modest flowers, by poets loved,
Sweet Pansies, with their dark eyes fringed
With silken lashes finely tinged,
That trembled if a leaf but moved:

And some in gardens where the grass
Mossed o'er the green quadrangle's breast,
There dwelt each flower, a welcome guest,
In crystal palaces of glass:

Shown as a beauteous wonder there,
By beauty's hands to beauty's eyes,
Breathing what mimic art supplies,
The genial glow of sun-warm air.

Nor were the absent ones forgot,
Those whom a thousand cares detained,
Those whom the links of duty chained
Awhile from this their natal spot.

One, who is labour's useful tracks
Is proudly eminent, who roams
The providence of humble homes--

The blue-eyed, fair-haired, friendly Flax:

Giving himself to cheer and light
The cottier's else o'ershadowing murk,
Filling his hand with cheerful work,
And all his being with delight:

And one, the loveliest and the last,
For whom they waited day by day,
All through the merry month of May,
Till one-and-thirty days had passed.

And when, at length, the longed-for noon
Of night arched o'er th' expectant green
The Rose, their sister and their queen--
Came on the joyous wings of June:

And when was heard the gladsome sound,
And when was breath'd her beauteous name,
Unnumbered buds, like lamps of flame,
Gleamed from the hedges all around:

Where she had been, the distant clime,
The orient realm their sceptre sways,
The poet's pen may paint and praise
Hereafter in his simple rhyme.

109 The Daisy.

110 The Wallflower.

THE PROGRESS OF THE ROSE.

The days of old, the good old days,
Whose misty memories haunt us still,
Demand alike our blame and praise,
And claim their shares of good and ill.

They had strong faith in things unseen,
But stronger in the things they saw
Revenge for Mercy's pitying mien,
And lordly Right for equal Law.

'Tis true the cloisters all throughout
The valleys rais'd their peaceful towers,
And their sweet bells ne'er wearied out
In telling of the tranquil hours.

But from the craggy hills above,
A shadow darken'd o'er the sward;
For there--a vulture to this dove--
Hung the rude fortress of the lord;

Whence oft the ravening bird of prey
Descending, to his eyry wild
Bore, with exulting cries, away
The powerless serf's dishonour'd child.

Then Safety lit with partial beams
But the high-castled peaks of Force,
And Polity revers'd its streams,
And bade them flow but for their Source.

That Source from which, meandering down,
A thousand streamlets circle now;
For then the monarch's glorious crown
But girt the most rapacious brow.

But individual Force is dead,
And link'd Opinion late takes birth;
And now a woman's gentle head
Supports the mightiest crown on earth.

A pleasing type of all the change
Permitted to our eyes to see,
When she herself is free to range
Throughout the realm her rule makes free.

Not prison'd in a golden cage,
To sigh or sing her lonely state,
A show for youth or doating age,

With idiot eyes to contemplate.

But when the season sends a thrill
To ev'ry heart that lives and moves,
She seeks the freedom of the hill,
Or shelter of the noontide groves.

There, happy with her chosen mate,
And circled by her chirping brood,
Forgets the pain of being great
In the mere bliss of being good.

And thus the festive summer yields
No sight more happy, none so gay,
As when amid her subject-fields
She wanders on from day to day.

Resembling her, whom proud and fond,
The bard hath sung of--she of old,
Who bore upon her snow-white wand,
All Erin through, the ring of gold.

Thus, from her castles coming forth,
She wanders many a summer hour,
Bearing the ring of private worth
Upon the silver wand of Power.

Thus musing, while around me flew
Sweet airs from fancy's amaranth bowers,
Methought, what this fair queen doth do,
Hath yearly done the queen of flowers.

The beauteous queen of all the flowers,
Whose faintest sigh is like a spell,
Was born in Eden's sinless bowers
Long ere our primal parents fell.

There in a perfect form she grew,
Nor felt decay, nor tasted death;
Heaven was reflected in her hue,
And heaven's own odours filled her breath.

And ere the angel of the sword
Drove thence the founders of our race,
They knelt before him, and implor'd
Some relic of that radiant place:

Some relic that, while time would last,
Should make men weep their fatal sin;
Proof of the glory that was past,
And type of that they yet might win.

The angel turn'd, and ere his hands
The gates of bliss for ever close,
Pluck'd from the fairest tree that stands
Within heaven's walls--the peerless rose.

And as he gave it unto them,
Let fall a tear upon its leaves--
The same celestial liquid gem
We oft perceive on dewy eves.

Grateful the hapless twain went forth,
The golden portals backward whirl'd,
Then first they felt the biting north,
And all the rigour of this world.

Then first the dreadful curse had power
To chill the life-streams at their source,
Till e'en the sap within the flower
Grew curdled in its upward course.

They twin'd their trembling hands across
Their trembling breasts against the drift,
Then sought some little mound of moss
Wherein to lay their precious gift.

Some little soft and mossy mound,
Wherein the flower might rest till morn;
In vain! God's curse was on the ground,
For through the moss out gleam'd the thorn!

Out gleam'd the forkèd plant, as if

The serpent tempter, in his rage,
Had put his tongue in every leaf
To mock them through their pilgrimage.

They did their best; their hands eras'd
The thorns of greater strength and size;
Then 'mid the softer moss they plac'd
The exiled flower of paradise.

The plant took root; the beams and showers
Came kindly, and its fair head rear'd;
But lo! around its heaven of flowers
The thorns and moss of earth appear'd.

Type of the greater change that then
Upon our hapless nature fell,
When the degenerate hearts of men
Bore sin and all the thorns of hell.

Happy, indeed, and sweet our pain,
However torn, however tost,
If, like the rose, our hearts retain
Some vestige of the heaven we've lost.

Where she upon this colder sphere
Found shelter first, she there abode;
Her native bowers, unseen were near,
And near her still Euphrates flow'd--

Brilliantly flow'd; but, ah! how dim,
Compar'd to what its light had been;--
As if the fiery cherubim
Let pass the tide, but kept its sheen.

At first she liv'd and reigned alone,
No lily-maidens yet had birth;
No turban'd tulips round her throne
Bow'd with their foreheads to the earth.

No rival sisters had she yet--
She with the snowy forehead fringed
With blushes; nor the sweet brunette
Whose cheek the yellow sun has ting'd.

Nor all the harbingers of May,
Nor all the clustering joys of June:
Uncarpeted the bare earth lay,
Unhung the branches' gay festoon.

But Nature came in kindly mood,
And gave her kindred of her own,
Knowing full well it is not good
For man or flower to be alone.

Long in her happy court she dwelt,
In floral games and feasts of mirth,
Until her heart kind wishes felt
To share her joy with all the earth.

To go from longing land to land
A stateless queen, a welcome guest,
O'er hill and vale, by sea and strand,
From North to South, and East to West.

And thus it is that every year,
Ere Autumn dons his russet robe,
She calls her unseen charioteer,
And makes her progress through the globe.

First, sharing in the month-long feast--
"The Feast of Roses"--in whose light
And grateful joy, the first and least
Of all her subjects reunite.

She sends her heralds on before:
The bee rings out his bugle bold,
The daisy spreads her marbled floor,
The buttercup her cloth of gold.

The lark leaps up into the sky,
To watch her coming from afar;
The larger moon descends more nigh,
More lingering lags the morning star.

From out the villages and towns,
From all of mankind's mix'd abodes,
The people, by the lawns and downs,
Go meet her on the winding roads.

And some would bear her in their hands,
And some would press her to their breast,
And some would worship where she stands,
And some would claim her as their guest.

Her gracious smile dispels the gloom
Of many a love-sick girl and boy;
Her very presence in a room
Doth fill the languid air with joy.

Her breath is like a fragrant tune,
She is the soul of every spot;
Gives nature to the rich saloon,
And splendour to the peasant's cot.

Her mission is to calm and soothe,
And purely glad life's every stage;
Her garlands grace the brow of youth,
And hide the hollow lines of age.

But to the poet she belongs,
By immemorial ties of love;--
Herself a folded book of songs,
Dropp'd from the angel's hands above.

Then come and make his heart thy home,
For thee it opes, for thee it glows;--
Type of ideal beauty, come!
Wonder of Nature! queenly Rose!

THE BATH OF THE STREAMS.

Down unto the ocean,
Trembling with emotion,
Panting at the notion,
See the rivers run--
In the golden weather,
Tripping o'er the heather,
Laughing all together--
Madcaps every one.

Like a troop of girls
In their loosen'd curls,
See, the concourse whirls
Onward wild with glee;
List their tuneful tattle,
Hear their pretty prattle,
How they'll love to battle
With the assailing sea.

See, the winds pursue them,
See, the willows woo them
See, the lakelets view them
Wistfully afar,
With a wistful wonder
Down the green slopes under,
Wishing, too, to thunder
O'er their prison bar.

Wishing, too, to wander
By the sea-waves yonder,
There awhile to squander
All their silvery stores,
There awhile forgetting
All their vain regretting
When their foam went fretting
Round the rippling shores.

Round the rocky region,
Whence their prison'd legion,
Oft and oft besieging,
Vainly sought to break,
Vainly sought to throw them
O'er the vales below them,
Through the clefts that show them
Paths they dare not take.

But the swift streams speed them
In the might of freedom,
Down the paths that lead them
 Joyously along.
Blinding green recesses
With their floating tresses,
Charming wildernesses
 With their murmuring song.

Now the streams are gliding
With a sweet abiding--
Now the streams are hiding
 'Mid the whispering reeds--
Now the streams outglancing
With a shy advancing
Naiad-like go dancing
 Down the golden meads.

Down the golden meadows,
Chasing their own shadows--
Down the golden meadows,
 Playing as they run:
Playing with the sedges,
By the water's edges,
Leaping o'er the ledges,
 Glist'ning in the sun:

Streams and streamlets blending,
Each on each attending,
All together wending,
 Seek the silver sands;
Like the sisters holding
With a fond enfolding--
Like to sisters holding
 One another's hands.

Now with foreheads blushing
With a rapturous flushing--
Now the streams are rushing
 In among the waves.
Now in shy confusion,
With a pale suffusion,
Seek the wild seclusion
 Of sequestered caves.

All the summer hours
Hiding in the bowers,
Scattering silver showers
 Out upon the strand;
O'er the pebbles crashing,
Through the ripples splashing,
Liquid pearl-wreaths dashing
 From each other's hand.

By yon mossy boulder,
See an ivory shoulder,
Dazzling the beholder,
 Rises o'er the blue;
But a moment's thinking,
Sends the Naiad sinking,
With a modest shrinking,
 From the gazer's view.

Now the wave compresses
All their golden tresses--
Now their sea-green dresses
 Float them o'er the tide;
Now with elf-locks dripping
From the brine they're sipping,
With a fairy tripping,
 Down the green waves glide.

Some that scarce have tarried
By the shore are carried
Sea-ward to be married
 To the glad gods there:
Triton's horn is playing,
Neptune's steeds are neighing,
Restless with delaying
 For a bride so fair.

See at first the river

How its pale lips quiver,
How its white waves shiver
 With a fond unrest;
List how low it sigheth,
See how swift it flieth,
Till at length it lieth
 On the ocean's breast.

Such is Youth's admiring,
Such is Love's desiring,
Such is Hope's aspiring
 For the higher goal;
Such is man's condition
Till in heaven's fruition
Ends the mystic mission
 Of the eternal soul.

THE FLOWERS OF THE TROPICS.

"C'est ainsi qu'elle nature a mis, entre les tropiques, la plupart des fleurs apparentes sur des arbres. J'y en ai vu bien peu dans les prairies, mais beaucoup dans les forêts. Dans ces pays, il faut lever les yeux en haut pour y voir des fleurs; dans le notre, il faut les baisser à terre."—SAINT PIERRE, *Etudes de la Nature*.

In the soft sunny regions that circle the waist
 Of the globe with a girdle of topaz and gold,
Which heave with the throbbings of life where they're placed,
 And glow with the fire of the heart they enfold;
Where to live, where to breathe, seems a paradise dream--
 A dream of some world more elysian than this--
Where, if Death and if Sin were away, it would seem
 Not the foretaste alone, but the fulness of bliss.

Where all that can gladden the sense and the sight,
 Fresh fruitage as cool and as crimson as even;
Where the richness and rankness of Nature unite
 To build the frail walls of the Sybarite's heaven.
But, ah! should the heart feel the desolate dearth
 Of some purer enjoyment to speed the bright hours,
In vain through the leafy luxuriance of earth
 Looks the languid-lit eye for the freshness of flowers.

No, its glance must be turned from the earth to the sky,
 From the clay-rooted grass to the heaven-branching trees;
And there, oh! enchantment for soul and for eye,
 Hang blossoms so pure that an angel might seize.
Thus, when pleasure begins from its sweetness to cloy,
 And the warm heart grows rank like a soil over ripe,
We must turn from the earth for some promise of joy,
 And look up to heaven for a holier type.

In the climes of the North, which alternately shine,
 Now warm with the sunbeam, now white with the snow,
And which, like the breast of the earth they entwine.
 Grow chill with its chillness, or glow with its glow,
In those climes where the soul, on more vigorous wing,
 Rises soaring to heaven in its rapturous flight,
And, led ever on by the radiance they fling,
 Tracketh star after star through infinitude's night.

How oft doth the seer from his watch-tower on high.
 Scan the depths of the heavens with his wonderful glass;
And, like Adam of old, when Earth's creatures went by,
 Name the orbs and the sun-lighted spheres as they pass.
How often, when drooping, and weary, and worn,
 With fire-throbbing temples and star-dazzled eyes,
Does he turn from his glass at the breaking of morn,
 And exchanges for flowers all the wealth of the skies?

Ah! thus should we mingle the far and the near,
 And, while striving to pierce what the Godhead conceals,
From the far heights of Science look down with a fear
 To the lowliest truths the same Godhead reveals.
When the rich fruit of Joy glads the heart and the mouth,
 Or the bold wing of Thought leads the daring soul forth;
Let us proudly look up as for flowers of the south,
 Let us humbly look down as for flowers of the north.

THE YEAR-KING.

It is the last of all the days,

The day on which the Old Year dies.
Ah! yes, the fated hour is near;
I see upon his snow-white bier
Outstretched the weary wanderer lies,
And mark his dying gaze.

A thousand visions dark and fair,
Crowd on the old man's fading sight;
A thousand mingled memories throng
The old man's heart, still green and strong;
The heritage of wrong and right
He leaves unto his heir.

He thinks upon his budding hopes,
The day he stood the world's young king,
Upon his coronation morn,
When diamonds hung on every thorn,
And peeped the pearl flowers of the spring
Adown the emerald slopes.

