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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ENTHUSIASM AND OTHER POEMS ***

ENTHUSIASM;

AND

OTHER POEMS,

BY

SUSANNA STRICKLAND,

(NOW MRS. MOODIE.)

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POEMS.

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TO JAMES MONTGOMERY, ESQ.

With sincere admiration of his genius as a poet, his virtues as a Christian, and his character as a man, this Volume is most respectfully inscribed, by his obliged servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Reydon, Suffolk,
Jan. 1st. 1831.

[Pg 1]

ENTHUSIASM.

Oh for the spirit which inspired of old
The seer's prophetic song—the voice that spake
Through Israel's warrior king. The strains that burst
In thrilling tones from Zion's heaven-strung harp,
Float down the tide of ages, shedding light
On pagan shores and nations far remote:
Eternal as the God they celebrate,
Their fame shall last when Time's long race is run,
And you refulgent eye of this fair world,—
Its light and centre,—into darkness shrinks,

Eclipsed for ever by the glance of Him
Whose rising sheds abroad eternal day.
Almighty, uncreated Source of life!
To Thee I dedicate my soul and song;
In humble adoration bending low
Before thy footstool. Thou alone canst stamp
A lasting glory on the works of man,
Tuning the shepherd's reed, or monarch's harp,
To sounds harmonious. Immortality
Exists alone in Thee. The proudest strain
That ever fired the poet's soul, or drew
Melodious breathings from his gifted lyre,
Unsanctioned by thy smile, shall die away
Like the faint sound which the soft summer breeze
Wins from the stately lily's silver bells;
A passing murmur, a half-whispered sigh,
Heard for a moment in the deep repose
Of Nature's midnight rest—then hushed for ever!

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Parent of genius, bright Enthusiasm!
Bold nurse of high resolve and generous thought,
'Tis to thy soul-awakening power we owe
The preacher's eloquence, the painter's skill,
The poet's lay, the patriot's noble zeal,
The warrior's courage, and the sage's lore.
Oh! till the soul is quickened by thy breath,
Wit, wisdom, eloquence, and beauty, fail
To make a just impression on the heart;
The tide of life creeps lazily along,
Soiled with the stains of earth, and man debased
Sinks far below the level of the stream.
Alas! that thy bright flame should be confined
To passion's maddening vortex; and the soul
Waste all its glorious energies on earth!—
The world allows its votaries to feel
A glowing ardour, an intense delight,
On every subject but the one that lifts
The soul above its sensual, vain pursuits,
And elevates the mind and thoughts to God!
Zeal in a sacred cause alone is deemed
An aberration of our mental powers.
The sons of pleasure cannot bear that light
Of heavenly birth which penetrates the souls
Of men, who, deeply conscious of their guilt,
Mourn o'er their lost, degraded state, and seek,
Through faith in Christ's atonement, to regain
The glorious liberty of sons of God!
Who, as redeemed, account it their chief joy
To praise and celebrate the wondrous love
That called them out of darkness into light,—
Severed the chain which bound them to the dust,
Unclosed the silent portals of the grave,
And gave Hope wings to soar again to heaven!—

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Oh, thou bright spirit, of whose power I sing,
Electric, deathless energy of mind,
Harp of the soul, by genius swept, awake!

Inspire my strains, and aid me to portray
The base and joyless vanities which man
Madly prefers to everlasting bliss!—
Come! let us mount gay Fancy's rapid car,
And trace through forest and o'er mountain rude
The bounding footsteps of the youthful bard,
Yet new to life—a stranger to the woes
His harp is doomed to mourn in plaintive tones.
His ardent unsophisticated mind,
On all things beautiful, delighted, dwells.
Earth is to him a paradise. No cloud
Floats o'er the golden promise of the morn.
Hope daily weaves fresh roses for his brow,
Shrouding the grim and ghastly phantom, Death,
Beneath her soft and rainbow-tinted wings.
Ere Care has tainted with her poisonous breath
Life's opening buds, all objects wear to him
A lovely aspect, and he peoples space
With creatures of his own. The glorious forms
Which haunt his solitude, and brightly fill
Imagination's airy hall, atone
For all the faults and follies of his kind.
Nor marvel that he cannot comprehend
The speculative aims of worldly men:
Dearer to him a leaf, or bursting bud,
Culled fresh from Nature's treasury, than all
The golden dreams that cheat the care-worn crowd.
His world is all within. He mingles not
In their society; he cannot drudge
To win the wealth they toil to realize.
A different spirit animates his breast.
Their eager calculations, hopes, and fears,
Still flit before him, like dim shadows thrown
By April's passing clouds upon the stream,
A moment mirrored in its azure depths,
Till the next sunbeam turns them into light!—

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Rashly confiding, still to be deceived,
Our youthful poet overleaps the bounds
Of probability. He walks this earth
Like an enfranchised spirit; and the storms,
That darken and convulse a guilty world,
Come like faint peals of thunder on his ear,
Or hoarser murmurs of the mighty deep,
Which heard in some dark forest's leafy shade
But add a solemn grandeur to the scene.—
The genial tide of thought still swiftly flows
Rejoicing onward, ere the icy breath
Of sorrow falls upon the sunny fount,
And chains the music of its dancing waves.—
What is the end of all his lovely dreams—
The bright fulfilment of his earthly hopes?
Too often penury and dire disease,
Neglect, a broken heart, an early grave!—
Oh, had he tuned his harp to truths divine,
With saints and martyrs sought a heavenly crown,

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How had his theme immortalized his song!—

Behold the man, who to the poet's fire
Unites the painter's fascinating art;
His touch embodies all that fancy brings
To charm the mental vision, and he dives
Into the rich and shadowy world of thought,
Soars up to heaven, or plunges down to hell,
In search of forms to mortal eyes unknown,
To animate the canvass. His bold eye
Confronts the king of terrors. Through the gates
Of that dark prison-house of woe and dread
Hails the infernal monarch on his throne,
Crowned with ambition's diadem of fire.—
Unsatisfied with all that Nature gives
To charm the wandering heart and roving eye,
He would portray Omnipotence.—Rash man!
Reason revolting shudders at the act.—
God is a Spirit without form or parts;
And canst thou, from a human model, trace
The awful grandeur of Creation's King?
Nature supplies thee with no perfect draught
Of human beauty in its sinless state.
Man bears upon his brow the curse of guilt,
The shadow of mortality, that marks,
E'en in the sunny season of his youth,
The melancholy sentence of decay.—
Is it from such the painter would depict
The vision of Jehovah?—and from eyes,
Dimmed with the tears of passion, woe, and pain,
Seek to portray the dread all-seeing eye,
Which at a momentary glance can read
The inmost secrets of all hearts, and pierce
The dark and fathomless abyss of night?
Oh, drop the pencil!—Angels cannot gaze
On Him who sits upon the jasper throne,
Robed in the splendour of immortal light;
But cast their crowns before him whilst they veil
The brow in rapt devotion and adore!—

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Nature will furnish subjects far beyond
The grasp of human genius. Didst thou e'er,
On mossy bank or grassy plot reclined,
Watch the effect of sunlight on the boughs
Of some tall graceful ash, or maple tree?
Each leaf illumin'd by the noon-tide beam
Transparent shines.—Anon a heavy cloud
Floats for a moment o'er the car of day,
And gloom descends upon the forest bowers;
A ray steals forth—and on the topmost twig
Falls, like a silver star. From leaf to leaf
The glory spreads, shoots down the rugged trunk
And gilds each spray, till the whole tree stands forth
Arrayed in light.—This is beyond thy art.
All thy enthusiasm, all thy boasted skill,
But poorly imitates a forest tree.

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But let us leave the painter. Let us turn
To those, who never swept the sounding lyre
Or grasped the pencil,—ardent minds that hold
A deep communion with the winds and waves,
The youthful worshippers at Nature's shrine:
What says the soft voice of the plaintive breeze,
Mournfully sweeping through the forest boughs,
In airy play moved gently by its breath?
To such it hath a language, and it wins
A tender echo from the youthful heart.—

With throbbing bosom Nature's student treads
The sylvan haunts, exultingly leaps forth
To hail the coming of the genial spring,
Shedding around from her green lap the buds,
In winter's rugged casket long enshrined,
To form the chaplet of the infant year.—
Young pensive moralist!—'tis sweet to muse
On beauties which escape the vulgar eye,
To talk with Nature 'mid her woodland paths,
And hear an answering voice in every breeze.—
You court her beauties with a lover's zeal;
You hear her voice, nor understand the sound
Which speaks to you—to all. The volume spread
Before your dazzled eyes, so rich with life,
Is a closed book—a fair illumined scroll,
Traced in strange characters, unknown to you.
Would you unfold the mystery, and read
The record the eternal hand of God
Has, of himself, on Nature's tablets graved?
You must explore another wondrous book,
Of deeper interest far—the book of life—
The glorious volume of unsullied truth!—
Time's rapid and undeviating march
Tramples down empires, blots out names that once
Bid fair for perpetuity of fame.
Truth is alone eternal as the God
Who on this everlasting basis placed
His own immutable and moveless throne.
Time to these writings daily adds new force,
Deepening the traces of Jehovah's love,
His fathomless, unbounded love to man.—
Peruse this volume, and then walk abroad
And meditate in silence on the scenes
Which lately charmed your unassisted sense,
Till your soul burns within you, and breaks forth
In holy hymns of gratitude and praise.—