He thinks upon his youthful pride,
When in his ermined cloak of snow,
Upon his war-horse, stout and staunch--
The cataract-crested avalanche--
He thundered on the rocks below,
With his warriors at his side.

From rock to rock, through cloven scalp,
By rivers rushing to the sea,
With thunderous sound his army wound
The heaven supporting hills around;
Like that the Man of Destiny
Led down the astonished Alp.

The bugles of the blast rang out,
The banners of the lightning swung,
The icy spear-points of the pine
Bristled along the advancing line,
And as the winds' *reveillé* rung,
Heavens! how the hills did shout.

Adown each slippery precipice
Rattled the loosen'd rocks, like balls
Shot from his booming thunder guns,
Whose smoke, effacing stars and suns,
Darkens the stifled heaven, and falls
Far off in arrowy showers of ice.

Ah! yes, he was a mighty king,
A mighty king, full flushed with youth;
He cared not then what ruin lay
Upon his desolating way;
Not his the cause of God or Truth,
But the brute lust of conquering.

Nought could resist his mighty will,
The green grass withered where he stood;
His ruthless hands were prompt to seize
Upon the tresses of the trees;
Then shrieked the maidens of the wood,
And the saplings of the hill.

Nought could resist his mighty will;
For in his ranks rode spectral Death;
The old expired through very fear;
And pined the young, when he came near;
The faintest flutter of his breath
Was sharp enough to kill.

Nought could resist his mighty will;
The flowers fell dead beneath his tread;
The streams of life, that through the plains
Throb night and day through crystal veins,
With feverish pulses frighten'd fled,
Or curdled, and grew still.

Nought could resist his mighty will;
On rafts of ice, blue-hued, like steel,
He crossed the broadest rivers o'er
Ah! me, and then was heard no more
The murmur of the peaceful wheel
That turned the peasant's mill.

But why the evil that attends
On War recall to further view?
Accursèd War!--the world too well
Knows what thou art--thou fiend of hell!
The heartless havoc of a few
For their own selfish ends!

Soon, soon the youthful conqueror
Felt moved, and bade the horrors cease;
Nature resumed its ancient sway,
Warm tears rolled down the cheeks of Day,
And Spring, the harbinger of peace
Proclaimed the fight was o'er.

Oh! what a change came o'er the world;
The winds, that cut like naked swords,
Shed balm upon the wounds they made;
And they who came the first to aid
The foray of grim Winter's hordes
The flag of truce unfurled.

Oh! how the song of joy, the sound
Of rapture thrills the leaguered camps
The tinkling showers like cymbals clash
Upon the late leaves of the ash,
And blossoms hang like festal lamps
On all the trees around.

And there is sunshine, sent to strew
God's cloth of gold, whereon may dance,
To music that harmonious moves,
The linkèd Graces and the Loves,
Making reality romance,
And rare romance even more than true.

The fields laughed out in dimpling flowers,
The streams' blue eyes flashed bright with smiles;
The pale-faced clouds turned rosy-red,
As they looked down from overhead,
Then fled o'er continents and isles,
To shed their happy tears in showers.

The youthful monarch's heart grew light
To find what joy good deeds can shed;
To nurse the orphan buds that bent
Over each turf-piled monument,
Wherein the parent flowers lay dead
Who perished in that fight.

And as he roamed from day to day,
Atoning thus to flower and tree,
Flinging his lavish gold around
In countless yellow flowers, he found,
By gladsome-weeping April's knee,
The modest maiden May.

Oh! she was young as angels are,
Ere the eternal youth they lead
Gives any clue to tell the hours
They've spent in heaven's elysian bowers;
Ere God before their eyes decreed
The birth-day of some beauteous star.

Oh! she was fair as are the leaves
Of pale white roses, when the light
Of sunset, through some trembling bough,
Kisses the queen-flower's blushing brow,
Nor leaves it red nor marble white,
But rosy-pale, like April eyes.

Her eyes were like forget-me-nots,
Dropped in the silvery snowdrop's cup,
Or on the folded myrtle buds,
The azure violet of the woods;
Just as the thirsty sun drinks up
The dewy diamonds on the plots.

And her sweet breath was like the sighs
Breathed by a babe of youth and love;
When all the fragrance of the south
From the cleft cherry of its mouth,
Meets the fond lips that from above
Stoop to caress its slumbering eyes.

He took the maiden by the hand,
And led her in her simple gown
Unto a hamlet's peaceful scene,
Upraised her standard on the green;
And crowned her with a rosy crown
The beauteous Queen of all the land.

And happy was the maiden's reign--
For peace, and mirth, and twin-born love
Came forth from out men's hearts that day,
Their gladsome fealty to pay;
And there was music in the grove,
And dancing on the plain.

And Labour carolled at his task,
Like the blithe bird that sings and builds
His happy household 'mid the leaves;
And now the fibrous twig he weaves,
And now he sings to her who gilds
The sole horizon he doth ask.

And Sickness half forgot its pain,
And Sorrow half forgot its grief;
And Eld forgot that it was old,
As if to show the age of gold
Was not the poet's fond belief,
But every year comes back again.

The Year-King passed along his way:
Rejoiced, rewarded, and content;
He passed to distant lands and new;
For other tasks he had to do;
But wheresoe'er the wanderer went,
He ne'er forgot his darling May.

He sent her stems of living gold
From the rich plains of western lands,
And purple-gushing grapes from vines
Born of the amorous sun that shines
Where Tagus rolls its golden sands,
Or Guadaleté old.

And citrons from Firenze's fields,
And golden apples from the isles
That gladden the bright southern seas,
True home of the Hesperides:
Which now no dragon guards, but smiles,
The bounteous mother, as she yields.

And then the king grew old like Lear--
His blood waxed chill, his beard grew gray;
He changed his sceptre for a staff:
And as the thoughtless children laugh
To see him totter on his way,
He knew his destined hour was near.

And soon it came; and here he strives,
Outstretched upon his snow-white bier,
To reconcile the dread account--
How stands the balance, what the amount;
As we shall do with trembling fear
When our last hour arrives.

Come, let us kneel around his bed,
And pray unto his God and ours
For mercy on his servant here:
Oh, God be with the dying year!
And God be with the happy hours
That died before their sire lay dead!

And as the bells commingling ring
The New Year in, the Old Year out,
Muffled and sad, and now in peals
With which the quivering belfry reels,
Grateful and hopeful be the shout,
The King is dead!--Long live the King!

THE AWAKING.

A lady came to a snow-white bier,
Where a youth lay pale and dead:

She took the veil from her widowed head,
And, bending low, in his ear she said:
"Awaken! for I am here."

She pass'd with a smile to a wild wood near,
Where the boughs were barren and bare;
She tapp'd on the bark with her fingers fair,
And call'd to the leaves that were buried there:
"Awaken! for I am here."

The birds beheld her without a fear,
As she walk'd through the dank-moss'd dells;
She breathed on their downy citadels,
And whisper'd the young in their ivory shells:
"Awaken! for I am here."

On the graves of the flowers she dropp'd a tear,
But with hope and with joy, like us;
And even as the Lord to Lazarus,
She call'd to the slumbering sweet flowers thus:
"Awaken! for I am here."

To the lilies that lay in the silver mere,
To the reeds by the golden pond;
To the moss by the rounded marge beyond,
She spoke with her voice so soft and fond:
"Awaken! for I am here."

The violet peep'd, with its blue eye clear,
From under its own gravestone;
For the blessed tidings around had flown,
And before she spoke the impulse was known:
"Awaken! for I am here."

The pale grass lay with its long looks sere
On the breast of the open plain;
She loosened the matted hair of the slain,
And cried, as she filled each juicy vein:
"Awaken! for I am here."

The rush rose up with its pointed spear
The flag, with its falchion broad;
The dock uplifted its shield unawed,
As her voice rung over the quickening sod:
"Awaken! for I am here."

The red blood ran through the clover near,
And the heath on the hills o'erhead;
The daisy's fingers were tipp'd with red,
As she started to life, when the lady said:
"Awaken! for I am here."

And the young Year rose from his snow-white bier,
And the flowers from their green retreat;
And they came and knelt at the lady's feet,
Saying all, with their mingled voices sweet:
"O lady! behold us here."

THE RESURRECTION.

The day of wintry wrath is o'er,
The whirlwind and the storm have pass'd,
The whiten'd ashes of the snow
Enwrap the ruined world no more;
Nor keenly from the orient blow
The venom'd hissings of the blast.

The frozen tear-drops of despair
Have melted from the trembling thorn;
Hope plumes unseen her radiant wing,
And lo! amid the expectant air,
The trumpet of the angel Spring
Proclaims the resurrection morn.

Oh! what a wave of gladsome sound
Runs rippling round the shores of space,
As the requicken'd earth upheaves
The swelling bosom of the ground,
And Death's cold pallor, startled, leaves
The deepening roses of her face.

Up from their graves the dead arise--

The dead and buried flowers of spring;--
Up from their graves in glad amaze,
Once more to view the long-lost skies,
Resplendent with the dazzling rays
Of their great coming Lord and King.

And lo! even like that mightiest one,
In the world's last and awful hour,
Surrounded by the starry seven,
So comes God's greatest work, the sun,
Upborne upon the clouds of heaven,
In pomp, and majesty, and power.

The virgin snowdrop bends its head
Above its grave in grateful prayer;
The daisy lifts its radiant brow,
With a saint's glory round it shed;
The violet's worth, unhidden now,
Is wafted wide by every air.

The parent stem reclasps once more
Its long-lost severed buds and leaves;
Once more the tender tendrils twine
Around the forms they clasped of yore
The very rain is now a sign
Great Nature's heart no longer grieves.

And now the judgment-hour arrives,
And now their final doom they know;
No dreadful doom is theirs whose birth
Was not more stainless than their lives;
'Tis Goodness calls them from the earth,
And Mercy tells them where to go.

Some of them fly with glad accord,
Obedient to the high behest,
To worship with their fragrant breath
Around the altars of the Lord;
And some, from nothingness and death,
Pass to the heaven of beauty's breast.

Oh, let the simple fancy be
Prophetic of our final doom;
Grant us, O Lord, when from the sod
Thou deign'st to call us too, that we
Pass to the bosom of our God
From the dark nothing of the tomb!

THE FIRST OF THE ANGELS.

Hush! hush! through the azure expanse of the sky
Comes a low, gentle sound, 'twixt a laugh and a sigh;
And I rise from my writing, and look up on high,
And I kneel, for the first of God's angels is nigh!

Oh, how to describe what my rapt eyes descry!
For the blue of the sky is the blue of his eye;
And the white clouds, whose whiteness the snowflakes outvie,
Are the luminous pinions on which he doth fly!

And his garments of gold gleam at times like the pyre
Of the west, when the sun in a blaze doth expire;
Now tinged like the orange, now flaming with fire!
Half the crimson of roses and purple of Tyre.

And his voice, on whose accents the angels have hung,
He himself a bright angel, immortal and young,
Scatters melody sweeter the green buds among
Than the poet e'er wrote, or the nightingale sung.

It comes on the balm-bearing breath of the breeze,
And the odours that later will gladden the bees,
With a life and a freshness united to these,
From the rippling of waters and rustling of trees.

Like a swan to its young o'er the glass of a pond,
So to earth comes the angel, as graceful and fond;
While a bright beam of sunshine--his magical wand,
Strikes the fields at my feet, and the mountains beyond.

They waken--they start into life at a bound--
Flowers climb the tall hillocks, and cover the ground

With a nimbus of glory the mountains are crown'd,
As the rivulets rush to the ocean profound.

There is life on the earth, there is calm on the sea,
And the rough waves are smoothed, and the frozen are free;
And they gambol and ramble like boys, in their glee,
Round the shell-shining strand or the grass-bearing lea.

There is love for the young, there is life for the old,
And wealth for the needy, and heat for the cold;
For the dew scatters, nightly, its diamonds untold,
And the snowdrop its silver, the crocus its gold!

God!--whose goodness and greatness we bless and adore--
Be Thou praised for this angel--the first of the four--
To whose charge Thou has given the world's uttermost shore,
To guide it, and guard it, till time is no more!

SPIRIT VOICES.

There are voices, spirit voices,
Sweetly sounding everywhere,
At whose coming earth rejoices,
And the echoing realms of air,
And their joy and jubilation
Pierce the near and reach the far,
From the rapid world's gyration
To the twinkling of the star.

One, a potent voice uplifting,
Stops the white cloud on its way,
As it drives with driftless drifting
O'er the vacant vault of day,
And in sounds of soft upbraiding
Calls it down the void inane
To the gilding and the shading
Of the mountain and the plain.

Airy offspring of the fountains,
To thy destined duty sail,
Seek it on the proudest mountains,
Seek it in the humblest vale;
Howsoever high thou fliest,
How so deep it bids thee go,
Be a beacon to the highest
And a blessing to the low.

When the sad earth, broken-hearted,
Hath not even a tear to shed,
And her very soul seems parted
For her children lying dead,
Send the streams with warmer pulses
Through that frozen fount of fears,
And the sorrow that convulses,
Soothe and soften down to tears.

Bear the sunshine and the shadow,
Bear the rain-drop and the snow,
Bear the night-dew to the meadow,
And to hope the promised bow,
Bear the moon, a moving mirror
For her angel face and form,
Bear to guilt the flashing terror
Of the lightning and the storm.

When thou thus hast done thy duty
On the earth and o'er the sea,
Bearing many a beam of beauty,
Ever bettering what must be,
Thus reflecting heaven's pure splendour
And concealing ruined clay,
Up to God thy spirit render,
And dissolving pass away.

And with fond sollicitation,
Speaks another to the streams--
Leave your airy isolation,
Quit the cloudy land of dreams,
Break the lonely peak's attraction,
Burst the solemn, silent glen,
Seek the living world of action
And the busy haunts of men.

Turn the mill-wheel with thy fingers,
Turn the steam-wheel with thy breath,
With thy tide that never lingers
Save the dying fields from death;
Let the swiftness of thy currents
Bear to man the freight-fill'd ship,
And the crystal of thy torrents
Bring refreshment to his lip.

And when thou, O rapid river,
Thy eternal home dost seek,
When no more the willows quiver
But to touch thy passing cheek,
When the groves no longer greet thee
And the shore no longer kiss,
Let infinitude come meet thee
On the verge of the abyss.

Other voices seek to win us--
Low, suggestive, like the rest--
But the sweetest is within us
In the stillness of the breast;
Be it ours, with fond desiring,
The same harvest to produce,
As the cloud in its aspiring
And the river in its use.

Centenary Odes.

O'CONNELL.

AUGUST 6TH, 1875.

Harp of my native land
That lived anew 'neath Carolan's master hand;
Harp on whose electric chords,
The minstrel Moore's melodious words,
Each word a bird that sings,
Borne as if on Ariel's wings,
Touched every tender soul
From listening pole to pole.
Sweet harp, awake once more:
What, though a ruder hand disturbs thy rest,
A theme so high
Will its own worth supply.
As finest gold is ever moulded best:
Or as a cannon on some festive day,
When sea and sky, when winds and waves rejoice,
Out-booms with thunderous voice,
Bids echo speak, and all the hills obey--

So let the verse in echoing accents ring,
So proudly sing,
With intermittent wail,
The nation's dead, but sceptred King,
The glory of the Gael.

1775.

Six hundred stormy years have flown,
Since Erin fought to hold her own,
To hold her homes, her altars free,
Within her wall of circling sea.
No year of all those years had fled,
No day had dawned that was not red,
(Oft shed by fratricidal hand),
With the best blood of all the land.
And now, at last, the fight seemed o'er,
The sound of battle pealed no more;
Abject the prostrate people lay,
Nor dared to hope a better day;
An icy chill, a fatal frost,
Left them with all but honour lost,
Left them with only trust in God,
The lands were gone their fathers owned;
Poor pariahs on their native sod.
Their faith was banned, their prophets stoned;

Their temples crowning every height,
Now echoed with an alien rite,
Or silent lay each mouldering pile,
With shattered cross and ruined aisle.
Letters denied, forbade to pray,
And white-winged commerce scared away:
Ah, what can rouse the dormant life
That still survives the stormier strife?
What potent charm can once again
Relift the cross, rebuild the fane?
Free learning from felonious chains,
And give to youth immortal gains?
What signal mercy from on high?--
Hush! hark! I hear an infant's cry,
The answer of a new-born child,
From Iveragh's far mountain wild.

Yes, 'tis the cry of a child, feeble and faint in the night,
But soon to thunder in tones that will rouse both tyrants and slaves.
Yes, 'tis the sob of a stream just awake in its source on the height,
But soon to spread as a sea, and rush with the roaring of waves.

Yes, 'tis the cry of a child affection hastens to still,
But what shall silence ere long the victor voice of the man?
Easy it is for a branch to bar the flow of the rill,
But all the forest would fail where raging the torrent once ran.

And soon the torrent will run, and the pent-up waters o'erflow,
For the child has risen to a man, and a shout replaces the cry;
And a voice rings out through the world, so wingèd with Erin's woe,
That charmed are the nations to listen, and the Destinies to reply.

Boyhood had passed away from that child, predestined by fate
To dry the eyes of his mother, to end the worst of her ills,
And the terrible record of wrong, and the annals of hell and hate,
Had gathered into his breast like a lake in the heart of the hills.

Brooding over the past, he found himself but a slave,
With manacles forged on his mind, and fetters on every limb;
The land that was life to others, to him was only a grave,
And however the race he ran no victor wreath was for him.

The fane of learning was closed, shut out was the light of day,
No ray from the sun of science, no brightness from Greece or Rome,
And those who hungered for knowledge, like him, had to fly away,
Where bountiful France threw wide the gates that were shut at home.

And there he happily learned a lore far better than books,
A lesson he taught for ever, and thundered over the land,
That Liberty's self is a terror, how lovely may be her looks,
If religion is not in her heart, and reverence guide not her hand.

The steps of honour were barred: it was not for him to climb,
No glorious goal in the future, no prize for the labour of life,
And the fate of him and his people seemed fixed for all coming time
To hew the wood of the helot and draw the waters of strife.

But the glorious youth returning
Back from France the fair and free,
Rage within his bosom burning,
Such a servile sight to see,
Vowed to heaven it should not be.
"No!" the youthful champion cried,
"Mother Ireland, widowed bride,
If thy freedom can be won
By the service of a son,
Then, behold that son in me.
I will give thee every hour,
Every day shall be thy dower,
In the splendour of the light,
In the watches of the night,
In the shine and in the shower,
I shall work but for thy right."

1782-1800.

A dazzling gleam of evanescent glory,
Had passed away, and all was dark once more,
One golden page had lit the mournful story,
Which ruthless hands with envious rage out-tore.

One glorious sun-burst, radiant and far-reaching,
Had pierced the cloudy veil dark ages wove,

When full-armed Freedom rose from Grattan's teaching,
As sprang Minerva from the brain of Jove.

Oh! in the transient light that had outbroken,
How all the land with quickening fire was lit!
What golden words of deathless speech were spoken,
What lightning flashes of immortal wit!

Letters and arts revived beneath its beaming,
Commerce and Hope outspread their swelling sails,
And with "Free Trade" upon their standard gleaming,
Now feared no foes and dared adventurous gales.

Across the stream the graceful arch extended,
Above the pile the rounded dome arose,
The soaring spire to heaven's high vault ascended,
The loom hummed loud as bees at evening's close.

And yet 'mid all this hope and animation,
The people still lay bound in bigot chains,
Freedom that gave some slight alleviation,
Could dare no panacea for their pains.

Yet faithful to their country's quick uprising,
Like some fair island from volcanic waves,
They shared the triumph though their claims despising,
And hailed the freedom though themselves were slaves.

But soon had come the final compensation,
Soon would the land one brotherhood have known,
Had not some spell of hellish incantation
The new-formed fane of Freedom overthrown.

In one brief hour the fair mirage had faded,
No isle of flowers lay glad on ocean's green,
But in its stead, deserted and degraded,
The barren strand of Slavery's shore was seen.

1800-1829.

Yet! 'twas on that barren strand
Sing his praise throughout the world!
Yet, 'twas on that barren strand,
O'er a cowed and broken band,
That his solitary hand
Freedom's flag unfurled.

Yet! 'twas there in Freedom's cause,
Freedom from unequal laws,
Freedom for each creed and class,
For humanity's whole mass,
That his voice outrang;--
And the nation at a bound,
Stirred by the inspiring sound,
To his side up-sprang.

Then the mighty work began,
Then the war of thirty years--
Peaceful war, when words were spears,
And religion led the van.
When O'Connell's voice of power,
Day by day and hour by hour,
Raining down its iron shower,
Laid oppression low,
Till at length the war was o'er,
And Napoleon's conqueror,
Yielded to a mightier foe.

1829.

Into the senate swept the mighty chief,
Like some great ocean wave across the bar
Of intercepting rock, whose jagged reef
But frets the victor whom it cannot mar.
Into the senate his triumphal car
Rushed like a conqueror's through the broken gates
Of some fallen city, whose defenders are
Powerful no longer to resist the fates,
But yield at last to him whom wondering Fame awaits.

And as "sweet foreign Spenser" might have sung,
Yoked to the car two wingèd steeds were seen,
With eyes of fire and flashing hoofs outflung,

As if Apollo's coursers they had been.
These were quick Thought and Eloquence, I ween,
Bounding together with impetuous speed,
While overhead there waved a flag of green,
Which seemed to urge still more each flying steed,
Until they reached the goal the hero had decreed.

There at his feet a captive wretch lay bound,
Hideous, deformed, of baleful countenance,
Whom as his blood-shot eye-balls glared around,
As if to kill with their malignant glance,
I knew to be the fiend Intolerance.
But now no longer had he power to slay,
For Freedom touched him with Ithuriel's lance,
His horrid form revealing by its ray,
And showed how foul a fiend the world could once obey.

Then followed after him a numerous train,
Each bearing trophies of the field he won:
Some the white wand, and some the civic chain,
Its golden letters glistening in the sun;
Some--for the reign of justice had begun--
The ermine robes that soon would be the prize
Of spotless lives that all pollution shun,
And some in mitred pomp, with upturned eyes,
And grateful hearts invoked a blessing from the skies.

1843-1847.

A glorious triumph! a deathless deed!--
Shall the hero rest and his work half done?
Is it enough to enfranchise a creed,
When a nation's freedom may yet be won?
Is it enough to hang on the wall
The broken links of the Catholic chain,
When now one mighty struggle for ALL
May quicken the life in the land again?--

May quicken the life, for the land lay dead;
No central fire was a heart in its breast,--
No throbbing veins, with the life-blood red,
Ran out like rivers to east or west:
Its soul was gone, and had left it clay--
Dull clay to grow but the grass and the root;
But harvests for *Men*, ah! where were they?--
And where was the tree for Liberty's fruit?

Never till then, in victory's hour,
Had a conqueror felt a joy so sweet,
As when the wand of his well-won power
O'Connell laid at his country's feet.
"No! not for me, nor for mine alone,"
The generous victor cried, "Have I fought,
But to see my *Eire* again on her throne;
Ah, that was my dream and my guiding thought.

To see my *Eire* again on her throne,
Her tresses with lilies and shamrocks twined,
Her severed sons to a nation grown,
Her hostile hues in one flag combined;
Her wisest gathered in grave debate,
Her bravest armed to resist the foe:
To see my country 'glorious and great,'--
To see her 'free,'--to fight I go!"

And forth he went to the peaceful fight,
And the millions rose at his words of fire,
As the lightning's leap from the depth of the night,
And circle some mighty minster's spire:
Ah, ill had it fared with the hapless land,
If the power that had roused could not restrain?
If the bolts were not grasped in a glowing hand
To be hurled in peals of thunder again?

And thus the people followed his path,
As if drawn on by a magic spell,--
By the royal hill and the haunted rath,
By the hallowed spring and the holy well,
By all the shrines that to *Erin* are dear,
Round which her love like the ivy clings,--
Still folding in leaves that never grow sere
The cell of the saint and the home of kings.

And a soul of sweetness came into the land:
Once more was the harp of Erin strung;
Once more on the notes from some master hand
The listening land in its rapture hung.
Once more with the golden glory of words
Were the youthful orator's lips inspired,
Till he touched the heart to its tenderest chords,
And quickened the pulse which his voice had fired.

And others divinely dowered to teach--
High souls of honour, pure hearts of fire,
So startled the world with their rhythmic speech,
That it seemed attuned to some unseen lyre.
But the kingliest voice God ever gave man
Words sweeter still spoke than poet hath sung,--
For a nation's wail through the numbers ran,
And the soul of the Celt exhaled on his tongue.

And again the foe had been forced to yield;
But the hero at last waxed feeble and old,
Yet he scattered the seed in a fruitful field,
To wave in good time as a harvest of gold.
Then seeking the feet of God's High Priest,
He slept by the soft Ligurian Sea,
Leaving a light, like the Star in the East,
To lead the land that will yet be free.

1875.

A hundred years their various course have run,
Since Erin's arms received her noblest son,
And years unnumbered must in turn depart
Ere Erin fails to fold him to her heart.
He is our boast, our glory, and our pride,
For us he lived, fought, suffered, dared, and died;
Struck off the shackles from each fettered limb,
And all we have of best we owe to him.
If some cathedral, exquisitely fair,
Lifts its tall turrets through the wondering air,
Though art or skill its separate offering brings,
'Tis from O'Connell's heart the structure springs.
If through this city on these festive days,
Halls, streets, and squares are bright with civic blaze
Of glittering chains, white wands, and flowing gowns,
The red-robed senates of a hundred towns,
Whatever rank each special spot may claim,
'Tis from O'Connell's hand their charters came.
If in the rising hopes of recent years
A mighty sound reverberates on our ears,
And myriad voices in one cry unite
For restoration of a ravished right,
'Tis the great echo of that thunder blast,
On Tara pealed or mightier Mullaghmast,
If arts and letters are more widely spread,
A Nile o'erflowing from its fertile bed,
Spreading the rich alluvium whence are given
Harvests for earth and amaranth flowers for heaven;
If Science still, in not unholy walls,
Sets its high chair, and dares unchartered halls,
And still ascending, ever heavenward soars,
While capped Exclusion slowly opes its doors,
It is his breath that speeds the spreading tide,
It is his hand the long-locked door throws wide.
Where'er we turn the same effect we find--
O'Connell's voice still speaks his country's mind.
Therefore we gather to his birthday feast
Prelate and peer, the people and the priest;
Therefore we come, in one united band,
To hail in him the hero of the land,
To bless his memory, and with loud acclaim
To all the winds, on all the wings of fame
Waft to the listening world the great O'Connell's name.

MOORE.

MAY 28TH, 1879.

Joy to Ierné, joy,
This day a deathless crown is won,
Her child of song, her glorious son,
Her minstrel boy

Attains his century of fame,
Completes his time-allotted zone,
And proudly with the world's acclaim
Ascends the lyric throne.

Yes, joy to her whose path so long,
Slow journeying to her realm of rest
O'er many a rugged mountain's crest,
He charmed with his enchanting song:
Like his own princess in the tale,
When he who had her way beguiled
Through many a bleak and desert wild
Until she reached Cashmere's bright vale
Had ceased those notes to play and sing
To which her heart responsive swelled,
She looking up, in him beheld
Her minstrel lover and her king;--
So Erin now, her journey well-nigh o'er,
Enraptured sees her minstrel king in Moore.

And round that throne whose light to-day
O'er all the world is cast,
In words though weak, in hues though faint,
Congenial fancy rise and paint
The spirits of the past
Who here their homage pay--
Those who his youthful muse inspired,
Those who his early genius fired
To emulate their lay:
And as in some phantasmal glass
Let the immortal spirits pass,
Let each renew the inspiring strain,
And fire the poet's soul again.

First there comes from classic Greece,
Beaming love and breathing peace,
With her pure, sweet smiling face,
The glory of the Æolian race,
Beauteous Sappho, violet-crowned,
Shedding joy and rapture round:
In her hand a harp she bears,
Parent of celestial airs,
Love leaps trembling from each wire,
Every chord a string of fire:--
How the poet's heart doth beat,
How his lips the notes repeat,
Till in rapture borne along,
The Sapphic lute, the lyrist's song,
Blend in one delicious strain,
Never to divide again.

And beside the Æolian queen
Great Alcæus' form is seen:
He takes up in voice more strong
The dying cadence of the song,
And on loud resounding strings
Hurls his wrath on tyrant kings:--
Like to incandescent coal
On the poet's kindred soul
Fall these words of living flame,
Till their songs become the same,--
The same hate of slavery's night,
The same love of freedom's light,
Scorning aught that stops its way,
Come the black cloud whence it may,
Lift alike the inspirèd song,
And the liquid notes prolong.