Faith gives a grandeur to created things,
Beyond the poet's lay or painter's art,
Or upward flight of Fancy's eagle wing;—
Earth is the vista through which heaven is seen
By him who, journeying through life's narrow vale,
Seeks in the objects which around him rise
To hold communion with his God! to trace
The wisdom, goodness, majesty, and love,
That clothed the lilies of the field, and twined

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The simple diadem of buds and leaves,
So rich in their diversity of shade,
Round Nature's brow,—and o'er the rugged hills
Cast the light floating veil of purple haze,
Which harmonizes to its own soft hue
The broken precipice and barren heath.
Here admiration may have ample scope:
The spirit soaring upward drinks in light
From other worlds, and in the choral song
Of happy birds among the forest bowers,
Hears the seraphic and harmonious strains
That angels chant around the eternal throne!—
To him there is an anthem in the breeze,
A burst of triumph in the thunder's peal,
Which, slowly rolling through the troubled air,
Strikes man with terror, and yet praises God!—

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O'er Fancy's glass another shadow flits,
Which shows a bolder aspect than the gay
Impassioned votaries of Nature wear.
Mark his majestic port, his eagle eye,
The stern erection of his haughty brow,
Partially shaded by the snowy plumes
That lightly wave and wanton in the breeze.—
Is this a pensioner of hope?—Is this
A dreamer of wild dreams?—All eyes are turned
To gaze upon him, as with measured step
The weaponed warrior slowly passes by.—
Oh, this is one of War's tremendous sons,
Glory's intrepid champion: his stout heart
Leaps, as the war-horse, to the trumpet's sound,
And hails the storm of battle from afar.
He loves the press, the tumult, and the strife,
Where horror holds the gory steeds of death,
And slaughter hews a passage for the brave!—
He too is an enthusiast!—his zeal
Impels him onward with resistless force,
Severs his heart from nature's kindred ties,
And feeds the wild ambition which consumes
All that is good and lovely in his path.
He flashes, like a meteor, on the sight,
Seen 'mid the angry thunder-clouds of war,
Seeking a living name in fields where Death
Holds his imperial banquet, and the blood
Of thousands flows to furnish forth the feast.

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There was a time when softer feelings held
Their mild dominion o'er that haughty breast;
When at his mother's feet, a rosy boy,
He wove bright garlands for his artless brow,
And sought, with playful dalliance, to detain
The busy hand that could not pause to bind
His cumbrous wreath, or answer the caress
Of him who climbed her knees to steal the kiss.
But even at those tender years, his braid
Of April blossoms was his crown; the twig
Of golden willow, with white daisies bound,

His jewelled sceptre; and the mossy bank,
 Where he reclined in floral state, his throne;
 The lambs that sported in the yellow meads
 His lawful subjects; while his azure eye
 Looked up to heaven with all a child's delight,
 And thought that earth was only made for him.—
 How often has he wept for that fair moon,
 That shed her trembling glory o'er his path;
 Wearied his slender limbs to reach the spot
 On which the rainbow based its splendid arch,
 And felt his heart with disappointment beat
 When the fair pageant faded from his view.—

Ah, simple boy!—well had it been for thee
 Had thy ambitious longings been confined
 To objects wisely placed beyond thy grasp.
 But years stole on—thy ardent spirit broke
 Its childish trammels, and with eager joy
 Explored the warlike annals of the past,
 And called up spirits of the mighty dead,
 To set their hostile armies in array,
 And fight for thee their sanguine battles o'er.
 Oh, while such visions burst upon thy sight,
 Whilst shouts of victory and dying groans
 Rang on thine ear—time backward rolled his tide,
 Rome in her ancient splendour proudly rose,
 And murdered Cæsar lived again in thee!

Young fiery soldier!—let us track thy steps
 Through danger's stormy paths, to win the goal
 Of all thy lofty and ambitious hopes.
 Wedded to glory, thy brave heart springs forth
 To win thy bride from valour's armed hand,
 And pluck the laurel from the brow of death.
 A novice in the camp and new to arms,
 The bugle lulls thee to repose, the trumpet
 Thrills on thy sleeping ear, and bids thee dream
 Of deathless fields in fancy fought and won.
 At length the day of trial comes—the day
 Which puts thy boasted courage to the proof—
 Thy first in battle, and perchance thy last.
 The camp is broken up, the air is rent
 With strains of martial music, the loud neigh
 Of prancing steeds, impatient for the strife,
 With clang of arms, and oft-repeated shouts
 Of warriors, who impatiently leap forth
 With reckless hardihood to meet their doom.

With beating heart, firm step, and flashing eye,
 The young recruit of glory proudly grasps
 The standard he must only yield with life.
 The march commences—deep excitement grows
 To fiery expectation—he forgets,
 Amidst the hurried interest of the scene,
 The crown he fights for only can be won
 Through seas of slaughter and the waste of life.
 Alas! how few devoted hearts like his

Survive their first engagement with the foe.
Death strikes the hero to the dust. He falls
In honour's mantle, the triumphant cry
Of victory on his pallid lip expires!
But what are conquests of the bow and spear,
And Alexander's victories, compared
With the stern warfare which the soul maintains
Against the subtle tempter of mankind—
The base corruptions of a sinful world—
An evil conscience and a callous heart?
Oh, vanquish these!—and through the gates of death
Triumphant pass and win a heavenly crown!—

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Oh, that my soul could find a voice to speak;
That human language could express the thoughts
Which fill the secret chambers of the brain.
In vain the lips pour forth harmonious sounds;
In vain the eager eye is raised to heaven,
Swimming in tears, and bright with ecstasy,—
The senses still are debtors to the heart,
Which, trembling, throbs for utterance in vain.
Does the salvation of a deathless soul
Kindle no hope in the possessor's breast?
Awaken no desire to be restored
To that most pure and perfect state of bliss
Man by transgression lost?—the noble thought
Of claiming kindred with the skies, give birth
To no anticipations of delight—
Joys such as angels share, and saints, who dwell
Within the circle of Jehovah's throne?
A light is breaking on my mental eye;
Visions of glory in succession rise
And fill the airy palace of the soul.
I see afar the promised land. An arch
Of golden radiance canopies the gates
Of that celestial city—Beautiful!
Unbuilt by hands—the New Jerusalem—
And holy to the Lord; the happy home
Of pilgrims, who to reach that heavenly shrine
Sojourned as strangers on this goodly earth,
Counting all things but loss—yea, life itself—
To win an entrance through those gates of pearl,
And dwell within the temple of their God!
Alas! earth's dusky shadow lies between
My ardent spirit and that blissful shore:
Eye hath not seen, nor mortal ear hath heard,
How then can mortal pen portray, the joys
Prepared for those who live and die in Christ!

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Before me flows the rapid stream of time,
Dark, fathomless, encumbered with the wrecks
Of twice three thousand years. They too shall sink
Beneath those turbid waters, swallowed up
In the vast ocean of eternity;
Leaving few fragments on the boundless waste
To tell to coming years that such have been.
How shall the naked spirit cross the flood,

And land in safety on the happy shore?
'Tis not an earthly pilot that can steer
So frail a bark through such a stormy tide.
Cannot the eye of faith look up and see
The clouds of sorrow part—the day-star rise
Above life's trackless ocean, shedding light
Upon the darkened nations? From its beams
The mist of error flies, the angry waves
Of passion, which so long have vexed the world,
Are hushed to rest; controlled by Him who rose
From tranquil sleep, and to the roaring waste
Of midnight waters, mustering all their wrath,
Said, "Peace, be still." The howling winds obeyed,
And silence sank upon the storm-tossed main!—

[Pg 22]

Oh look to Him! and to his glorious word.
His universal sovereignty demands
That deep devotion of the heart which men
Miscall enthusiasm!—Zeal alone deserves
The name of madness in a worldly cause.
Light misdirected ever leads astray;
But hope inspired by faith will guide to heaven!
To win the laurel wreath the soldier fights;
To free his native land the patriot bleeds;
And to secure his crown the martyr dies!
For beauteous Rachel Isaac's son endured
Seven years of bitter servitude, and deemed
The weary months but moments to obtain
From crafty Laban's hand his promised bride.
To prove his friendship for the man he loved,
The generous Jonathan forgot his claims
To royalty, intent to save the life
Of him whom God had called to fill his throne.
And wilt thou feel less zealous to regain
The love and favour of thy heavenly King,
And shrink because the path to glory lies
Up the steep hill of duty? He who saved,
Amidst the tempest on Gennesaret,
Peter, when sinking in the waves, will aid
Thy feeble steps, and guide thee to the rock
Of everlasting strength!—

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Spirit divine!
Whose name I erst invoked, whose influence fills
The narrow confines of this human breast,—
If I have dared to sing of truths sublime,
Oh, shed a glory round my rugged lyre—
Hallow the feeble strains that would reveal
The dazzling light, which streaming from thy wings,
Gilds all the dark and troubled tide of thought.
Lifted by thee above the gulf of time
My eye explores the regions of the blessed,
And hopes long chained to earth are raised to heaven.
Never, while reason holds her steady rein,
To curb imagination's fiery steeds,
May I to joyless apathy resign
The high and holy thoughts inspired by thee!

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FAME.

Oh ye! who all life's energies combine
 The fadeless laurel round your brows to twine,
 Pause but one moment in your brief career,
 Nor seek for glory in a mortal sphere.
 Can figures traced upon the shifting sand
 Washed by the mighty tide, its force withstand?
 Time's stern resistless torrent onward flows,
 The restless waves above your labours close,
 And He who bids the bounding billows roll
 Sweeps out the feeble record from the soul.

The glorious hues that flush the evening sky
 Melt into night, and on her bosom die;
 Through the wide fields of heaven's immensity
 The gold-tipped billows of that crimson sea
 Flash on the awe-struck gazer's dazzled sight,
 The rich out-gushings from the fount of light;
 Yet oft, concealed beneath that splendid form,
 We hail the herald of the coming storm;
 The fiery spirit over half a globe
 Spreads the bright tissue of his beamy robe,
 And, ere the day-king veils his glowing crest,
 Shrouds the dark tempest in his burning vest;
 O'er earth and heaven his gorgeous banner flings,
 And gilds with borrowed light his sable wings—
 And those who view with rapture-lifted eyes
 The short-lived pageant of the summer skies,
 Behold it vanish like a fearful dream,
 And death and desolation mar its beam.
 So when we seek above life's sea of tears
 To raise a monument for future years,
 If built on earth the fabric will decay,
 Oblivion's hand will sweep the pile away;
 The proudest trophies of the mightiest mind
 Fade in her grasp, nor leave a wreck behind;
 She o'er earth's ruins spreads her misty pall,
 And time's unsparing ocean swallows all;
 Hope for a moment gilds the spoiler's shroud,
 As parting sunbeams tinge the lurid cloud;
 The transient glory cheats the gazer's sight;
 The storm rolls on—'tis universal night!

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Say did not man inherit, at his birth,
 A higher promise than the things of earth;
 Views more exalted than this world can give,
 And hopes that, deathless as the soul, outlive
 The wreck of nature, and the common doom
 That hourly sweeps her myriads to the tomb?
 His mental powers, unfettered by the clod,
 Soar o'er time's gulf, and reach the throne of God.
 Oh what a privilege it is to know
 That death chains not the immortal soul below!
 Through the dark portals of the grave upborne,

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Leaving the care-worn sons of earth to mourn,
On wings of light the new-born spirit flies
To seek a home and kindred in the skies.

Oh what are earthly crowns and earthly bliss,
And pride's delusive dreams, compared with this?
Ambition's laurel, purchased with a flood
Of human tears and stained with kindred blood,
Once gained, converted to a crown of thorns,
Pierces the aching temples it adorns—
Not Sappho's lyre, nor Raphael's deathless art
Can twine the olive round the bleeding heart;
In heaven alone the promised blessing lies,
And those who seek—must seek it in the skies!
Seek it through Him who, humbling human pride,
Wept o'er man's fall, and for his ransom died;
Poured out his blood on the accursed tree,
To break the chain and set the captive free.
Heaven bowed its glory on the cross to teach
That greatness man's lost nature could not reach,
The true humility, which stoops to rise,
And, leaving earth, claims kindred with the skies.

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How many pages have been blotted o'er
With heartfelt tears, that now are read no more;
And, like the eyes that long have ceased to weep,
In dust and darkness quite forgotten sleep!
Dead to the world as if they ne'er had been
The favoured actors in one little scene.
The scene is changed—and, like their fleeting-fame,
The fickle world adores another name.
They knew the price at which its praise was bought;
The glittering bauble was not worth a thought;
Yet, Esau like, a better birthright sold,
And for base counterfeit exchanged the gold!

Ere man presumptuously his genius boasts,
Let him reflect upon the countless hosts,
The untold myriads, of each age and clime,
That sleep forgotten in the grave of time.
What were their names! Go ask the silent sod
Their deeds—their record lives but with their God!
At every step we tread on kindred earth,
Nor know the spot that gave our fathers birth.
Oh! could we call before our wondering eyes
All that have lived—and bid the dead arise,
From the first moment the Creator spoke
The word of power, and light through darkness broke,
And see earth covered with the mighty tide
Of all who on her bosom lived and died,
What a stupendous thought would fill the soul
Could we behold life's breathing ocean roll
Its human billows onward—and the mass
The grave has swallowed, down from Adam, pass
In one unbroken stream—the brain would reel—
Lost in immensity, would cease to feel!
Whilst living, ah, how few were known to fame!

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One in a million has not left a name,—
A single token, on life's shifting scene,
To tell to other years that such has been.
Yet man, unaided by a hope sublime,
Thinks that his puny arm can cope with time;
That his vast genius can reverse the doom,
And shed a deathless light upon his tomb;
That distant ages shall his worth admire,
And young hearts kindle at the sacred fire
Of him whose fame no envious clouds o'er cast,
Yet died forgotten and unknown at last.

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Oh think not genius, with its hallowed light,
Can break the gloom of an eternal night;
For splendid talents often lead astray
The unguarded heart, and hide the narrow way,
While the unlearned and those of low estate,
With faith's clear eye behold the living gate,
Whose portals open on the shoreless sea
Where time's strong ocean meets eternity.
Across the gulf that stretches far beneath
Lies the dark valley of the shade of death—
A land of deep forgetfulness,—a shore
Which all must traverse, but return no more
To this sad earth, to dissipate our dread,
And tell the mighty secrets of the dead.
Enough for us that those drear realms were trod
By heavenly footsteps, that the Son of God
Passed the dark bourne and vanquished Death, to save
The weary wanderers of life's stormy wave.

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Why then should man thus cleave to things of earth?
Daily experience proves their little worth—
Or waste those noble qualities of mind,
For wise and better purposes designed,
In the pursuit of trifles, which confer
No solid pleasure on their worshipper;
Or in the search of causes that are known
And guided by Omnipotence alone?
A height his finite reason cannot reach,
And all his boasted learning fails to teach?
While the bewildering thought overwhelms his brain,
Death comes to prove his speculations vain!

[Pg 33]

Is he deserving of a better doom
Who will not raise a hope beyond the tomb?
Who, quite enamoured with his fallen state,
Clings to the world and leaves the rest to fate;
Prefers corruption to his Maker's smile,
"And shuns the light because his deeds are vile?"
The man who feels the value of his soul,
Presses unwearied towards a higher goal;
Leaving this earth, he seeks a brighter prize,
And claims a crown immortal in the skies.
The child of pleasure may despise his aim,
And heap reproach upon the Christian's name,
May laugh his faith, as foolishness, to scorn:—

These by the man of God are meekly borne.
His glorious hope no infidel can shake;
He suffers calmly for his Saviour's sake.—

[Pg 34]

The world's poor votary seeks in vain for peace:
He cannot bid the voice of conscience cease
Its dire upbraidings; in his heartless course
He meets at every turn the fiend Remorse,
Who glares upon him with her tearless eye,
That sears his heart—but mocks its agony.
He hears that voice, amid the festive throng,
Speak in the dance and murmur in the song,
A death-bell, pealing in the midnight chime,
Whose awful tones proclaim the lapse of time,
And e'en the winged moments as they fly
Seem to proclaim—"Rash mortal, thou must die!
Soon must thou tread the path thy fathers trod,
And stand before the judgment-seat of God!"—
He hears—but seeks in pleasure's cup to drown
The dread that weighs his ardent spirit down;
Derides the warning voice in mercy sent;
Rejects the thought of after-punishment;
In folly's vortex wastes the spring of youth,
Nor, till death summons, owns the awful truth;
Feels it too late to calm the agonies
Remorse has kindled—and despairing, dies!

[Pg 35]

But in the breast where true religion reigns
There is a balm for all these mental pains;
A sweet contentment, felt, but undefined,
A full and free surrender of the mind
To its divine-original; a trust
Which lifts to heaven the dweller of the dust.
The pilgrim, glowing with a hope divine,
Counts not the distance to the heavenly shrine;
He meets with guardian spirits on the road,
Who cheer his steps and ease his heavy load.
Serenely journeying to a better clime
He does not shudder at the lapse of time;
But calmly drinks the cup of mortal woe,
And finds that peace the world cannot bestow;
That promised joy which brightens all beneath,
And smooths his pillow on the bed of death;
That perfect love which casteth out all fear,
And wafts his spirit to a happier sphere!—

[Pg 36]

Fame is a dream—the praise of man as brief
As morning dew upon the folded leaf;
The summer sun exhales the pearly tear,
And leaves no trace of its existence there.
Seek not for immortality below,
But fix your hopes beyond this vale of woe,
That when oblivion gathers round thy sod,
A lasting record may be found with God!—

[Pg 37]

THE DELUGE.

Visions of the years gone by
Flash upon my mental eye;
Ages time no longer numbers,
Forms that share oblivion's slumbers,
Creatures of that elder world
Now in dust and darkness hurled,
Crushed beneath the heavy rod
Of a long forsaken God!

Hark! what spirit moves the crowd?
Like the voice of waters loud,
Through the open city gate,
Urged by wonder, fear, or hate,
Onward rolls the mighty tide—
Spreads the tumult far and wide.
Heedless of the noontide glare,
Infancy and age are there,—
Joyous youth and matron staid,
Blooming bride and blushing maid,—
Manhood with his fiery glance,
War-chief with his lifted lance,—
Beauty with her jewelled brow,
Hoary age with locks of snow:
Prince, and peer, and statesman grave,
White-stoled priest, and dark-browed slave,—
Plumed helm, and crowned head,
By one mighty impulse led—
Mingle in the living mass,
That onward to the desert pass!