Carolling a livelier measure
Comes the Teian bard of pleasure,
Round his brow where joy reposes
Radiant love enwreaths his roses,
Rapture in his verse is ringing,
Soft persuasion in his singing:--
'Twas the same melodious ditty
Moved Polycrates to pity,
Made that tyrant heart surrender
Captive to a tone so tender:
To the younger bard inclining,
Round his brow the roses twining,
First the wreath in red wine steeping,
He his cithern to his keeping
Yields, its glorious fate foreseeing,

From her chains a nation freeing,
Fetters new around it flinging
In the flowers of his own singing.

But who is this that from the misty cloud
Of immemorial years,
Wrapped in the vesture of his vaporous shroud
With solemn steps appears?
His head with oak-leaves and with ivy crowned
Let's fall its silken snow,
While the white billows of his beard unbound
Athwart his bosom flow:
Who is this venerable form
Whose hands, prelude of the storm
Across his harp-strings play--
That harp which, trembling in his hand,
Impatient waits its lord's command
To pour the impassioned lay?
Who is it comes with reverential hail
To greet the bard who sang his country best
'Tis Ossian--primal poet of the Gael--
The Homer of the West.

He sings the heroic tales of old
When Ireland yet was free,
Of many a fight and foray bold,
And raid beyond the sea.

Of all the famous deeds of Fin,
And all the wiles of Mave,
Now thunders 'mid the battle's din,
Now sobs beside the wave.

That wave empurpled by the sword
The hero used too well,
When great Cuchullin held the ford,
And fair Ferdiah fell.

And now his prophet eye is cast
As o'er a boundless plain;
He sees the future as the past,
And blends them in his strain.

The Red-Branch Knights their flags unfold
When danger's front appears,
The sunburst breaks through clouds of gold
To glorify their spears.

But, ah! a darker hour drew nigh,
The hour of Erin's woe,
When she, though destined not to die,
Lay prostrate 'neath the foe.

When broke were all the arms she bore,
And bravely bore in vain,
Till even her harp could sound no more
Beneath the victor's chain.

Ah! dire constraint, ah! cruel wrong,
To fetter thus its chord,
But well they knew that Ireland's song
Was keener than her sword.

That song would pierce where swords would fail,
And o'er the battle's din,
The sweet, sad music of the Gael
A peaceful victory win.

Long was the trance, but sweet and low
The harp breathed out again
Its speechless wail, its wordless woe,
In Carolan's witching strain.

Until at last the gift of words
Denied to it so long,
Poured o'er the now enfranchised chords
The articulate light of song.

Poured the bright light from genius won,
That woke the harp's wild lays;
Even as that statue which the sun
Made vocal with his rays.

Thus Ossian in disparted dream
Outpoured the varied lay,
But now in one united stream
His rapture finds its way:--

"Yes, in thy hands, illustrious son,
The harp shall speak once more,
Its sweet lament shall rippling run
From listening shore to shore.

Till mighty lands that lie unknown
Far in the fabled west,
And giant isles of verdure thrown
Upon the South Sea's breast.

And plains where rushing rivers flow--
Fit emblems of the free--
Shall learn to know of Ireland's woe,
And Ireland's weal through thee."

'Twas thus he sang,
And while tumultuous plaudits rang
From the immortal throng,
In the younger minstrel's hand
He placed the emblem of the land--
The harp of Irish song.

Oh! what dulcet notes are heard.
Never bird
Soaring through the sunny air
Like a prayer
Borne by angel's hands on high
So entranced the listening sky
As his song--
Soft, pathetic, joyous, strong,
Rising now in rapid flight
Out of sight
Like a lark in its own light,
Now descending low and sweet
To our feet,
Till the odours of the grass
With the light notes as they pass
Blend and meet:
All that Erin's memory guards
In her heart,
Deeds of heroes, songs of bards,
Have their part.

Brian's glories reappear,
Fionualla's song we hear,
Tara's walls resound again
With a more inspired strain,
Rival rivers meet and join,
Stately Shannon blends with Boyne;
While on high the storm-winds cease
Heralding the arch of peace.

And all the bright creations fair
That 'neath his master-hand awake,
Some in tears and some in smiles,
Like Nea in the summer isles,
Or Kathleen by the lonely lake,
Round his radiant throne repair:
Nay, his own Peri of the air
Now no more disconsolate,
Gives in at Fame's celestial gate
His passport to the skies--
The gift to heaven most dear,
His country's tear.
From every lip the glad refrain doth rise,
"Joy, ever joy, his glorious task is done,
The gates are passed and Fame's bright heaven is won!"

Ah! yes, the work, the glorious work is done,
And Erin crowns to-day her brightest son,
Around his brow entwines the victor bay,
And lives herself immortal in his lay--
Leads him with honour to her highest place,
For he had borne his more than mother's name
Proudly along the Olympic lists of fame
When mighty athletes struggled in the race.
Byron, the swift-souled spirit, in his pride
Paused to cheer on the rival by his side,

And Lycidas, so long
Lost in the light of his own dazzling song,
Although himself unseen,
Gave the bright wreath that might his own have been
To him whom 'mid the mountain shepherd throng,
The minstrels of the isles,
When Adonais died so fair and young,
Ierné sent from out her green defiles
"The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue."
And he who sang of Poland's kindred woes,
And Hope's delicious dream,
And all the mighty minstrels who arose
In that auroral gleam
That o'er our age a blaze of glory threw
Which Shakspeare's only knew--
Some from their hidden haunts remote,
Like him the lonely hermit of the hills,
Whose song like some great organ note
The whole horizon fills.
Or the great Master, he whose magic hand,
Wielding the wand from which such wonder flows,
Transformed the lineaments of a rugged land,
And left the thistle lovely as the rose.
Oh! in a concert of such minstrelsy,
In such a glorious company,
What pride for Ireland's harp to sound,
For Ireland's son to share,
What pride to see him glory-crowned,
And hear amid the dazzling gleam
Upon the rapt and ravished air
Her harp still sound supreme!

Glory to Moore, eternal be the glory
That here we crown and consecrate to-day,
Glory to Moore, for he has sung our story
In strains whose sweetness ne'er can pass away.

Glory to Moore, for he has sighed our sorrow
In such a wail of melody divine,
That even from grief a passing joy we borrow,
And linger long o'er each lamenting line.

Glory to Moore, that in his songs of gladness
Which neither change nor time can e'er destroy,
Though mingled oft with some faint sigh of sadness,
He sings his country's rapture and its joy.

What wit like his flings out electric flashes
That make the numbers sparkle as they run:
Wit that revives dull history's Dead-sea ashes,
And makes the ripe fruit glisten in the sun?

What fancy full of loveliness and lightness
Has spread like his as at some dazzling feast,
The fruits and flowers, the beauty and the brightness,
And all the golden glories of the East?

Perpetual blooms his bower of summer roses,
No winter comes to turn his green leaves sere,
Beside his song-stream where the swan reposes
The bulbul sings as by the Bendemeer.

But back returning from his flight with Peris,
Above his native fields he sings his best,
Like to the lark whose rapture never wearies,
When poised in air he singeth o'er his nest.

And so we rank him with the great departed,
The kings of song who rule us from their urns,
The souls inspired, the natures noble hearted,
And place him proudly by the side of Burns.

And as not only by the Calton Mountain,
Is Scotland's bard remembered and revered,
But whereso'er, like some o'erflowing fountain,
Its hardy race a prosperous path has cleared.

There 'mid the roar of newly-rising cities,
His glorious name is heard on every tongue,
There to the music of immortal ditties,
His lays of love, his patriot songs are sung.

So not alone beside that bay of beauty
That guards the portals of his native town
Where like two watchful sentinels on duty,
Howth and Killiney from their heights look down.

But wheresoe'er the exiled race hath drifted,
By what far sea, what mighty stream beside,
There shall to-day the poet's name be lifted,
And Moore proclaimed its glory and its pride:

There shall his name be held in fond memento,
There shall his songs resound for evermore,
Whether beside the golden Sacramento,
Or where Niagara's thunder shakes the shore.

For all that's bright indeed must fade and perish,
And all that's sweet when sweetest not endure,
Before the world shall cease to love and cherish
The wit and song, the name and fame of MOORE.

Miscellaneous Poems.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SNOW.

The night brings forth the morn--
Of the cloud is lightning born;
From out the darkest earth the brightest roses grow.
Bright sparks from black flints fly,
And from out a leaden sky
Comes the silvery-footed Spirit of the Snow.

The wondering air grows mute,
As her pearly parachute
Cometh slowly down from heaven, softly floating to and fro;
And the earth emits no sound,
As lightly on the ground
Leaps the silvery-footed Spirit of the Snow.

At the contact of her tread,
The mountain's festal head,
As with chaplets of white roses, seems to glow;
And its furrowed cheek grows white
With a feeling of delight,
At the presence of the Spirit of the Snow.

As she wendeth to the vale,
The longing fields grow pale--
The tiny streams that vein them cease to flow;
And the river stays its tide
With wonder and with pride,
To gaze upon the Spirit of the Snow.

But little doth she deem
The love of field or stream--
She is frolicsome and lightsome as the roe;
She is here and she is there,
On the earth or in the air,
Ever changing, floats the Spirit of the Snow.

Now a daring climber, she
Mounts the tallest forest tree--
Out along the giddy branches doth she go;
And her tassels, silver-white,
Down swinging through the night,
Mark the pillow of the Spirit of the Snow.

Now she climbs the mighty mast,
When the sailor boy at last
Dreams of home in his hammock down below
There she watches in his stead
Till the morning sun shines red,
Then evanishes the Spirit of the Snow.

Or crowning with white fire.
The minster's topmost spire
With a glory such as sainted foreheads show;
She teaches fanes are given
Thus to lift the heart to heaven,
There to melt like the Spirit of the Snow.

Now above the loaded wain,
Now beneath the thundering train,
Doth she hear the sweet bells tinkle and the snorting engine blow;
Now she flutters on the breeze,
Till the branches of the trees
Catch the tossed and tangled tresses of the Spirit of the Snow.

Now an infant's balmy breath
Gives the spirit seeming death,
When adown her pallid features fair Decay's damp dew-drops flow;
Now again her strong assault
Can make an army halt,
And trench itself in terror 'gainst the Spirit of the Snow.

At times with gentle power,
In visiting some bower,
She scarce will hide the holly's red, the blackness of the sloe;
But, ah! her awful might,
When down some Alpine height
The hapless hamlet sinks before the Spirit of the Snow.

On a feather she floats down
The turbid rivers brown,
Down to meet the drifting navies of the winter-freighted floe;
Then swift o'er the azure walls
Of the awful waterfalls,
Where Niagara leaps roaring, glides the Spirit of the Snow.

With her flag of truce unfurled,
She makes peace o'er all the world--
Makes bloody battle cease awhile, and war's un pitying woe;
Till, its hollow womb within,
The deep dark-mouthed culverin
Encloses, like a cradled child, the Spirit of the Snow.

She uses in her need
The fleetly-flying steed--
Now tries the rapid reindeer's strength, and now the camel slow;
Or, ere defiled by earth,
Unto her place of birth,
Returns upon the eagle's wing the Spirit of the Snow.

Oft with pallid figure bowed,
Like the Banshee in her shroud,
Doth the moon her spectral shadow o'er some silent gravestone throw;
Then moans the fitful wail,
And the wanderer grows pale,
Till at morning fades the phantom of the Spirit of the Snow.

In her ermine cloak of state
She sitteth at the gate
Of some winter-prisoned princess in her palace by the Po;
Who dares not to come forth
Till back unto the North
Flies the beautiful besieger--the Spirit of the Snow.

In her spotless linen hood,
Like the other sisterhood,
She braves the open cloister when the psalm sounds sweet and low;
When some sister's bier doth pass
From the minster and the Mass,
Soon to sink into the earth, like the Spirit of the Snow.

But at times so full of joy,
She will play with girl and boy,
Fly from out their tingling fingers, like white fireballs on the foe;
She will burst in feathery flakes,
And the ruin that she makes
Will but wake the crackling laughter of the Spirit of the Snow.

Or in furry mantle drest,
She will fondle on her breast
The embryo buds awaiting the near Spring's mysterious throe;
So fondly that the first
Of the blossoms that outburst
Will be called the beauteous daughter of the Spirit of the Snow.

Ah! would that we were sure
Of hearts so warmly pure,
In all the winter weather that this lesser life must know;
That when shines the Sun of Love
From the warmer realm above,
In its light we may dissolve, like the Spirit of the Snow.

TO THE BAY OF DUBLIN.

My native Bay, for many a year
I've lov'd thee with a trembling fear,
Lest thou, though dear and very dear,
 And beauteous as a vision,
Shouldst have some rival far away,
Some matchless wonder of a bay,
Whose sparkling waters ever play
 'Neath azure skies elysian.

'Tis Love, methought, blind Love that pours
The rippling magic round these shores,
For whatsoever Love adores
 Becomes what Love desireth:
'Tis ignorance of aught beside
That throws enchantment o'er the tide,
And makes my heart respond with pride
 To what mine eye admireth,

And thus, unto our mutual loss,
Whene'er I paced the sloping moss
Of green Killiney, or across
 The intervening waters,
Up Howth's brown sides my feet would wend,
To see thy sinuous bosom bend,
Or view thine outstretch'd arms extend
 To clasp thine islet daughters;

Then would this spectre of my fear
Beside me stand--How calm and clear
Slept underneath, the green waves, near
 The tide-worn rocks' recesses;
Or when they woke, and leapt from land,
Like startled sea-nymphs, hand-in-hand,
Seeking the southern silver strand
 With floating emerald tresses:

It lay o'er all, a moral mist,
Even on the hills, when evening kissed
The granite peaks to amethyst,
 I felt its fatal shadow:
It darkened o'er the brightest rills,
It lowered upon the sunniest hills,
And hid the wingèd song that fills
 The moorland and the meadow.

But now that I have been to view
All even Nature's self can do,
And from Gaeta's arch of blue
 Borne many a fond memento;
And from each fair and famous scene,
Where Beauty is, and Power hath been,
Along the golden shores between
 Misenum and Sorrento:

I can look proudly in thy face,
Fair daughter of a hardier race,
And feel thy winning well-known grace,
 Without my old misgiving;
And as I kneel upon thy strand,
And kiss thy once unvalued hand,
Proclaim earth holds no lovelier land,
 Where life is worth the living.

TO ETHNA.

First loved, last loved, best loved of all I've loved!
Ethna, my boyhood's dream, my manhood's light,
Pure angel spirit, in whose light I've moved,
Full many a year, along life's darksome night!
Thou wert my star, serenely shining bright
Beyond youth's passing clouds and mists obscure
Thou wert the power that kept my spirit white,
My soul unsoiled, my heart untouched and pure.
Thine was the light from heaven that ever must endure.