[Pg 38]

[Pg 39]

With song and shout and impious glee,
What rush earth's myriads forth to see?
Hark! the sultry air is rent
With their boisterous merriment!
Are they to the vineyards rushing,
Where the grape's rich blood is gushing?
Or hurrying to the bridal rite
Of warrior brave and beauty bright?
Ah no! those heads in mockery crowned,
Those pennons gay with roses bound,
Hie not to a scene of gladness—
Theirs is mirth that ends in madness!
All recklessly they rush to hear
The dark words of that gifted seer,
Who amid a guilty race
Favour found and saving grace;
Rescued from the doom that hurled
To chaos back a sinful world.—
Self-polluted, lost, debased,
Every noble trait effaced,
To rapine, lust, and murder given,
Denying God, defying heaven,
Spoilers of the shrine and hearth,
Behold the impious sons of earth!
Alas! all fatally opposed,

[Pg 40]

The heart of erring man is closed
Against that warning, and he deems
The prophet's counsel idle dreams,
And laughs to hear the preacher rave
Of bursting cloud and whelming wave!

Tremble Earth! the awful doom
That sweeps thy millions to the tomb
Hangs darkly o'er thee,—and the train
That gaily throng the open plain,
Shall never raise those laughing eyes
To welcome summer's cloudless skies;
Shall never see the golden beam
Of day light up the wood and stream,
Or the rich and ripened corn
Waving in the breath of morn,
Or their rosy children twine
Chaplets of the clustering vine:—
The bow is bent! the shaft is sped!
Who shall wail above the dead?

[Pg 41]

What arrests their frantic course?
Back recoils the startled horse,
And the stifling sob of fear
Like a knell appals the ear!
Lips are quivering—cheeks are pale—
Palsied limbs all trembling fail;
Eyes with bursting terror gaze
On the sun's portentous blaze,
Through the wide horizon gleaming,
Like a blood-red banner streaming;
While like chariots from afar,
Armed for elemental war,
Clouds in quick succession rise,
Darkness spreads o'er all the skies;
And a lurid twilight gloom
Closes o'er earth's living tomb!

[Pg 42]

Nature's pulse has ceased to play,—
Night usurps the crown of day,—
Every quaking heart is still,
Conscious of the coming ill.
Lo, the fearful pause is past,
The awful tempest bursts at last!
Torrents sweeping down amain
With a deluge flood the plain;
The rocks are rent, the mountains reel,
Earth's yawning caves their depths reveal;
The forests groan,—the heavy gale
Shrieks out Creation's funeral wail.
Hark! that loud tremendous roar!
Ocean overleaps the shore,
Pouring all his giant waves
O'er the fated land of graves;
Where his white-robed spirit glides,
Death the advancing billow rides,
And the mighty conqueror smiles

[Pg 43]

In triumph o'er the sinking isles.

Hollow murmurs fill the air,
Thunders roll and lightnings glare;
Shrieks of woe and fearful cries,
Mingled sounds of horror rise;
Dire confusion, frantic grief,
Agony that mocks relief,
Like a tempest heaves the crowd,
While in accents fierce and loud,
With pallid lips and curdled blood,
Each trembling cries, "The flood! the flood!"

[Pg 44]

THE AVENGER OF BLOOD.

There were two sons of Ashur at work in the field,
And one to the other his passion revealed—
As the white barley bowed to the stroke of his scythe,
He burst out in accents exultingly blithe—

"I have wooed a young maid!—I have wooed and I've won,
On a lovelier face never glanced yon bright sun;
To the tall stately cedar my love I'll compare,
With her eyes' shaded glory, her long raven hair,
And her bosom as white as the snow when it gleams
On Lebanon's heights, ere washed down by the streams.
She has ravished and filled my rapt soul with delight;
She's more dear to my heart than yon heavens to my sight."—

[Pg 45]

"And who is the chosen?" his comrade replied,
Whilst the deepest of crimson his swarthy cheek dyed,
His severed lips trembled, his eagle eye fell
With a glance on his kinsman that urged him to tell.—
"Tis Iddo's bright daughter!"—The words were scarce said—
At the feet of his brother young Simeon lay dead.—
It was but one blow on those temples so fair,
One fierce cry of anger and jealous despair;
And shuddering with horror his stern rival stood,
And gazed on those features disfigured with blood.—

Weep, fratricide, weep!—'tis in vain that you cast
Your arms round that pale form, the struggle is past;
'Tis in vain that chilled heart to your bosom you press,
Its stillness increases your frantic distress.
You have scattered the gems in youth's beautiful crown,
And his sun at mid-day has in darkness gone down;
He never shall bind for your false love a wreath,
The hand of the bridegroom is stiffened in death.
Then dash from those wild eyes the fast-flowing tear,
And fly!—for the City of Refuge is near.—
There's a murmur of voices, a shout on the wind,
Fly! fly! the Avenger of Blood is behind!—

[Pg 46]

He fled like an arrow just launched from the bow,
O'erwhelm'd with remorse and distracted with woe;
The victim of passion—he'd gladly give all

Life's dearest enjoyments that hour to recall.
The stain on his hands added wings to his flight,
As onward he sped through the shadows of night,
And his startled ear caught in the wind's fitful moan,
As it swept through the forest, a faint dying groan;
The leaves rustling near sent a chill to his heart,
And oft backward he glanced with an agonized start,
And felt on his throat, parched and swollen with dread,
The soul-thrilling grasp of the phantom-like dead.
That pang was too great for the sinner to bear,
And his fears found a voice in wild shrieks of despair!

[Pg 47]

But the night and its long noon of horrors is past,
A broad line of light on the blue hills is cast,
And the city of refuge before him appears,
Like a beacon of hope, giving rest to his fears—
"But hark!—the avenger of blood is at hand;
Dost thou hear the loud shouts of his death-dooming band?
The trampling of horses rings sharp on the breeze,
And armour is glancing at times through the trees;
On! on! for thy life!—if they compass the plain,
Thy sentence is sealed and all rescue is vain?"—

He strains every nerve—he redoubles his speed,
And strength is supplied in the moment of need,
The race is for life—and the city is won,
Ere its broad towers reflect the first beams of the sun.—

[Pg 48]

One proud glance of triumph the fugitive threw
On the band of pursuers that burst on his view,
He shook his clenched hand—and a tremulous cry
Rose and died on his pale lips their wrath to defy;
But the effort, too mighty, has severed in twain
His heart-strings—he staggers and sinks to the plain,
And the cold dews that moisten that toil-crimsoned face
Tell that death claims his victim, the prize of the race,
That the city no refuge to guilt can afford—
He has found an Avenger of Blood in the Lord!

[Pg 49]

THE OVERTHROW OF ZEBAH AND ZALMUNNA.

JUDGES VIII.

Who are ye, who through the night
Onward urge your desperate flight?
Far and wide the hills repeat
The hurried tread of armed feet,
Ringing helm and dying groan,
The crash of chariots overthrown,
And muttered curse and menace dire,
As warriors in their rage expire.
From the vengeance of the Lord,
From the terrors of the sword,
From Karkor's field, with slaughter red,

He who checked their haughty boast,
Hard upon that flying host
Presses, with avenging spear
Flashing on their scattered rear:
Nor can hills of slaughter tire
The pursuer's burning ire;
Still along the hills are poured
Shouts of "Gideon and the Lord."

Morning spread her wings of light
O'er the sable couch of night:
Back the shades of darkness rolled,
Glowed the purple east with gold,
And the young day's rosy glance
Gleamed on broken helm and lance,
Ere the fearful chase was won,
Ere the fierce pursuit was done,
Or the slayer staid his hand,
Or the warrior sheathed his brand,
Or rested from the sanguine toil,
Or paused to share the princely spoil,
And pealed along the host the cry,
"The Lord hath won the victory!"

[Pg 51]

Lo! Zebah and Zalmunna come,
Unheralded by trump or drum;
Harp and timbrel now are mute,
Cymbal loud and softer flute.
And where are they, the bands that rent
At morn with shouts the firmament?
Like clods, far stretched o'er plain and hill,
Their limbs are stiff, their lips are still!
Broken is the arm of war;
Quenched in night is Midian's star!

Hot with toil, and stained with blood,
Yet still in spirit unsubdued,
To the champion of the Lord
Midian's princes yield the sword.
Pomp and power, and crown and life,
All were staked on that fell strife:
All are lost!—yet still they bear
A monarch's pride in their despair;
A warrior's pride, that will not yield
Though vanquished on the battle-field.

[Pg 52]

"Captives of my bow and spear!
Zebah and Zalmunna, hear:
God hath smitten down the pride
Of Midian on the mountain's side;
Ye are given, a helpless prey,
Into Israel's hand to-day:
Gideon's arm is strong to spare
Princes, boldly now declare
The form and bearing of the brave

Who at Tabor found a grave?"

His head the high Zalmunna raised,
A moment on the victor gazed,
And paused until the tide of thought
The image back to memory brought:
His reply was stern and brief—
"As thou art—were they, O chief!
Each a regal crown might wear,
Each might be a monarch's heir."—

[Pg 53]

With a sudden start and cry,
Quivering lip and blazing eye,
Gideon smote his clenched hand
Fiercely on his battle brand—
"Smitten down with spear and bow,
All my father's house lie low,
Brethren of one mother born—
As their sun went down at morn,
Neither crown nor regal state
Shall exempt you from their fate!—
By the Lord of Hosts I swear,
Had your souls been known to spare
The men whom ye at Tabor slew,
Such mercy I had shown to you!
Up Jether!—for thy kindred's sake,
Thy father's sword and spirit take;
Let Zebah and Zalmunna feel
A brother's vengeance in the steel!"

[Pg 54]

Eagerly the blood-stained brand
Grasped young Jether in his hand,
While the spirit of his race
Lighted up his kindling face,
And his soul to vengeance woke
As he nerved him for the stroke!
"Now for Gideon and the Lord!"
He said—then sudden dropped the sword,
As from a palsied arm; and pressed
His hand upon his heaving breast;
And the burning crimson streak
Faded from his altered cheek,
As he backward slowly stepped,
And turned away his head and wept.

[Pg 55]

All unbidden to his eyes
Visions of his home arise:
The play-mates of his early years;
The spot that kindred love endears;
The sunny fields; the rugged rocks;
The valley where they fed their flocks;
The still, deep stream; the drooping pride
Of willows weeping o'er the tide.
And are they gone—the young and brave,
Who oft in sport had stemmed that wave?
When, fainting from the mid-day heat,
They sought at noon that cool retreat;

While one among the youthful throng
Poured forth his ardent soul in song,
And bade his harp's wild numbers tell
How Israel fled and Egypt fell!

[Pg 56]

Proudly then Zalmunna spoke:
"Dost thou think we dread the stroke
Doomed to stretch us on the plain
With the brave in battle slain?
Leave yon tender boy to shed
Tear-drops o'er the tombless dead:
Like the mighty chiefs of old,
Thou art cast in sterner mould.
Rise, then, champion of the Lord,
Rise! and slay us with the sword:
Life from thee we scorn to crave,
Midian would not live a slave!
But when Judah's harp shall raise
Songs to celebrate thy praise,
Let the bards of Israel tell
How Zebah and Zalmunna fell!"

[Pg 57]

PARAPHRASE.

PSALM XLIV.

O mighty God! our fathers told
The wondrous works thou didst of yore;
Thy glories in the days of old,
Wrought on proud Egypt's hostile shore.
Thy wrath swept through that guilty land;
Before thy face the heathen fled;
His people, with an outstretched hand,
The Lord of Hosts in triumph led!

It was not counsel, spear, nor sword,
A heritage for Israel won;
It was Jehovah's awful word
That led our conquering armies on.
The heathen host—their warriors brave—
Were scattered when the Lord arose;
At his terrific glance, a grave
Was found by Jacob's haughty foes!

[Pg 58]

God of our strength! Almighty Power!
Our sure defence, our sword and shield,
Still guide our hosts in danger's hour,
Still lead our armies to the field.
In thee we trust—what foe can stand
The awful brightness of thine eye?
Both life and death are in thy hand,
And in thy smile is victory!

[Pg 59]

PARAPHRASE.

ISAIAH XL.

Rejoice O my people! Jehovah hath spoken!
The dark chain of sin and oppression is broken;
Thy warfare is over, thy bondage is past,
The Lord hath looked down on his chosen at last.
A voice from the wilderness breaks on mine ear—
O Israel, rejoice! thy redemption is near:
A path for our God the wild desert shall yield;
He comes in the light of salvation revealed;
His word hath declared, who speaks not in vain;
He bends the high mountain, exalts the low plain;
All flesh shall behold him, far nations shall bring
Their glad songs of triumph to welcome their King!

[Pg 60]

As the grass of the field in the morning is green,
So man, in his beauty and vigour, is seen
A perishing glory, the beam of a day,
A flower that will fade with the evening away:
The breath of the Lord o'er its verdure shall pass;
The freshness shall wither and fade like the grass;
The flower from its stem the rude whirlwind may sever,
But the word of our God is established for ever!

O Zion, that bringeth good tidings of peace,
Raise thy voice in the song, thy afflictions shall cease;
Arise in thy strength, banish every base fear,
Tell the cities of Judah redemption is near:
He comes! and his works shall his glory reveal;
He comes! his lost children to succour and heal;
In mercy and truth to establish his throne,
That his name to the ends of the earth may be known!

[Pg 61]

THE VISION OF DRY BONES.

EZEKIEL XXXVII.

The Spirit of God with resistless control,
Like a sunbeam, illumined the depths of my soul,
And visions prophetic burst on my sight,
As he carried me forth in the power of his might.
Around me I saw in a desolate heap
The relics of those who had slept their death-sleep,
In the midst of the valley, all reckless and bare,
Like the hope of my country, lie withering there,—

"Son of man! can these dry bones, long bleached in decay,
Ever feel in their flesh the warm beams of the day;
Can the spirit of life ever enter again
The perishing heaps that now whiten the plain?"
"Lord, thou knowest alone, who their being first gave:
Thy power may be felt in the depths of the grave;
The hand that created again may impart
The rich tide of feeling and life to the heart.

[Pg 62]

"Lo, these dry bones are withered and shrunk in the blast,
O'er their ashes the tempests of ages have past;
And the flesh that once covered each mouldering frame
With the dust of the earth is re-mingled again:—
At the voice of their God, son of man, they shall rise;
The light shall revisit their death-darkened eyes;
Their sinews and flesh shall again be restored,
They shall live and acknowledge the power of the Lord!"

And lo! as I prophesied o'er them, a sound,
Like the rushing of water, was heard all around:
The earth trembled and shook like a leaf in the wind,
As those long-severed limbs to each other were joined,
And flesh came upon them, and beauty and grace
Returned, as in life, to each warrior's face.
A numberless host they lay stretched on the sod,
All glowing and fresh from the hand of their God.

[Pg 63]

But the deep sleep of death on each eyelid still hung;
Each figure was motionless, mute every tongue:
Through those slumbering thousands there breathed not a sound,
And silence, unbroken, reigned awfully round:—
"Raise thy voice, son of man! call the winds from on high,
As viewless they sweep o'er the brow of the sky;
And life shall return on the wings of the blast,
And the slumber of death shall be broken at last."

I called to the wind—and a deep answer came
In the rush of the tempest, the bursting of flame;
And the spirit of life, as it breathed on the dead,
Restored to each body the soul that had fled.
Rejoicing to break from that dreamless repose,
Like a host in the dark day of battle they rose;
He alone who had formed them could number again
The myriads that filled all the valley and plain.

[Pg 64]

"Son of man! in this numerous army behold
My chosen of Israel, beloved of old.
They say that the hope of existence is o'er,
That no power from death's grasp can the spirit restore:
He who called you my people is mighty to save,
Your God can re-open the gates of the grave;
From the chain of oblivion the soul can release,
And restore you again to your country in peace!"

[Pg 65]

THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON.

An awful vision floats before my sight,
Black as the storm and fearful as the night:
Thy fall, oh Babylon!—the awful doom
Pronounced by Heaven to hurl thee to the tomb,
Peals in prophetic thunder in mine ear—
The voice of God foretelling ruin near!

Hark! what strange murmurs from the hills arise,
Like rushing torrents from the bursting skies!
Loud as the billows of the restless tide,
In strange confusion flowing far and wide,
Ring the deep tones of horror and dismay,
The shriek—the shout—the battle's stern array—
The gathering cry of nations from afar—
The tramp of steeds—the tumult of the war—
Burst on mine ear, and o'er thy fated towers
Hovers despair, and fierce destruction lowers;
Within the fire—without the vengeful sword;
Who leads those hosts against thee but the Lord?

[Pg 66]

Proud queen of nations! where is now thy trust?—
Thy crown is ashes and thy throne the dust.
The crowds who fill thy gates shall pass away,
As night's dim shadows flee the eye of day.
No patriot voice thy glory shall recall,
No eye shall weep, no tongue lament thy fall.

The day of vengeance comes—the awful hour—
Fraught with the terrors of almighty power;
The arm of God is raised against thy walls;
Destruction hovers o'er thy princely halls,
Flings his red banner to the rising wind,
While death's stern war-cry echoes far behind.
When the full horrors of that hour are felt,
The warrior's heart shall as the infant's melt;
Counsel shall flee the learned and the old,
And fears unfelt before shall tame the bold.

[Pg 67]

Woe for thee, Babylon!—thy men of might
Shall fall unhonoured in the sanguine fight;
Like the chased roe thy hosts disordered fly,
And those who turn to strive but turn to die.
Thy young men tremble and thy maids grow pale,
And swell with frantic grief thy funeral wail;
They kneel for mercy, but they sue in vain;
Their beauty withers on the gore-dyed plain;
With fathers, lovers, brothers, meet their doom,
And 'mid thy blackened ruins find a tomb.
Of fear unconscious, in soft slumbers blest,
The infant dies upon its mother's breast,
Unpitied e'en by her—the hand that gave
The blow has sent the parent to the grave.

[Pg 68]

Queen of the East! all desolate and lone,
No more shall nations bow before thy throne.
Low in the dust thy boasted beauty lies;
Loud through thy princely domes the bitter cry,
And the night wind in mournful cadence sighs.
The step of man and childhood's joyous voice
Are heard no more, and never shall rejoice
Thy lonely echoes; savage beasts shall come
And find among thy palaces a home.
The dragon there shall rear her scaly brood,
And satyrs dance where once thy temples stood;

The lion, roaming on his angry way,
Shall on thy sacred altars rend his prey;
The distant *isles* at midnight gloom shall hear
Their frightful clamours, and, in secret, fear.