Purest, and best, and brightest, no mishap,
No chance, or change can break our mutual ties;
My heart lies spread before thee like a map,

Here roll the tides, and there the mountains rise;
Here dangers frown and there hope's streamlet flies,
And golden promontories cleave the main:
And I have looked into thy lustrous eyes,
And saw the thought thou couldst not all restrain,
A sweet, soft, sympathetic pity for my pain!

Dearest, and best, I dedicate to thee,
From this hour forth, my hopes, my dreams, my cares,
All that I am, and all I e'er may be,
Youth's clustering locks, and age's thin white hairs;
Thou by my side, fair vision, unawares--
Sweet saint--shalt guard me as with angel's wings;
To thee shall rise the morning's hopeful prayers,
The evening hymns, the thoughts that midnight brings,
The worship that like fire out of the warm heart springs.

Thou wilt be with me through the struggling day,
Thou wilt be with me through the pensive night,
Thou wilt be with me, though far, far away
Some sad mischance may snatch you from my sight,
In grief, in pain, in gladness, in delight,
In every thought thy form shall bear a part,
In every dream thy memory shall unite,
Bride of my soul! and partner of my heart!
Till from the dreadful bow flieth the fatal dart!

Am I deceived? and do I pine and faint
For worth that only dwells in heaven above,
And if thou'rt not the Ethna that I paint,
Then thou art not the Ethna that I love;
If thou art not as gentle as the dove,
And good as thou art beautiful, the tooth
Of venom'd serpent will not deadlier prove
Than that dark revelation; but in sooth,
Ethna, I wrong thee, dearest, for thy name is TRUTH.

"NOT KNOWN."

On receiving through the Post-Office a Returned Letter from an old residence, marked on the envelope, "Not Known."

A beauteous summer-home had I
As e'er a bard set eyes on--
A glorious sweep of sea and sky,
Near hills and far horizon.
Like Naples was the lovely bay,
The lovely hill like Rio--
And there I lived for many a day
In Campo de Estío.

It seemed as if the magic scene
No human skill had planted;
The trees remained for ever green,
As if they were enchanted:
And so I said to Sweetest-eyes,
My dear, I think that *we* owe
To fairy hands this paradise
Of Campo de Estío.

How swiftly flew the hours away!
I read and rhymed and revelled;
In interchange of work and play,
I built, and drained, and levelled;
"The Pope," so "happy," days gone by
(Unlike our ninth Pope Pio),
Was far less happy than than I
In Campo de Estío.

For children grew in that sweet place,
As in the grape wine gathers--
Their mother's eyes in each bright face,
In each light heart, their father's:
Their father, who by some was thought
A literary *leo*,
Ne'er dreamed he'd be so soon forgot
In Campo de Estío.

But so it was--Of hope bereft,
A year had scarce gone over,
Since he that sweetest place had left,
And gone--we'll say--to Dover,
When letters came where he had flown.

Returned him from the "P. O.,"
On which was writ, O Heavens! "NOT KNOWN
IN CAMPO DE ESTIO!"

"Not known" where he had lived so long,
A "cintra" home created,
Where scarce a shrub that now is strong
But had its place debated;
Where scarce a flower that now is shown,
But shows *his* care: O Dio!
And now to be described, "Not known
In Campo de Estío."

That pillar from the Causeway brought--
This fern from Connemara--
That pine so long and widely sought--
This Cedrus deodara--
That bust (if Shakespeare's doth survive,
And busts had brains and *brío*),
Might keep his name at least alive
In Campo de Estío.

When Homer went from place to place,
The glorious siege reciting
(Of course I presuppose the case
Of reading and of writing),
I've little doubt the Bard divine
His letters got from Scio,
Inscribed "Not known," Ah! me, like mine
From Campo de Estío.

The poet, howsoe'er inspired,
Must brave neglect and danger;
When Philip Massinger expired,
The death-list said "a stranger!"
A stranger! yes, on earth, but let
The poet sing *laus Deo!*--
Heaven's glorious summer waits him yet--
God's "Campo de Estío."

THE LAY MISSIONER.

Had I a wish--'twere this, that heaven would make
My heart as strong to imitate as love,
That half its weakness it could leave, and take
Some spirit's strength, by which to soar above,
A lordly eagle mated with a dove.
Strong-will and warm affection, these be mine;
Without the one no dreams has fancy wove,
Without the other soon these dreams decline,
Weak children of the heart, which fade away and pine!

Strong have I been in love, if not in will;
Affections crowd and people all the past,
And now, even now, they come and haunt me still,
Even from the graves where once my hopes were cast.
But not with spectral features--all aghast--
Come they to fright me; no, with smiles and tears,
And winding arms, and breasts that beat as fast
As once they beat in boyhood's opening years,
Come the departed shades, whose steps my rapt soul hears.

Youth has passed by, its first warm flush is o'er,
And now, 'tis nearly noon; yet unsubdued
My heart still kneels and worships, as of yore,
Those twin-fair shapes, the Beautiful and Good!
Valley and mountain, sky and stream, and wood,
And that fair miracle, the human face,
And human nature in its sunniest mood,
Freed from the shade of all things low and base--
These in my heart still hold their old accustom'd place.

'Tis not with pride, but gratitude, I tell
How beats my heart with all its youthful glow,
How one kind act doth make my bosom swell,
And down my cheeks the sweet, warm, glad tears flow.
Enough of self, enough of me you know,
Kind reader, but if thou wouldst further wend,
With me, this wilderness of weak words thro',
Let me depict, before the journey end,
One whom methinks thou'lt love, my brother and my friend.

Ah! wondrous is the lot of him who stands
A Christian Priest, with a Christian fane,
And binds with pure and consecrated hands,
Round earth and heaven, a festal, flower chain;
Even as between the blue arch and the main,
A circling western ring of golden light
Weds the two worlds, or as the sunny rain
Of April makes the cloud and clay unite,
Thus links the Priest of God the dark world and the bright.

All are not priests, yet priestly duties may
And should be all men's: as a common sight
We view the brightness of a summer's day,
And think 'tis but its duty to be bright;
But should a genial beam of warming light
Suddenly break from out a wintry sky,
With gratitude we own a new delight,
Quick beats the heart and brighter beams the eye,
And as a boon we hail the splendour from on high.

'Tis so with men, with those of them at least
Whose hearts by icy doubts are chill'd and torn;
They think the virtues of a Christian Priest
Something professional, put on and worn
Even as the vestments of a Sabbath morn:
But should a friend or act or teach as he,
Then is the mind of all its doubting shorn,
The unexpected goodness that they see
Takes root, and bears its fruit, as uncoerced and free!

One I have known, and haply yet I know,
A youth by baser passions undefiled,
Lit by the light of genius and the glow
Which real feeling leaves where once it smiled;
Firm as a man, yet tender as a child;
Armed at all points by fantasy and thought,
To face the true or soar amid the wild;
By love and labour, as a good man ought,
Ready to pay the price by which dear truth is bought!

'Tis not with cold advice or stern rebuke,
With formal precept, or wit face demure,
But with the unconscious eloquence of look,
Where shines the heart so loving and so pure:
'Tis these, with constant goodness, that allure
All hearts to love and imitate his worth.
Beside him weaker natures feel secure,
Even as the flower beside the oak peeps forth,
Safe, though the rain descends, and blows the biting North!

Such is my friend, and such I fain would be,
Mild, thoughtful, modest, faithful, loving, gay,
Correct, not cold, nor uncontroll'd though free,
But proof to all the lures that round us play,
Even as the sun, that on his azure way
Moveth with steady pace and lofty mien,
Though blushing clouds, like syrens, woo his stay,
Higher and higher through the pure serene,
Till comes the calm of eve and wraps him from the scene.

THE SPIRIT OF THE IDEAL.

Sweet sister spirits, ye whose starlight tresses
Stream on the night-winds as ye float along,
Missioned with hope to man--and with caresses

To slumbering babes--refreshment to the strong--
And grace the sensuous soul that it's arrayed in:
As the light burden of melodious song

Weights down a poet's words;--as an o'erladen
Lily doth bend beneath its own pure snow;
Or with its joy, the free heart of a maiden:--

Thus, I behold your outstretched pinions grow
Heavy with all the priceless gifts and graces
God through thy ministration doth bestow.

Do ye not plant the rose on youthful faces?
And rob the heavens of stars for Beauty's eyes?
Do ye not fold within love's pure embraces

All that Omnipotence doth yet devise
For human bliss, or rapture superhuman--
Heaven upon earth, and earth still in the skies?

Do ye not sow the fruitful heart of woman
With tenderest charities and faith sincere,
To feed man's sterile soul and to illumine

His duller eyes, that else might settle here,
With the bright promise of a purer region--
A starlight beacon to a starry sphere?

Are they not all thy children, that bright legion--
Of aspirations, and all hopeful sighs
That in the solemn train of grave Religion

Strew heavenly flowers before man's longing eyes,
And make him feel, as o'er life's sea he wendeth,
The far-off odorous airs of Paradise?--

Like to the breeze some flowery island sendeth
Unto the seaman, ere its bowers are seen,
Which tells him soon his weary wandering endeth--

Soon shall he rest, in bosky shades of green,
By daisied meadows pranked with dewy flowers,
With ever-running rivulets between.

These are thy tasks, my sisters--these the powers
God in his goodness gives into thy hands:--
'Tis from thy fingers fall the diamond showers

Of budding Spring, and o'er the expectant lands
June's odorous purple and rich Autumn's gold:
And even when needful Winter wide expands

His fallow wings, and winds blow sharp and cold
From the harsh east, 'tis thine, o'er all the plain,
The leafless woodlands and the unsheltered wold,

Gently to drop the flakes of feathery rain--
Heaven's warmest down--around the slumbering seeds,
And o'er the roots the frost-blanch'd counterpane.

What though man's careless eye but little heeds
Even the effects, much less the remoter cause,
Still, in the doing of beneficent deeds--

By God and his Vicegerent Nature's laws--
Ever a compensating joy is found.
Think ye the rain-drop heedeth if it draws

Rankness as well as Beauty from the ground?
Or that the sullen wind will deign to wake
Only Æolian melodies of sound--

And not the stormy screams that make men quake
Thus do ye act, my sisters; thus ye *do*
Your cheerful duty for the doing's sake--

Not unrewarded surely--not when you
See the successful issue of your charms,
Bringing the absent back again to view--

Giving the loved one to the lover's arms--
Smoothing the grassy couch in weary age--
Hushing in death's great calm a world's alarms.

I, I alone upon the earth's vast stage
Am doomed to act an unrequited part--
I, the unseen preceptress of the sage--

I, whose ideal form doth win the heart
Of all whom God's vocation hath assigned
To wear the sacred vesture of high Art--

To pass along the electric sparks of mind
From age to age, from race to race, until
The expanding truth encircles all mankind.

What without me were all the poet's skill?--
Dead, sensuous form without the quickening soul.
What without me the instinctive aim of will?--

A useless magnet pointing to no pole.
What the fine ear and the creative hand?
Most potent spirits free from man's control.

I, THE IDEAL, by the poet stand
When all his soul o'erflows with holy fire,
When currents of the beautiful and grand

Run glittering down along each burning wire
Until the heart of the great world doth feel
The electric shock of his God-kindled lyre:--

Then rolls the thunderous music peal on peal,
Or in the breathless after-pause, a strain
Simpler and sweeter through the hush doth steal--

Like to the pattering drops of summer rain
Or rustling grass, when fragrance fills the air
And all the groves are vocal once again:

Whatever form, whatever shape I bear,
The Spirit of high Impulse, and the Soul
Of all conceptions beautiful and rare,

Am I; who now swift spurning all control,
On rapid wings--the Ariel of the Muse--
Dart from the dazzling centre to the pole;

Now in the magic mimicry of hues
Such as surround God's golden throne, descend
In Titian's skies the boundaries to confuse

Betwixt earth's heaven and heaven's own heaven to blend
In Raphael's forms the human and divine,
Where spirit dawns, and matter seems to end.

Again on wings of melody, so fine
They mock the sight, but fall upon the ear
Like tuneful rose-leaves at the day's decline--

And with the music of a happier sphere
Entrance some master of melodious sound,
Till startled men the hymns of angels hear.

Happy for me when, in the vacant round
Of barren ages, one great steadfast soul
Faithful to me and to his art is found.

But, ah! my sisters, with my grief condole;
Join in my sorrows and respond my sighs;
And let your sobs the funeral dirges toll;

Weep those who falter in the great emprise--
Who, turning off upon some poor pretence,
Some worthless guerdon or some paltry prize,

Down from the airy zenith through the immense
Sink to the low expedients of an hour,
And barter soul for all the slough of sense,--

Just when the mind had reached its regal power,
And fancy's wing its perfect plume unfurl'd,--
Just when the bud of promise in the flower

Of all completeness opened on the world--
When the pure fire that heaven itself outflung
Back to its native empyrean curled,

Like vocal incense from a censer swung:--
Ah, me! to be subdued when all seemed won--
That I should fly when I would fain have clung.

Yet so it is,--our radiant course is run;--
Here we must part, the deathless lay unsung,
And, more than all, the deathless deed undone.

RECOLLECTIONS.

Ah! summer time, sweet summer scene,
When all the golden days,
Linked hand-in-hand, like moonlit fays,

Danced o'er the deepening green.

When, from the top of Pelier[111] down
We saw the sun descend,
With smiles that blessings seemed to send
To our near native town.

And when we saw him rise again
High o'er the hills at morn--
God's glorious prophet daily born
To preach good will to men--

Good-will and peace to all between
The gates of night and day--
Join with me, love, and with me say--
Sweet summer time and scene.

Sweet summer time, true age of gold,
When hand-in-hand we went
Slow by the quickening shrubs, intent
To see the buds unfold:

To trace new wild flowers in the grass,
New blossoms on the bough,
And see the water-lilies now
Rise o'er the liquid glass.

When from the fond and folding gale
The scented briar I pulled,
Or for thy kindred bosom culled
The lily of the vale;--

Thou without whom were dark the green,
The golden turned to gray,
Join with me, love, and with me say--
Sweet summer time and scene.

Sweet summer time, delight's brief reign,
Thou hast one memory still,
Dearer than ever tree or hill
Yet stretched along life's plain.

Stranger than all the wond'rous whole,
Flowers, fields, and sunset skies--
To see within our infant's eyes
The awakening of the soul.

To see their dear bright depths first stirred
By the far breath of thought,
To feel our trembling hearts o'erfraught
With rapture when we heard

Her first clear laugh, which might have been
A cherub's laugh at play--
Ah! love, thou canst but join and say--
Sweet summer time and scene.

Sweet summer time, sweet summer days,
One day I must recall;
One day the brightest of them all,
Must mark with special praise.