[Pg 69]

No more their snowy flocks shall shepherds lead
By Babel's silver stream and fertile mead;
Or peasant girls at summer's eve repair,
To wreathe with wilding flowers their flowing hair;
Or pour their plaintive ditties to the wave,
That rolls its sullen murmurs o'er thy grave.
The wandering Arab there no rest shall find,
But, starting, listen to the hollow wind
That howls, prophetic, through thy ruined halls,
And flee in haste from thy accursed walls.
Oh Babylon, with wrath encompassed round,
For thee no hope, no mercy, shall be found:
Thy doom is sealed—e'en to thy ruin clings
The awful sentence of the King of kings!

[Pg 70]

**TO THE MEMORY OF
MRS. EWING.**

**WRITTEN AFTER PERUSING THE INTERESTING MEMOIR
COMPOSED BY HER HUSBAND, THE REV. GREVILLE EWING.**

Daughter of Scotland! may a stranger twine
One cypress wreath around thy honoured urn?—
Yet, when I meditate on faith like thine,
I feel my breast with sacred ardour burn;
Deep admiration checks the starting tear,—
Such drops would stain a Ewing's holy bier!

Death was to thee a messenger of love;
He met thee in the path thy Saviour trod,
Bearing this blessed mandate from above,
"Come, happy spirit—come away to God!
Thy works of piety on earth are o'er,—
Plume thy bright wing to reach the heavenly shore!"

[Pg 71]

Calm was thy exit from this troubled scene;
Pain from thy lips no hasty murmurs wrung;
With brow unruffled and with mind serene,
Thy Saviour's praise employed thy faltering tongue:
And though no kindling raptures marked thy flight,
Thy faith unshaken *showed that all was right!*

Those who beheld thee in the burning hour,
When fever raged in every throbbing vein,
Oft shall recount the parting struggle o'er,
The scene on memory's tablets long retain—
Each gracious word, each kindly glance, that told
The Christian's love, ere that warm heart was cold!

Thy memory is a pure and holy thing,
Embalmed and treasured in the hearts of those

Who saw thee, like an angel, ministering
The precious balm that softens human woes.
Thou didst not hide thy talent in the dust;
Anxious that all should own the same high trust.—

[Pg 72]

Deeply concerned that other realms should share
Those blessed promises so dear to thee,—
That messengers of mercy should declare
Glad tidings far beyond thy native sea;—
Thy bounteous spirit compassed land and wave
To send redemption to the soil-bound slave!

But not to foreign realms and climes alone
Didst thou confine a Christian's sacred zeal;
With all a mother's fondness for thine own,
The deep devotion faith alone could feel,
'Twas thine the drooping penitent to cheer,
And wipe from sorrow's eyes the gushing tear!

And like the faithful saints and priests of old,
Thou with thy honoured partner didst go forth,
Exploring barren heath and mountain hold,
Far through the isles and highlands of the north,
To teach the Gospel in each rocky glen,
And bless with Scripture truths unlearned men!

[Pg 73]

Thy zeal was felt along the rugged wild,
Heard round the hearth where pious maidens meet;
And matrons oft shall tell the rosy child,
Twining its wilding garlands at their feet,
To bless her name—who, conquering selfish pride,
Sought them on foot to tell how Jesus died!

Daughter of Scotland! when her bards shall trace
The noble deeds of thy illustrious line,
Thy sainted name a fairer page shall grace,
A brighter wreath for thee the minstrel twine
Than ever crowned thy warlike sires of yore,
Than history ever gave or genius wore!

[Pg 74]

TO THE MEMORY

OF

R. R. JUN.

LATE OF IPSWICH, AND ONE OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

From thy sad sire and weeping kindred torn,
Thine is the crown of everlasting life;
On thy closed eye has burst a brighter morn,
In realms where joy and peace alone are rife;
Thy soul, in Christ, enlightened and new-born,
Has meekly triumphed over nature's strife,
And passed the dreary portals of the grave,
Strong in the faith of Him who died to save!

[Pg 75]

Soldier of Christ! thy warfare now is o'er,
Thy toils accomplished and thy trials done,
And thou shalt weep and sigh, young saint, no more;
With thee the scene is closed, the race is run.
Death heaved the bar of that eternal door;
The palm is gained,—the victory is won,
And earthly sorrows shall no more alloy
Thy soul's pure raptures in those realms of joy!

Ah! who would weep for thee?—the early blessed—
Who that has mourned the tyranny of sin,
The strong temptations which assail the breast,
The fiery passions warring still within,
But does not envy thee thy heavenly rest,
And sighing, wish that they at length may win
The narrow path thy faith and patience trod,
And meet thee in the presence of thy God?

[Pg 76]

Though friends who loved thee weep above thy bier,
And kindred anguish find in grief a voice,
We will not mourn thy exit from this sphere,
When angels in the heaven of heavens rejoice,
When God's own hand hath wiped away each tear,
And crowned with endless life thy happy choice.
Oh blessed lot—oh change with rapture fraught,
Surpassing human love—and human thought!

[Pg 77]

AN

APPEAL TO THE FREE.

Offspring of heaven, fair Freedom! impart
The light of thy spirit to quicken each heart.
Though the chains of oppression our free limbs ne'er bound,
Bid us feel for the wretch round whose soul they are wound;
Whose breast is corroded with anguish so deep
That the eye of the slave is too blood-shot to weep;
No balm from the fountain of nature will flow
When the mind is degraded by fetter and blow.

The friends of humanity nobly have striven,
But the bonds of the heart-broken slave are unriven!
Whilst Religion extends o'er those champions her shield,
May they never to party or prejudice yield
The glorious cause by all freemen espoused.
A light shines abroad and the lion is roused;
The crush of the iron has struck fire from the stone;
Bid them back to the charge—and the field is their own!

[Pg 78]

Ye children of Britain! brave sons of the Isles!
Who revel in freedom and bask in her smiles,
Can ye sanction such deeds as are done in the West
And sink on your pillows untroubled to rest?
Are your slumbers unbroken by visions of dread?
Does no spectre of misery glare on your bed?
No cry of despair break the silence of night

And thrill the cold hearts that ne'er throbb'd for the right?

Are ye fathers,—nor pity those children bereaved
Of the birth-right which man from his Maker received?
Are ye husbands,—and blest with affectionate wives,
The comfort, the solace, the joy of your lives,—
And feel not for him whom a tyrant can sever
From the wife of his bosom and children for ever?
Are ye Christians, enlightened with precepts divine,
And suffer a brother in bondage to pine?
Are ye men, whom fair freedom has marked for her own,
Yet listen unmoved to the negro's deep groan?

[Pg 79]

Ah no!—ye are slaves!—for the freeborn in mind
Are the children of mercy, the friends of mankind:
By no base, selfish motive their actions are weigh'd;
They barter no souls in an infamous trade;
They eat not the bread which is moistened by tears,
And carelessly talk of the bondage of years;—
They feel as men should feel;—the clank of the chain
Bids them call upon Justice to cleave it in twain!—

[Pg 80]

WAR.

Dark spirit! who through every age
Hast cast a baleful gloom;
Stern lord of strife and civil rage,
The dungeon and the tomb!
What homage should men pay to thee,
Spirit of woe and anarchy?

Yet there are those who in thy train
Can feel a fierce delight;
Who rush, exulting, to the plain,
And triumph in the fight,
Where the red banner floats afar
Along the crimson tide of war.

[Pg 81]

Who is the knight on sable steed,
That comes with thundering tread?
Dark warrior, slack thy furious speed,
Nor trample on the dead:
A youthful chief before thee lies,
Struggling in life's last agonies.

Oh pause one moment in thy course,
Those lineaments to trace;
Dost thou not feel a strange remorse,
Whilst gazing on that face,
Where grace and manly beauty meet,
To die beneath thy courser's feet?

Those sunny tresses scattered wide,
And soiled with dust and blood,
Were once a mother's fondest pride,
When at her knee he stood,

A rosy, playful, laughing boy,
Her lonely heart's sole hope and joy.

[Pg 82]

But youth a glowing vision brought,
And whispered glory's name,
Renown, with every burning thought
Linked to ambition, came:
Like a young war-horse in his might,
He panted for the desperate fight.

For civil discord rent the land,
His warrior sire, afar,
Against his sovereign raised the brand,
The leader of the war:
By honour fired the stripling draws
His weapon in the royal cause.

Stretched bleeding on the battle-field
His first, last strife is done;
No more his hand the sword shall wield,
His eyes behold the sun,
Or his pale lips repeat the cry,
The thrilling shout of victory!—

[Pg 83]

He struggles yet—the strife is o'er—
The soul hath winged its flight,
Again beholds its native shore,
A spirit robed in light.
What now avail his mother's cares—
Her silent tears—her nightly prayers?

On that young soldier's prostrate form
The warrior grimly smiled,
As if he viewed in secret scorn
That face so fair and mild;
Why springs he to the fatal plain
To gaze upon that form again?

Why does his eye in frenzy roll?
Why is his clenched hand raised?
What thought quick rushed across his soul,
When on that boy he gazed?
His quivering lip and swollen brow
His mental agonies avow.