'Twas when at length in genial showers
The spring attained its close;
And June with many a myriad rose
Incarnadined the bowers:

Led by the bright and sun-warm air,
We left our indoor nooks;
Thou with my paper and my books,
And I thy garden chair;

Crossed the broad, level garden-walks,
With countless roses lined;
And where the apple still inclined
Its blossoms o'er the box,

Near to the lilacs round the pond,
In its stone ring hard by
We took our seats, where save the sky,
And the few forest trees beyond

The garden wall, we nothing saw,

But flowers and blossoms, and we heard
Nought but the whirring of some bird,
Or the rooks' distant, clamorous caw.

And in the shade we saw the face
Of our dear infant sleeping near,
And thou wert by to smile and hear,
And speak with innate truth and grace.

There through the pleasant noontide hours
My task of echoed song I sung;
Turning the golden southern tongue
Into the iron ore of ours!

'Twas the great Spanish master's pride,
The story of the hero proved;
'Twas how the Moorish princess loved,
And how the firm Fernando died.[112]

O happiest season ever seen,
O day, indeed the happiest day;
Join with me, love, and with me say--
Sweet summer time and scene.

One picture more before I close
Fond Memory's fast dissolving views;
One picture more before I lose
The radiant outlines as they rose.

'Tis evening, and we leave the porch,
And for the hundredth time admire
The rhododendron's cones of fire
Rise round the tree, like torch o'er torch.

And for the hundredth time point out
Each favourite blossom and perfume--
If the white lilac still doth bloom,
Or the pink hawthorn fadeth out:

And by the laurell'd wall, and o'er
The fields of young green corn we've gone;
And by the outer gate, and on
To our dear friend's oft-trodden door.

And there in cheerful talk we stay,
Till deepening twilight warns us home;
Then once again we backward roam
Calmly and slow the well-known way--

And linger for the expected view--
Day's dying gleam upon the hill;
Or listen for the whip-poor-will,[113]
Or the too seldom shy cuckoo.

At home the historic page we glean,
And muse, and hope, and praise, and pray--
Join with me, love, as then, and say--
Sweet summer time and scene!

¹¹¹ Mount Pelier, in the county of Dublin, overlooking Rathfarnham, and more remotely Dundrum. To a brief residence near the latter village the "Recollections" rendered in this poem are to be referred.

¹¹² Calderon's "El Principe Constante," translated in the earlier volumes of the author's Calderon. London, 1853.

¹¹³ I do not know the bird to which I have given this Indian name. It, however, imitated its note quite distinctly.

DOLORS.

The moon of my soul is dark, Dolores,
Dead and dark in my breast it lies,
For I miss the heaven of thy smile, Dolores,
And the light of thy brown bright eyes.

The rose of my heart is gone, Dolores,
Bud or blossom in vain I seek;
For I miss the breath of thy lip, Dolores,
And the blush of thy pearl-pale cheek.

The pulse of my heart is still, Dolores,
Still and chill is its glowing tide;
For I miss the beating of thine, Dolores,

In the vacant space by my side.

But the moon shall revisit my soul, Dolores,
And the rose shall refresh my heart,
When I meet thee again in heaven, Dolores,
Never again to part.

LOST AND FOUND.

"Whither art thou gone, fair Una?
Una fair, the moon is gleaming;
Fear no mortal eye, fair Una,
For the very flowers are dreaming.
And the twinkling stars are closing
Up their weary watching glances,
Warders on heaven's walls reposing,
While the glittering foe advances.

"Una dear, my heart is throbbing,
Full of throbbings without number;
Come! the tired-out streams are sobbing
Like to children ere they slumber;
And the longing trees inclining,
Seek the earth's too distant bosom;
Sad fate! that keeps from intertwining
The earthly and the aerial blossom.

"Una dear, I've roamed the mountain,
Round the furze and o'er the heather;
Una, dear, I've sought the fountain
Where we rested oft together;
Ah! the mountain now looks dreary,
Dead and dark where no life liveth;
Ah! the fountain, to the weary,
Now, no more refreshment giveth.

"Una, darling, dearest daughter
Beauty ever gave to Fancy,
Spirit of the silver water,
Nymph of Nature's necromancy!
Fair enchantress, fond magician,
Is thine every spell-word spoken?
Hast thou closed thy fairy mission?
Is thy potent wand then broken?

"Una dearest, deign to hear me,
Fly no more my prayer resisting!"
Then a trembling voice came near me,
Like a maiden to the trysting,
Like a maiden's feet approaching
Where the lover doth attend her;
Half-forgiving, half-reproaching,
Came that voice so shy and tender.

"Must I blame thee, must I chide thee,
Change to scorn the love I bore thee?
And the fondest heart beside thee,
And the truest eyes before thee.
And the kindest hands to press thee,
And the instinctive sense to guide thee,
And the purest lips to bless thee,
What, O dreamer! is denied thee?

"Hast thou not the full fruition,
Hast thou not the full enjoyment
Of thy young heart's fond ambition,
Free from every feared annoyance
Thou hast sighed for truth and beauty,
Hast thou failed, then, in thy wooing?
Dreamed of some ideal duty,
Is there nought that waits thy doing?--

"Is the world less bright or beauteous,
That dear eyes behold it *with* thee?
Is the work of life less duteous,
That thou art helped to do it, prithee?
Is the near rapture non-existent,
Because thou dreamest an ideal?
And canst thou for a glimmering distant
Forget the blessings of the real?

"Down on thy knees, O doubting dreamer!

Down! and repent thy heart's misprision."
Scarce had I knelt in tears and tremor,
When the scales fell from off my vision.
There stood my human guardian angel,
Given me by God's benign foreseeing,
While from her lips came life's evangel,
"Live! that each day complete thy being!"

SPRING FLOWERS FROM IRELAND.

On receiving an early crocus and some violets in a letter from Ireland.

Within the letter's rustling fold
I find once more a glad surprise--
A little tiny cup of gold--
Two little lovely violet eyes;
A cup of gold with emeralds set,
Once filled with wine from happier spheres;
Two little eyes so lately wet
With spring's delicious dewy tears.

Oh! little eyes that wept and laughed,
Now bright with smiles, with tears now dim,
Oh! little cup that once was quaffed
By fay-queens fluttering round thy rim.
I press each silken fringe's fold,
Sweet little eyes once more ye shine;
I kiss thy lip, oh, cup of gold,
And find thee full of Memory's wine.

Within their violet depths I gaze,
And see as in the camera's gloom,
The island with its belt of bays,
Its chieftained heights all capped with broom,
Which as the living lens it fills,
Now seems a giant charmed to sleep--
Now a broad shield embossed with hills
Upon the bosom of the deep.

When will the slumbering giant wake?
When will the shield defend and guard?
Ah, me! prophetic gleams forsake
The once rapt eyes of seer or bard.
Enough, if shunning Samson's fate,
It doth not all its vigour yield;
Enough, if plenteous peace, though late,
May rest beneath the sheltering shield.

I see the long and lone defiles
Of Keimaneigh's bold rocks uphurled,
I see the golden fruited isles
That gem the queen-lakes of the world;
I see--a gladder sight to me--
By soft Shangânah's silver strand,
The breaking of a sapphire sea
Upon the golden-fretted sand.

Swiftly the tunnel's rock-hewn pass,
Swiftly the fiery train runs through;
Oh! what a glittering sheet of glass!
Oh! what enchantment meets my view!
With eyes insatiate I pursue,
Till Bray's bright headland bounds the scene.
'Tis Baiæ, by a softer blue!
Gæta, by a gladder green!

By tasseled groves, o'er meadows fair,
I'm carried in my blissful dream,
To where--a monarch in the air--
The pointed mountain reigns supreme;
There in a spot remote and wild,
I see once more the rustic seat,
Where Carrigoona, like a child,
Sits at the mightier mountain's feet.

There by the gentler mountain's slope,
That happiest year of many a year,
That first swift year of love and hope,
With her then dear and ever dear,
I sat upon the rustic seat,
The seat an aged bay-tree crowns,
And saw outspreading from our feet

The golden glory of the Downs.

The furze-crowned heights, the glorious glen,
The white-walled chapel glistening near,
The house of God, the homes of men,
The fragrant hay, the ripening ear;
There where there seemed nor sin nor crime,
There in God's sweet and wholesome air--
Strange book to read at such a time--
We read of Vanity's false Fair.

We read the painful pages through,
Perceived the skill, admired the art,
Felt them if true, not wholly true,
A truer truth was in our heart.
Save fear and love of One, hath proved
The sage how vain is all below;
And one was there who feared and loved,
And one who loved that she was so.

The vision spreads, the memories grow,
Fair phantoms crowd the more I gaze,
Oh! cup of gold, with wine o'erflow,
I'll drink to those departed days:
And when I drain the golden cup
To them, to those I ne'er can see,
With wine of hope I'll fill it up,
And drink to days that yet may be.

I've drunk the future and the past,
Now for a draught of warmer wine--
One draught, the sweetest and the last,
Lady, I'll drink to thee and thine.
These flowers that to my breast I fold,
Into my very heart have grown;
To thee I'll drain the cup of gold,
And think the violet eyes thine own.

Boulogne, March, 1865.

TO THE MEMORY OF FATHER PROUT.

In deep dejection, but with affection,
I often think of those pleasant times,
In the days of Fraser, ere I touched a razor,
How I read and revell'd in thy racy rhymes;
When in wine and wassail, we to thee were vassal,
Of Watergrass-hill, O renowned P.P.!
May the bells of Shandon
Toll blithe and bland on
The pleasant waters of thy memory!

Full many a ditty, both wise and witty,
In this social city have I heard since then
(With the glass before me, how the dream comes o'er me,
Of those Attic suppers, and those vanished men).
But no song hath woken, whether sung or spoken,
Or hath left a token of such joy in me
As "The Bells of Shandon
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters of the river Lee."

The songs melodious, which--a new Harmodius--
"Young Ireland" wreathed round its rebel sword,
With their deep vibrations and aspirations,
Fling a glorious madness o'er the festive board!
But to me seems sweeter, with a tone completer,
The melodious metre that we owe to thee--
Of the bells of Shandon
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters of the river Lee.

There's a grave that rises o'er thy sward, Devizes,
Where Moore lies sleeping from his land afar,
And a white stone flashes over Goldsmith's ashes
In quiet cloisters by Temple Bar;
So where'er thou sleepest, with a love that's deepest,
Shall thy land remember thy sweet song and thee,
While the Bells of Shandon
Shall sound so grand on
The pleasant waters of the river Lee.

THOSE SHANDON BELLS.

[The remains of the Rev. Francis Mahony were laid in the family burial-place in St. Anne Shandon Churchyard, the "Bells," which he has rendered famous, tolling the knell of the poet, who sang of their sweet chimes.]

Those Shandon bells, those Shandon bells!
Whose deep, sad tone now sobs, now swells--
Who comes to seek this hallowed ground,
And sleep within their sacred sound?

'Tis one who heard these chimes when young,
And who in age their praises sung,
Within whose breast their music made
A dream of home where'er he strayed.

And, oh! if bells have power to-day
To drive all evil things away,
Let doubt be dumb, and envy cease--
And round his grave reign holy peace.

True love doth love in turn beget,
And now these bells repay the debt;
Whene'er they sound, their music tells
Of him who sang sweet Shandon bells!

May 30, 1866.

YOUTH AND AGE.

To give the blossom and the fruit
The soft warm air that wraps them round,
Oh! think how long the toilsome root
Must live and labour 'neath the ground.

To send the river on its way,
With ever deepening strength and force,
Oh! think how long 'twas let to play,
A happy streamlet, near its source.

TO JUNE.

WRITTEN AFTER AN UNGENIAL MAY.

I'll heed no more the poet's lay--
His false-fond song shall charm no more--
My heart henceforth shall but adore
The real, not the misnamed May.

Too long I've knelt, and vainly hung
My offerings round an empty name;
O May! thou canst not be the same
As once thou wert when Earth was young.

Thou canst not be the same to-day--
The poet's dream--the lover's joy--
The floral heaven of girl and boy
Were heaven no more, if thou wert May.

If thou wert May, then May is cold,
And, oh! how changed from what she has been--
Then barren boughs are bright with green,
And leaden skies are glad with gold.

And the dark clouds that veiled thy moon
Were silvery-threaded tissues bright,
Looping the locks of amber light
That float but on the airs of June.

O June! thou art the real May;
Thy name is soft and sweet as hers
But rich blood thy bosom stirs,
Her marble cheek cannot display.

She cometh like a haughty girl,
So conscious of her beauty's power,
She now will wear nor gem nor flower
Upon her pallid breast of pearl.

And her green silken summer dress,

So simply flower'd in white and gold,
She scorns to let our eyes behold,
But hides through very wilfulness:

Hides it 'neath ermined robes, which she
Hath borrowed from some wintry quean,
Instead of dancing on the green--
A village maiden fair and free.

Oh! we have spoiled her with our praise,
And made her froward, false, and vain;
So that her cold blue eyes disdain
To smile as in the earlier days.

Let her beware--the world full soon
Like me shall tearless turn away,
And woo, instead of thine, O May!
The brown, bright, joyous eyes of June.

O June! forgive the long delay,
My heart's deceptive dream is o'er--
Where I believe I *will* adore,
Nor worship June, yet kneel to May.

SUNNY DAYS IN WINTER.

Summer is a glorious season
Warm, and bright, and pleasant;
But the Past is not a reason
To despise the Present.
So while health can climb the mountain,
And the log lights up the hall,
There are sunny days in Winter, after all!

Spring, no doubt, hath faded from us,
Maiden-like in charms;
Summer, too, with all her promise,
Perished in our arms.
But the memory of the vanished,
Whom our hearts recall,
Maketh sunny days in Winter, after all!

True, there's scarce a flower that bloometh,
All the best are dead;
But the wall-flower still perfumeth
Yonder garden-bed.
And the arbutus pearl-blossom'd
Hangs its coral ball--
There are sunny days in Winter, after all!

Summer trees are pretty,--very,
And love them well:
But this holly's glistening berry,
None of those excel.
While the fir can warm the landscape,
And the ivy clothes the wall,
There are sunny days in Winter, after all!

Sunny hours in every season
Wait the innocent--
Those who taste with love and reason
What their God hath sent.
Those who neither soar too highly,
Nor too lowly fall,
Feel the sunny days of Winter, after all!

Then, although our darling treasures
Vanish from the heart;
Then, although our once-loved pleasures
One by one depart;
Though the tomb looms in the distance,
And the mourning pall,
There is sunshine, and no Winter, after all!