[Pg 84]

Can sorrow touch that iron heart,
So long to mercy steeled?
From those fierce eyes the big drops start,
He sinks upon the field.
Night closes round, the strife is done,
That warrior sleeps beside his son!

[Pg 85]

THE EARTHQUAKE.

There was no sound in earth or air,
And soft the moonbeams smiled
On stately tower and temple fair,

Like mother o'er her child;
And all was hushed in the deep repose
That welcomes the summer evening's close.

Many an eye that day had wept,
And many a cheek with joy grew bright,
Which now, alike unconscious, slept
Beneath the wan moonlight;
And mandolin and gay guitar
Had ceased to woo the evening star.

[Pg 86]

The lover has sought his couch again,
And the maiden's eyes no longer glisten,
As she comes to the lattice to catch his strain,
And sighs while she bends to smile and listen.
She sleeps, but her rosy lips still move,
And in dreams she answers the voice of love.

Sleep on, ye thoughtless and giddy train,
Sorrow comes with the dawning ray;
Ye never shall wake to joy again,
Or your gay laugh gladden the rising day:
Death sits brooding above your towers,
And destruction rides on the coming hours.—

The day has dawned—but not a breath
Sighs through the sultry air;
The heavens above and earth beneath
One gloomy aspect wear—
Horror and doubt and wild dismay
Welcome the dawn of that fatal day.

[Pg 87]

Hark!—'tis not the thunder's lengthened peal!
Hark!—'tis not the winds that rise;
Or the heavy crush of the laden wheel,
That echoes through the skies—
'Tis the sound that gives the earthquake birth!
'Tis the heavy groans of the rending earth!

Oh, there were shrieks of wild affright,
And sounds of hurrying feet,
And men who cursed the lurid light,
Whose glance they feared to meet:
And some sunk down in mute despair
On the parched earth, and perished there.—

It comes!—it comes!—that lengthened shock—
The earth before it reels—
The stately towers and temples rock,
The dark abyss reveals
Its fiery depths—the strife is o'er,
The city sinks to rise no more.

[Pg 88]

She has passed from earth like a fearful dream;—
Where her pomp and splendour rose,
There runs a dark and turbid stream,
And a sable cloud its shadow throws;
Pale sorrow broods in silence there,

LINES

WRITTEN AMIDST THE RUINS OF A CHURCH ON THE COAST OF SUFFOLK.

"What hast thou seen in the olden time,
Dark ruin, lone and gray?"
"Full many a race from thy native clime,
And the bright earth, pass away.
The organ has pealed in these roofless aisles,
And priests have knelt to pray
At the altar, where now the daisy smiles
O'er their silent beds of clay.

[Pg 90]

"I've seen the strong man a wailing child,
By his mother offered here;
I've seen him a warrior fierce and wild;
I've seen him on his bier,
His warlike harness beside him laid
In the silent earth to rust;
His plumed helm and trusty blade
To moulder into dust!

"I've seen the stern reformer scorn
The things once deemed divine,
And the bigot's zeal with gems adorn
The altar's sacred shrine.
I've seen the silken banners wave
Where now the ivy clings,
And the sculptured stone adorn the grave
Of mitred priests and kings.

[Pg 91]

"I've seen the youth in his tameless glee,
And the hoary locks of age,
Together bend the pious knee,
To read the sacred page;
I've seen the maid with her sunny brow
To the silent dust go down,
The soil-bound slave forget his woe,
The king resign his crown.

"Ages have fled—and I have seen
The young—the fair—the gay—
Forgot as if they ne'er had been,
Though worshipped in their day:
And school-boys here their revels keep,
And spring from grave to grave,
Unconscious that beneath them sleep
The noble and the brave.

[Pg 92]

"Here thousands find a resting place
Who bent before this shrine;
Their dust is here—their name and race,
Oblivion; now are thine!
The prince—the peer—the peasant sleeps

Alike beneath the sod;
Time o'er their dust short record keeps,
Forgotten save by God!

"I've seen the face of nature change,
And where the wild waves beat,
The eye delightedly might range
O'er many a goodly seat;
But hill, and dale, and forest fair,
Are whelmed beneath the tide.
They slumber here—who could declare
Who owned those manors wide!

[Pg 93]

"All thou hast felt—these sleepers knew;
For human hearts are still
In every age to nature true,
And swayed by good or ill:
By passion ruled and born to woe,
Unceasing tears they shed;
But thou must sleep, like them, to know
The secrets of the dead!"

[Pg 94]

THE OLD ASH TREE.

Thou beautiful Ash! thou art lowly laid,
And my eyes shall hail no more
From afar thy cool and refreshing shade,
When the toilsome journey's o'er.
The winged and the wandering tribes of air
A home 'mid thy foliage found,
But thy graceful boughs, all broken and bare,
The wild winds are scattering round.

The storm-demon sent up his loudest shout
When he levelled his bolt at thee,
When thy massy trunk and thy branches stout
Were riven by the blast, old tree!
It has bowed to the dust thy stately form,
Which for many an age defied
The rush and the roar of the midnight storm,
When it swept through thy branches wide.

[Pg 95]

I have gazed on thee with a fond delight
In childhood's happier day,
And watched the moonbeams of a summer night
Through thy quivering branches play.
I have gathered the ivy wreaths that bound
Thy old fantastic roots,
And wove the wild flowers that blossomed round
With spring's first tender shoots.

And when youth with its glowing visions came,
Thou wert still my favourite seat;
And the ardent dreams of future fame
Were formed at thy hoary feet.
Farewell—farewell—the wintry wind

[Pg 96]

Has waged unsparing war on thee,
And only pictured on my mind
Remains thy form, time-honoured tree!

[Pg 97]

THE NAMELESS GRAVE.

**WRITTEN IN COVE CHURCH-YARD; AND OCCASIONED BY
OBSERVING MY OWN SHADOW THROWN ACROSS A GRAVE.**

"Tell me, thou grassy mound,
What dost thou cover?
In thy folds hast thou bound
Soldier or lover?
Time o'er the turf no memorial is keeping
Who in this lone grave forgotten is sleeping?"—

"The sun's westward ray
A dark shadow has thrown
On this dwelling of clay,
And the shade is thine own!
From dust and oblivion this stern lesson borrow—
Thou art living to-day and forgotten to-morrow!"

[Pg 98]

THE PAUSE.

There is a pause in nature, ere the storm
Rushes resistless in its awful might;
There is a softening twilight, ere the morn
Expands her wings of glory into light.

There is a sudden stillness in the heart,
Ere yet the tears of wounded feeling flow;
A speechless expectation, ere the dart
Of sorrow lays our fondest wishes low.

There is a dreamy silence in the mind,
Ere yet it wakes to energy of thought;
A breathless pause of feeling, undefined,
Ere the bright image is from fancy caught.

[Pg 99]

There is a pause more holy still,
When Faith a brighter hope has given,
And, soaring over earthly ill,
The soul looks up to heaven!

[Pg 100]

UNCERTAINTY.

Oh dread uncertainty!
Life-wasting agony!
How dost thou pain the heart,
Causing such tears to start,
As sorrow never shed
O'er hopes for ever fled.
For memory hoards up joy

Beyond Time's dull alloy;
Pleasures that once have been
Shed light upon the scene,
As setting suns fling back
A bright and glowing track,
To show they once have cast
A glory o'er the past;
But thou, tormenting fiend,
Beneath Hope's pinions screened,
Leagued with distrust and pain,
Makest her promise vain;
Weaving in life's fair crown
Thistles instead of down.

[Pg 101]

Who would not rather know
Present than coming woe?
For certain sorrow brings
A healing in its wings.
The softening touch of years
Still dries the mourner's tears;
For human minds inherit
A gay, elastic spirit,
Which rises in the hour
Of trial, with such power,
That men, with wonder, find
Sorrow is less unkind;
That human hearts can bear
All evils but despair,
Or that anticipated grief
Which, for a season, mocks relief.

[Pg 102]

Uncertainty still clings
To earth's fair but fleeting things;
And mortals vainly trust
In fabrics formed of dust!
We look into life's waste,
And tread its paths in haste;
The past—for ever flown;
The present—scarce our own;
While, cold and dim, before
Stretches the shadowy shore,
The dark futurity, which lies
Beyond the glance of mortal eyes,
Wrapped in the mystic gloom
Which canopies the tomb.
But faith can pour a light
On the spirit's earthly night,
And break that sullen shroud;
As a star bursts through the cloud,
To show the upward eye
The clear, but distant, sky;
The land of joy and peace,
Where doubts and sorrows cease.

[Pg 103]

[Pg 104]

When the eye whose kind beam was the beacon of gladness
From the glance of a lover turns coldly away,
O'er the bright sun of hope float the dark clouds of sadness,
And youth's lovely visions recede with the ray.
Oh turn not where pleasure's wild meteor is beaming,
And night's dreary shades wear the splendour of day,
To the rich festive board where the red wine is streaming;—
Can the dance and the song disappointment allay?

[Pg 105]

Oh heed not the Syren! for virtue is weeping
Where passion is struggling her victim to chain,
And Conscience, deep drugged, in her soft lap is sleeping,
Till startled by memory and quickened by pain.
Oh heed not the minstrel, when music is breathing
In the cold ear of fashion his heart-searching strain;
And pluck not the rose round Love's diadem wreathing;
The garland by beauty is woven in vain.