THE BIRTH OF THE SPRING.

O Kathleen, my darling, I've dreamt such a dream,
'Tis as hopeful and bright as the summer's first beam:
I dreamt that the World, like yourself, darling dear,
Had presented a son to the happy New Year!

Like yourself, too, the poor mother suffered awhile,
But like yours was the joy, at her baby's first smile,
When the tender nurse, Nature, quick hastened to fling
Her sun-mantle round, as she fondled THE SPRING.

O Kathleen, 'twas strange how the elements all,
With their friendly regards, condescended to call:
The rough rains of winter like summer-dews fell,
And the North-wind said, zephyr-like: "Is the World well?"
And the streams ran quick-sparkling to tell o'er the earth
God's goodness to man in this mystical birth;
For a Son of this World, and an heir to the King
Who rules over man, is this beautiful Spring!

O Kathleen, methought, when the bright babe was born,
More lovely than morning appeared the bright morn;
The birds sang more sweetly, the grass greener grew,
And with buds and with blossoms the old trees looked new;
And methought when the Priest of the Universe came--
The Sun--in his vestments of glory and flame,
He was seen, the warm raindrops of April to fling
On the brow of the babe, and baptise him The Spring!

O Kathleen, dear Kathleen! what treasures are piled
In the mines of the past for this wonderful Child!
The lore of the sages, the lays of the bards,
Like a primer, the eye of this infant regards;
All the dearly-bought knowledge that cost life and limb,
Without price, without peril, is offered to him;
And the blithe bee of Progress concealeth its sting,
As it offers its sweets to the beautiful Spring!

O Kathleen, they tell us of wonderful things,
Of speed that surpasseth the fairy's fleet wings;
How the lands of the world in communion are brought,
And the slow march of speech is as rapid as thought.
Think, think what an heir-loom the great world will be
With this wonderful wire 'neath the earth and the sea;
When the snows and the sunshine together shall bring
All the wealth of the world to the feet of The Spring.

Oh! Kathleen, but think of the birth-gifts of love,
That THE MASTER who lives in the GREAT HOUSE above
Prepares for the poor child that's born on His land--
Dear God! they're the sweet flowers that fall from Thy hand--
The crocus, the primrose, the violet given
Awhile, to make earth the reflection of heaven;
The brightness and lightness that round the world wing
Are thine, and are ours too, through thee, happy Spring!

O Kathleen, dear Kathleen! that dream is gone by,
And I wake once again, but, thank God! thou art by;
And the land that we love looks as bright in the beam,
Just as if my sweet dream was not all out a dream,
The spring-tide of Nature its blessing imparts,
Let the spring-tide of Hope send its pulse through our hearts;
Let us feel 'tis a mother, to whose breast we cling,
And a brother we hail, when we welcome the Spring.

ALL FOOL'S DAY.

The Sun called a beautiful Beam, that was playing
At the door of his golden-wall'd palace on high;
And he bade him be off, without any delaying,
To a fast-fleeting Cloud on the verge of the sky:
"You will give him this letter," said roguish Apollo
(While a sly little twinkle contracted his eye),
With my royal regards; and be sure that you follow
Whatsoever his Highness may send in reply."

The Beam heard the order, but being no novice,
Took it coolly, of course--nor in this was he wrong--
But was forced (being a clerk in Apollo's post-office)
To declare (what a bounce!) that he wouldn't be long;
So he went home and dress'd--gave his beard an elision--
Put his scarlet coat on, nicely edged with gold lace;
And thus being equipped, with a postman's precision,
He prepared to set out on his nebulous race.

Off he posted at last, but just outside the portals
He lit on earth's high-soaring bird in the dark;
So he tarried a little, like many frail mortals,

Who, when sent on an errand, first go on a lark;
But he broke from the bird--reach'd the cloud in a minute--
Gave the letter and all, as Apollo ordained;
But the Sun's correspondent, on looking within it,
Found, "Send the fool farther," was all it contained.

The Cloud, who was up to all mystification,
Quite a humorist, saw the intent of the Sun;
And was ever too airy--though lofty his station--
To spoil the least taste of the prospect of fun;
So he hemm'd, and he haw'd--took a roll of pure vapour,
Which the light from the beam made as bright as could be,
(Like a sheet of the whitest cream golden-edg'd paper),
And wrote a few words, superscribed, "To the Sea."

"My dear Beam," or "dear Ray" (t'was thus coolly he hailed him),
"Pray take down to Neptune this letter from me,
For the person you seek--though I lately regaled him--
Now tries a new airing, and dwells by the sea."
So our Mercury hastened away through the ether,
The bright face of Thetis to gladden and greet;
And he plunged in the water a few feet beneath her,
Just to get a sly peep at her beautiful feet.

To Neptune the letter was brought for inspection--
But the god, though a deep one, was still rather green;
So he took a few moments of steady reflection,
Ere he wholly made out what the missive could mean:
But the date (it was "April the first") came to save it
From all fear of mistake; so he took pen in hand,
And, transcribing the cruel entreaty, he gave it
To our travel-tired friend, and said, "Bring it to Land."

To Land went the Sunbeam, which scarcely received it,
When it sent it, post-haste, back again to the sea;
The Sea's hypocritical calmness deceived it,
And sent it once more to the Land on the lea;--
From the Land to the Lake--from the Lakes to the Fountains--
From the Fountains and Streams to the Hills' azure crest,
'Till, at last, a tall Peak on the top of the mountains,
Sent it back to the Cloud in the now golden west.

He saw the whole trick by the way he was greeted
By the Sun's laughing face, which all purple appears;
Then, amused, yet annoyed at the way he was treated,
He first laughed at the joke, and then burst into tears.
It is thus that this day of mistakes and surprises,
When fools write on foolscap, and wear it the while,
This gay saturnalia for ever arises
'Mid the showers and the sunshine, the tear and the smile.

DARRYNANE.

[Written in 1844, after a visit to Darrynane Abbey.]

Where foams the white torrent, and rushes the rill,
Down the murmuring slopes of the echoing hill--
Where the eagle looks out from his cloud-crested crags,
And the caverns resound with the panting of stags--
Where the brow of the mountain is purple with heath,
And the mighty Atlantic rolls proudly beneath,
With the foam of its waves like the snowy *fenane*--[114]
Oh! that is the region of wild Darrynane!

Oh! fair are the islets of tranquil Glengariff,
And wild are the sacred recesses of Scariff,
And beauty, and wildness, and grandeur commingle
By Bantry's broad bosom, and wave-wasted Dingle;
But wild as the wildest, and fair as the fairest,
And lit by a lustre that thou alone wearest--
And dear to the eye and the free heart of man
Are the mountains and valleys of wild Darrynane!

And who is the Chief of this lordly domain?
Does a slave hold the land where a monarch might reign?
Oh! no, by St. Finbar,[115] nor cowards, nor slaves,
Could live in the sound of these free, dashing waves!
A chieftain, the greatest the world has e'er known--
Laurel his coronet--true hearts his throne--
Knowledge his sceptre--a Nation his clan--
O'Connell, the chieftain of proud Darrynane!

A thousand bright streams on the mountains awake,
Whose waters unite in O'Donoghue's lake--
Streams of Glanflesk and the dark Gishadine
Filling the heart of that valley divine!
Then rushing in one mighty artery down
To the limitless ocean by murmuring Lowne--[116]
Thus Nature unfolds in her mystical plan
A type of the Chieftain of wild Darrynane!

In him every pulse of our bosoms unite--
Our hatred of wrong and our worship of right--
The hopes that we cherish, the ills we deplore,
All centre within his heart's innermost core,
Which, gathered in one mighty current, are flung
To the ends of the earth from his thunder-toned tongue!
Till the Indian looks up, and the valiant Afghan
Draws his sword at the echo from far Darrynane!

But here he is only the friend and the father,
Who from children's sweet lips truest wisdom can gather,
And seeks from the large heart of Nature to borrow
Rest for the present and strength for the morrow!
Oh! who that e'er saw him with children about him
And heard his soft tones of affection could doubt him?
My life on the truth of the heart of that man
That throbs like the Chieftain's of wild Darrynane!

Oh! wild Darrynane, on thy ocean-washed shore,
Shall the glad song of mariners echo once more?
Shall the merchants, and minstrels, and maidens of Spain,
Once again in their swift ships come over the main?
Shall the soft lute be heard, and the gay youths of France
Lead our blue-eyed young maidens again to the dance?
Graceful and shy as thy fawns, Killenane,[117]
Are the mind-moulded maidens of far Darrynane!

Dear land of the south, as my mind wandered o'er
All the joys I have felt by thy magical shore,
From those lakes of enchantment by oak-clad Glená
To the mountainous passes of bold Iveragh!
Like birds which are lured to a haven of rest,
By those rocks far away on the ocean's bright breast--[118]
Thus my thoughts loved to linger, as memory ran
O'er the mountains and valleys of wild Darrynane!

¹¹⁴ "In the mountains of Slivelougher, and other parts of this county, the country people, towards the end of June, cut the coarse mountain grass, called by them *fenane*; towards August this grass grows white."—*Smith's Kerry*.

¹¹⁵ The abbey on the grounds of Darrynane was founded in the seventh century by the monks of St. Finbar.

¹¹⁶ The river Lowne is the only outlet by which all the streams that form the Lakes of Killarney discharge themselves into the sea—*Lan*, or *Lowne*, in the old Irish signifying full.

¹¹⁷ "Killenane lies to the east of Cahir. It has many mountains towards the sea. These mountains are frequented by herds of fallow deer, that range about it in perfect security."—*Smith's Kerry*.

¹¹⁸ The Skellig Rocks. In describing one of them, Keating says "That there is a certain attractive virtue in the soil which draws down all the birds which attempt to fly over it, and obliges them to alight upon the rock."

A SHAMROCK FROM THE IRISH SHORE.

(On receiving a Shamrock in a Letter from Ireland.)

O postman! speed thy tardy gait--
Go quicker round from door to door;
For thee I watch, for thee I wait,
Like many a weary wanderer more.
Thou brightest news of bale and bliss--
Some life begun, some life well o'er.
He stops--he rings!--O heaven! what's this?--
A shamrock from the Irish shore!

Dear emblem of my native land,
By fresh fond words kept fresh and green;
The pressure of an unfelt hand--
The kisses of a lip unseen;
A throb from my dead mother's heart--
My father's smile revived once more--
Oh, youth! oh, love! oh, hope thou art,
Sweet shamrock from the Irish shore!

Enchanter, with thy wand of power,
Thou mak'st the past be present still:
The emerald lawn--the lime-leaved bower--
The circling shore--the sunlit hill;
The grass, in winter's wintriest hours,
By dewy daisies dimpled o'er,
Half hiding, 'neath their trembling flowers,
The shamrock of the Irish shore!

And thus, where'er my footsteps strayed,
By queenly Florence, kingly Rome--
By Padua's long and lone arcade--
By Ischia's fires and Adria's foam--
By Spezzia's fatal waves that kissed
My poet sailing calmly o'er;
By all, by each, I mourned and missed
The shamrock of the Irish shore!

I saw the palm-tree stand aloof,
Irresolute 'twixt the sand and sea:
I saw upon the trellised roof
Outspread the wine that was to be;
A giant-flowered and glorious tree
I saw the tall magnolia soar;
But there, even there, I longed for thee,
Poor shamrock of the Irish shore!

Now on the ramparts of Boulogne,
As lately by the lonely Rance,
At evening as I watch the sun,
I look! I dream! Can this be France
Not Albion's cliffs, how near they be,
He seems to love to linger o'er;
But gilds, by a remoter sea,
The shamrock on the Irish shore!

I'm with him in that wholesome clime--
That fruitful soil, that verdurous sod--
Where hearts unstained by vulgar crime
Have still a simple faith in God:
Hearts that in pleasure and in pain,
The more they're trod rebound the more,
Like thee, when wet with heaven's own rain,
O shamrock of the Irish shore!

Memorial of my native land,
True emblem of my land and race--
Thy small and tender leaves expand
But only in thy native place.
Thou needest for thyself and seed
Soft dews around, kind sunshine o'er;
Transplanted thou'rt the merest weed,
O shamrock of the Irish shore.

Here on the tawny fields of France,
Or in the rank, red English clay,
Thou showest a stronger form perchance;
A bolder front thou mayest display,
More able to resist the scythe
That cut so keen, so sharp before;
But then thou art no more the blithe
Bright shamrock of the Irish shore!

Ah, me! to think--thy scorns, thy slights,
Thy trampled tears, thy nameless grave
On Fredericksburg's ensanguined heights,
Or by Potomac's purpled wave!
Ah, me! to think that power malign
Thus turns thy sweet green sap to gore,
And what calm rapture might be thine,
Sweet shamrock of the Irish shore!

Struggling, and yet for strife unmeet,
True type of trustful love thou art;
Thou liest the whole year at my feet,
To live but one day at my heart.
One day of festal pride to lie
Upon the loved one's heart--what more?
Upon the loved one's heart to die,
O shamrock of the Irish shore!

And shall I not return thy love?

And shalt thou not, as thou shouldst, be
Placed on thy son's proud heart above
The red rose or the fleur-de-lis?
Yes, from these heights the waters beat,
I vow to press thy cheek once more,
And lie for ever at thy feet,
O shamrock of the Irish shore!

Boulogne-sur-Mer, March 17, 1865.

ITALIAN MYRTLES.

[Suggested by seeing for the first time fire-flies in the myrtle hedges at Spezzia.]

By many a soft Ligurian bay
The myrtles glisten green and bright,
Gleam with their flowers of snow by day,
And glow with fire-flies through the night,
And yet, despite the cold and heat,
Are ever fresh, and pure, and sweet.

There is an island in the West,
Where living myrtles bloom and blow,
Hearts where the fire-fly Love my rest
Within a paradise of snow--
Which yet, despite the cold and heat,
Are ever fresh, and pure, and sweet.

Deep in that gentle breast of thine--
Like fire and snow within the pearl--
Let purity and love combine,
O warm, pure-hearted Irish girl!
And in the cold and in the heat
Be ever fresh, and pure, and sweet.

Thy bosom bears as pure a snow
As e'er Italia's bowers can boast,
And though no fire-fly lends its glow--
As on the soft Ligurian coast--
'Tis warmed by an internal heat
Which ever keeps it pure and sweet.

The fire-flies fade on misty eyes--
The inner fires alone endure;
Like rain that wets the leaves,
Thy very sorrows keep thee pure--
They temper a too ardent heat--
And keep thee ever pure and sweet.

La Spezzia, 1862.

THE IRISH EMIGRANT'S MOTHER.

"Oh! come, my mother, come away, across the sea-green water;
Oh! come with me, and come with him, the husband of thy daughter;
Oh! come with us, and come with them, the sister and the brother,
Who, prattling climb thy aged knees, and call thy daughter--mother.

"Oh come, and leave this land of death--this isle of desolation--
This speck upon the sunbright face of God's sublime creation,
Since now o'er all our fatal stars the most malign hath risen,
When Labour seeks the poorhouse, and Innocence the prison.

"'Tis true, o'er all the sun-brown fields the husky wheat is bending;
'Tis true, God's blessed hand at last a better time is sending;
'Tis true the island's aged face looks happier and younger,
But in the best of days we've known the sickness and the hunger.

"When health breathed out in every breeze, too oft we've known the fever--
Too oft, my mother, have we felt the hand of the bereaver:
Too well remember many a time the mournful task that brought him,
When freshness fanned the summer air, and cooled the glow of autumn.

"But then the trial, though severe, still testified our patience,
We bowed with mingled hope and fear to God's wise dispensations;
We felt the gloomiest time was both a promise and a warning,
Just as the darkest hour of night is herald of the morning.

"But now through all the black expanse no hopeful morning breaketh--
No bird of promise in our hearts the gladsome song awaketh;

No far-off gleams of good light up the hills of expectation--
Nought but the gloom that might precede the world's annihilation.

"So, mother, turn thy aged feet, and let our children lead 'em
Down to the ship that wafts us soon to plenty and to freedom;
Forgetting nought of all the past, yet all the past forgiving;
Come, let us leave the dying land, and fly unto the living.

"They tell us, they who read and think of Ireland's ancient story,
How once its emerald flag flung out a sunburst's fleeting glory
Oh! if that sun will pierce no more the dark clouds that efface it,
Fly where the rising stars of heaven commingle to replace it.

"So come, my mother, come away, across the sea-green water;
Oh! come with us, and come with him, the husband of thy daughter;
Oh! come with us, and come with them, the sister and the brother,
Who, prattling, climb thy aged knees, and call thy daughter--mother."

"Ah! go, my children, go away--obey this inspiration;
Go, with the mantling hopes of health and youthful expectation;
Go, clear the forests, climb the hills, and plough the expectant prairies;
Go, in the sacred name of God, and the Blessed Virgin Mary's.

"But though I feel how sharp the pang from thee and thine to sever,
To look upon these darling ones the last time and for ever;
Yet in this sad and dark old land, by desolation haunted,
My heart has struck its roots too deep ever to be transplanted.

"A thousand fibres still have life, although the trunk is dying,
They twine around the yet green grave where thy father's bones are lying;
Ah! from that sad and sweet embrace no soil on earth can loose 'em,
Though golden harvests gleam on its breast, and golden sands its bosom.

"Others are twined around the stone, where ivy-blossoms smother
The crumbling lines that trace your names, my father and my mother;
God's blessing be upon their souls--God grant, my old heart prayeth,
Their names be written in the Book whose writing ne'er decayeth.

"Alas! my prayers would never warm within those great cold buildings,
Those grand cathedral churches with their marbles and their gildings;
Far fitter than the proudest dome that would hang in splendour o'er me,
Is the simple chapel's white-washed wall, where my people knelt before me.

"No doubt it is a glorious land to which you now are going,
Like that which God bestowed of old, with milk and honey flowing;
But where are the blessed saints of God, whose lives of his law remind me,
Like Patrick, Brigid, and Columkille, in the land I'd leave behind me?

"So leave me here, my children, with my old ways and old notions;
Leave me here in peace, with my memories and devotions;
Leave me in sight of your father's grave, and as the heavens allied us,
Let not, since we were joined in life, even the grave divide us.

"There's not a week but I can hear how you prosper better and better,
For the mighty fire-ships o'er the sea will bring the expected letter;
And if I need aught for my simple wants, my food or my winter firing,
You will gladly spare from your growing store a little for my requiring.

"Remember with a pitying love the hapless land that bore you;
At every festal season be its gentle form before you;
When the Christmas candle is lighted, and the holly and ivy glisten,
Let your eye look back for a vanished face--for a voice that is silent, listen!

"So go, my children, go away--obey this inspiration;
Go, with the mantling hopes of health and youthful expectation;
Go, clear the forests, climb the hills, and plough the expectant prairies;
Go, in the sacred name of God, and the Blessed Virgin Mary's."

THE RAIN: A SONG OF PEACE. 119

The Rain, the Rain, the beautiful Rain--
Welcome, welcome, it cometh again;
It cometh with green to gladden the plain,
And to wake the sweets in the winding lane.

The Rain, the Rain, the beautiful Rain,
It fills the flowers to their tiniest vein,
Till they rise from the sod whereon they had lain--
Ah, me! ah, me! like an army slain.

The Rain, the Rain, the beautiful Rain,

Each drop is a link of a diamond chain
That unites the earth with its sin and its stain
To the radiant realm where God doth reign.

The Rain, the Rain, the beautiful Rain,
Each drop is a tear not shed in vain,
Which the angels weep for the golden grain
All trodden to death on the gory plain;

For Rain, the Rain, the beautiful Rain,
Will waken the golden seeds again!
But, ah! what power will revive the slain,
Stark lying death over fair Lorraine?

'Twere better far, O beautiful Rain,
That you swelled the torrent and flooded the main;
And that Winter, with all his spectral train,
Alone lay camped on the icy plain.

For then, O Rain, O beautiful Rain,
The snow-flag of peace were unfurl'd again;
And the truce would be rung in each loud refrain
Of the blast replacing the bugle's strain.

Then welcome, welcome, beautiful Rain,
Thou bringest flowers to the parched-up plain;
Oh! for many a frenzied heart and brain,
Bring peace and love to the world again!

August 28, 1870.

¹¹⁹ Written during the Franco-German war.

M. H. Gill & Sons, Printers, Dublin.

Transcriber's Notes.

- *Source.* The collection of poems here presented follows as closely as possible the 1882 first edition. I assembled this e-text over several years, either typing or scanning one poem at a time as the spirit moved me. Some poems were transcribed either from the 1884 second edition, or from D. F. MacCarthy's earlier publications, depending on whatever happened to be handy at the time. I have proofread this entire e-text against the 1882 edition. In many instances there are minor variations, mostly in punctuation, among the different source material. In some cases, if the 1882 edition clearly has an error, I have used the other works as a guide. Where there are variations that are not obviously errors, I have followed the 1882 edition. It is certainly possible, where I transcribed from a non-1882 source, that a few variations may have slipped my notice, and have not been changed.
- *General.* In the printed source the first word of each section and poem is in SMALL CAPITALS, which I have removed as per Project Gutenberg standards. Due to HTML programming reasons associated with text within `<pre>` tags (very useful for formatting poetry) instances of SMALL CAPITALS within the poems are rendered as ALL CAPITALS. In the printed source the patronymic prefix "Mac" is always followed by a half space; due to limitations in this electronic format I have rendered names in ALL CAPITALS with a full space (MAC CAURA) and names in Mixed Capitals without any space (MacCaura) throughout. For various reasons the longest line of code in this file is 79 characters; this means that in some poems I had to wrap the ends of very long verses to the next line.
- *Footnotes.* In the printed source footnotes are marked with an asterisk, dagger, et cetera and placed at the bottom of each page. In this electronic version I have numbered the footnotes and placed them below each section or poem. Due to HTML programming reasons, note references within a poem are given in [brackets], elsewhere they are given as ^{superscript} text.
- *Contents.* I have removed the page numbers from the contents list. Text in brackets are my additions, giving alternate/earlier published titles for the poems.
- *Preface.* In the printed source, the Preface is placed before the Contents, but I have moved it for hypertext navigation purposes.
- *Waiting for the May.* This poem was published under the title of "Summer Longings" in *The Bell-Founder and Other Poems*, 1857.
- *Oh! had I the Wings of a Bird.* This poem was published under the title of "Home Preference" in *The Bell-Founder and Other Poems*, 1857.
- *Ferdiah.* The ballad between Mave and Ferdiah includes some long lines of text that would require (due to electronic publishing line length standards) occasionally breaking a line ending to make a new line. Because there is an internal rhyme in these verses, and for more consistent formatting, I have decided to break every verse here at the internal rhyme, but not capitalizing the beginning of resultant new line. For example, "Which many an arm less brave than thine, which many a heart less bold, would claim?" is one line of verse in the 1882 edition, but I have formatted it as "Which many an arm less brave than thine, / which many a heart less bold, would claim?" For purposes of recording [errata](#) below, I have not numbered these new pseudo-lines. The phrase "son of Dáman, Daré's son" appears in the poem a few times, but with inconsistently applied accents. As the inconsistency is the same in the 1884 edition, and I do not know if there is a poetic or Gaelic grammatical reason for the changing diacritical marks, I have presented these just as they appear in the printed source. The word "creit" is taken directly from the Irish text untranslated—a roughly equivalent English word is "frame."

- [The Voyage of St. Brendan](#). Note 56 refers to a puffin (*Anas leucopsis*) or *girrinn*a. The bird, at least by 2004 classification, is not a puffin but a barnacle goose (*Branta leucopsis*) and I found one reference to its Irish name as *gé ghiúrain*. As these birds nest in remote areas of the arctic, people were quite free to invent stories of their origins.
- [The Dead Tribune](#). The subject of this poem is Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), an Irish political leader and Minister of Parliament. In ill health, his doctor advised he go to a warmer climate; he died en route to Rome for a pilgrimage. The 1882 edition has the word "knawing" which is an obsolete variant of "gnawing"; the latter appears in the 1884 edition.
- [A Mystery](#). The spelling of "Istambol" is intentional—the current "Istanbul" was not adopted until the twentieth century. The name probably derives from an old nickname for Constantinople, but the complexity of this city's naming is beyond the capacity of a footnote.
- [To Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#). MacCarthy's translation of Calderón's *The Two Lovers of Heaven: Chrysanthus and Daria* has been released as Project Gutenberg e-text #12173.
- [To Ethna](#). This poem was published under the listing of "Dedicatory Sonnet" and dated 1850 in *The Bell-Founder and Other Poems*, 1857.
- [O'Connell](#). See note a few lines up on "The Dead Tribune." My correction of the phrase "heaven's high fault" is not based on any other published edition. It is conjectural, based on the illogicality of the phrase and MacCarthy's use of the phrase "heaven's high vault" in his translation of Calderón's *The Purgatory of St. Patrick* (Project Gutenberg e-text #6371) published two years before this poem was written.
- [Moore](#). The subject of this poem is Thomas Moore (1779-1852). A collection of his poems has been released as Project Gutenberg e-text #8187, but note that the biographical sketch therein mistakenly lists 1780 as his birth year. In this poem "Shakspere" is not misspelt; it is one of many variants used during and after the bard's lifetime (my favorite is "Shaxpere" from 1582).
- [To Ethna](#). This poem bears the same title as a sonnet that also appears in this collection of poems.
- [Spring Flowers from Ireland](#). I retained the format of the name "Gäeta" as originally printed, even though the rules for placing a diaeresis imply that it should be "Gaëta."
- [The Irish Emigrant's Mother](#). This poem was published under the title of "The Emigrants" in *The Bell-Founder and Other Poems*, 1857.

Errata.

Printer's errors found in the 1882 edition have been corrected in this electronic edition. While I have no desire to standardize Mr. MacCarthy's spelling or curtail his poetic license, in some cases where I could not find a documented variant matching the printed source I have replaced it and listed the change here. Occasionally I have inserted punctuation where it is obviously missing. Naturally it is possible that some of these "corrections" are themselves erroneous. When in doubt about either a spelling or punctuation error, I have followed the text of the original. The list below does not include minor corrections (punctuation and capitalization) in notes or introductions.

The [original text is in brackets] and {corrected text is in braces} below.

- [Contents](#). [Táin Bó Chuailgne] {Tain Bó Cuailgné} / [The Year King] {The Year-King} / [The Awakening] {The Awaking} / [The Voice and the Pen] {The Voice and Pen}
- [Preface](#). first paragraph [Táin Bó Chuailgne] {Tain Bó Cuailgné}
- [Waiting for the May](#). line 9 [longing] {longing,}
- [Kate of Kenmare](#). line 37 [and] {land}
- [A Lament](#). line 117 [strewn] {strawn}
- [Oh! had I the Wings of a Bird](#). line 35 [home] {home,}
- [The Fireside](#). line 20 [fireside.] {fireside!}
- [Autumn Fears](#). line 40 [field] {field!} / line 48 [field] {field!}
- [Ferdiah](#). line 69 [birds sing] {bird sings} / line 590 [ogether] {Together} / line 1007 [gle] {glen} / line 1176 [Tain Bó Cuailgné] {Tain Bó Cuailgné} / line 1229 [be.] {be."}
- [The Voyage of St. Brendan](#). note 64 [tanagar] {tanager} / note 65 [driole] {oriole}
- [The Foray of Con O'Donnell](#). line 347 [and come] {and some} / line 407 [seagull] {sea gull}
- [The Bell-Founder](#). subheader [Vicissitude and Rest.] {Part III.—Vicissitude and Rest.}
- [Alice and Una](#). line 77 [Glengariff's] {Glengariff's} / note 100 [Digialis] {Digitalis}
- [The Voice and Pen](#). line 35 [orator s] {orator's}
- [The Arraying](#). line 59 [verduous] {verdurous}
- [Welcome, May](#). line 30 [footseps] {footsteps}
- [The Progress of the Rose](#). line 65 [beateous] {beauteous}
- [The Year-King](#). line 114 [iu] {in}
- [The Awakening](#). line 11 [fear] {fear,} / line 29 [known] {known.}
- [The First of the Angels](#). line 32 [grass-bearing; lea] {grass-bearing lea}
- [Spirit Voices](#). title [VOICES] {VOICES.} / line 78 [prodnce] {produce}
- [O'Connell](#). line 123 [fault] {vault} / line 283 [it] {its}
- [Moore](#). line 101 [countr y] {country}
- ["Not Known"](#). line 39 [Not] {NOT} / line 48 [Estio] {Estío}
- [The Lay Missioner](#). line 20 [tis] {'tis}
- [Recollections](#). line 94 [hundreth] {hundredth}
- [Spring Flowers from Ireland](#). line 96 [own] {own.}
- [The Birth of the Spring](#). line 21 [When] {when} / line 29 [nowledge] {knowledge}
- [Darrynane](#). line 30 [Lowne?] {Lowne—} / line 52 [main] {main?}
- [The Irish Emigrant's Mother](#). line 10 [Tis] {'Tis}
- [The Rain: a Song of Peace](#). line 32 [again] {again!}

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