The pleasures of life, like its moments, are fleeting;
Oh let not its trifles your firm purpose move;
But think as those moments are slowly retreating,
How feebly against its enchantments you strove:
Then turn from the world, and, its follies forsaking,
Raise your eyes to the day-star of gladness above;
There's a balm for each wound, though the fond heart is breaking,
A Lethé divine in the fountain of Love!

[Pg 106]

LINES

ON A

NEW-BORN INFANT. [\[A\]](#)

Like a dew-drop from heaven in the ocean of life,
From the morn's rosy diadem falling,
A stranger as yet to the storms and the strife,
Dear babe, of thy earthly calling!

Thine eyes have unclosed on this valley of tears;
Hark! that cry is the herald of anguish and woe;
Thy young spirit finds a deep voice for its fears,
Prophetic of all that is passing below.

[Pg 107]

How short will the term of thy ignorance be!
The winds and the tempests will rise,
And passion will cover with wrecks the calm sea,
On whose surface no shadow now lies.

Unclouded and fair is the morn of thy birth,
The first lovely day in a season of gloom;
Whilst a pilgrim and stranger thou treadest this earth,
May the sunbeams of hope gild thy path to the tomb.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[A\]](#) Infant son (since dead) of Mr. James Bird, author of the *Vale of Slaughden*.

**THE
CHRISTIAN MOTHER'S LAMENT.**

**THE FOLLOWING LITTLE POEM WAS SUGGESTED BY A PASSAGE IN THE MEMOIRS
OF THE LATE MRS. SUSAN HUNTINGTON OF BOSTON, NEW ENGLAND.**

Ah! cold at my feet thou art sleeping, my boy,
And I press on thy pale lips, in vain, the fond kiss;
Earth opens her arms to receive thee, my joy!
And all I have suffered was nothing to this:
The day-star of hope 'neath thine eyelids is sleeping,
No more to arise at the voice of my weeping.

Oh, how art thou changed!—since the light breath of morning
Dispelled the soft dew-drops in showers from the tree,
Like a beautiful bud, my lone dwelling adorning,
Thy smiles called up feelings of rapture in me;
I thought not the sunbeams all brightly that shone
On thy waking, at eve would behold me alone.

[Pg 109]

The joy that flashed out from those death-shrouded eyes,
That laughed in thy dimples and brightened thy cheek,
Is quenched—but the smile on thy pale lip that lies,
Now tells of a joy that no language can speak.
The fountain is sealed, the young spirit at rest,
Ah, why should I mourn thee—my loved one—my blest?

[Pg 110]

THE CHILD'S FIRST GRIEF. [B]

Sorrow has touched thee, my beautiful boy!
And dimmed the bright eyes that were dancing with joy;
Thy ruby lips tremble, thy soft cheek is wet,
The tears on its roses are lingering yet.
On thy quick-heaving heart is thy little hand pressed;
There is care on thy brow—there is grief in thy breast,
And slowly and darkly the shadow steals o'er thee,
For the first time the vision of death is before thee!

[Pg 111]

Meet emblem of childhood—that innocent dove
Was the sharer alike of thy sports and thy love;
Thy playmate is dead—and that tenantless cage
Has stamped the first grief upon memory's page.
And oh!—thou art weeping—Life's fountain of tears,
Once unchained, will flow on through the desert of years;
No joy will e'er equal thy first dawn of bliss,
No sorrow blot out the remembrance of this!

Though reason may smile at the anguish which now
Convulses thy bosom and darkens thy brow;
The period may come, in thy journey through life,
When sick of its falsehood, corruption, and strife,
Thou vainly shall seek in thy desolate track
To bring those sweet feelings and sympathies back;
And thy spirit will murmur, when vexed and reviled,

Oh would I could weep—as I wept when a child!

[Pg 112]

But let us not darken the landscape with gloom,
And fling round the cradle the shade of the tomb,
The sorrows of youth are like April's rash showers,
Which though rapidly shed, strew our pathway with flowers:
On the soft downy cheek, while the tear glistens bright,
The young heart is leaping, all wild with delight;
The glance of a sunbeam will banish its pain,
And it joyously breaks into laughter again!

Oh, our early impressions are never forgot—
And the wide earth contains not so lovely a spot
As the fields that encircled the home of our youth,
With all its dear visions of beauty and truth:
No meads are so green, and no flowers are so fair
As the wildings we gathered and garlanded there;
And the dim eye grows bright whilst recounting the joy,
The sorrows, and trials, and sports of the boy!

FOOTNOTES:

- [B] Written to illustrate a plate by Westall, in *Friendship's Offering*, for 1830. To those who have not seen the picture, it may be proper to state, that the subject is a child weeping over a dead dove.

[Pg 113]

THE LAMENT OF THE DISAPPOINTED.

"When will the grave fling her cold arms around me,
And earth on her dark bosom pillow my head?
Sorrow and trouble and anguish, have found me,
Oh that I slumbered in peace with the dead!

"The forests are budding, the fruit-trees in bloom,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
But my soul is bowed down by the spirit of gloom,
I no longer rejoice as the blossoms expand.

[Pg 114]

"And April is here with her rich varied skies,
Where the sunbeams of hope with the tempest contend,
And the bright drops that flow from her deep azure eyes
On the bosom of nature like diamonds descend.

"She scatters her jewels o'er forest and lea,
And casts in earth's lap all the wealth of the year;
But the promise she brings wakes no transports in me,
Still the landscape looks dim through the fast flowing tear."

Thus sung a poor exile, whom Sorrow had banished
From Joy's golden halls, in those moments when care
Struck deep in her soul and Hope's sunny smiles vanished,
And her spirit grew dark 'neath the scowl of despair.

[Pg 115]

But oh! there's a balm e'en for anguish like thine,
And He who permitted the evil has given,

In exchange for this lost earth, an Eden divine,
Revealing to man all the glories of heaven.

Then hush these vain murmurs, arise from the dust,
Submit to the hand who the dark chain can sever
Of sorrow and sin:—God is faithful and just—
Oh seek but his face and be happy for ever!

[Pg 116]

HYMN OF THE CONVALESCENT.

My eyes have seen another spring
In floral beauty rise,
And happy birds on gladsome wing
Flit through the azure skies.
Though sickness bowed my feeble frame
Through winter's cheerless hours,
Life's sinking torch resumes its flame
With renovated powers.

Once more on nature's ample shrine,
Beneath the spreading boughs,
With lifted hands and hopes divine
I offer up my vows.
My incense is the breath of flowers,
Perfuming all the air;
My pillared fane these woodland bowers,
A heaven-built house of prayer;

[Pg 117]

My fellow-worshippers, the gay,
Free songsters of the grove,
Who to the closing eye of day
Warble their hymns of love.
The low and dulcet lyre of spring,
Swept by the vagrant breeze,
Borne far on echo's spreading wing
Stirs all the budding trees—

Again I catch the cuckoo's note
That faintly murmurs near,
The mingled melodies that float
To rapture's listening ear.
While April like a virgin pale
Retreats with modest grace,
And blushing through her tearful veil
Just shows her cherub face.

[Pg 118]

'Tis but a momentary gleam
From those young laughing eyes,
Yet, like a meteor's passing beam,
It lights up earth, and skies:
But, ere the sun exhales the dew
That sparkles on the grass,
Dark clouds flit o'er the smiling blue,
Like shadows o'er a glass.

But ah! upon the musing mind
Those varied smiles and tears,
Like words of love but half defined,
Give birth to hopes and fears.
The joyful heart one moment bounds,
Then feels a sudden chill,
Whispering in vague uncertain sounds
Presentiments of ill.

[Pg 119]

When dire disease an arrow sent,
And thrilled my breast with pain,
My mind was like a bow unbent,
Or harp-strings after rain;
I could not weep—I could not pray,
Nor raise my thoughts on high,
Till light from heaven, like April's ray,
Broke through the stormy sky!

[Pg 120]

YOUTH AND AGE.

YOUTH.

Pilgrim of life! thy hoary head
Is bent with age, thine eye
Looks downward to the silent dead,
Wreck of mortality!—
The friends who flourished in thy day
Have sought their narrow home;
Their spirits whisper, "Come away!"—

AGE.

My soul replies, I come.—
I tread the path I trod a child,
The fields I loved of yore;
The flowers that 'neath my footsteps smiled
Now meet my gaze no more.
I stand beneath this giant oak!
It was an aged tree,
Hollowed by time's resistless stroke,
When life was green with me.
Its lofty head it proudly rears
To greet the summer sky,
Whilst, bending with the weight of years,
I feebly totter by.
And hushed are all the thousand songs
That filled these branches high:
Echo no more for me prolongs
The woodland minstrelsy.
Silence has gathered round life's hall;
My friends are in the clay;
I hear no more the footsteps fall,
That cheered my early day;
I see no more the faces dear,
Which shone around my hearth:
Bereft of all—I sojourn here—

[Pg 121]

Still happy, though on earth!—

YOUTH.

[Pg 122]

And canst thou smile when all are gone
Who shared thy youthful prime;
Content to wait and watch alone,
To grapple still with time?
How comes it that thou thus below
Hast rest above the sod,
Which brings to memory scenes of woe?

AGE.

It is the will of God!

[Pg 123]

MARY HUME.

A BALLAD.

"He will come to night," young Mary said,
And checked the rising sigh;
And gazed on the stars that o'er her head
Shone out in the deep blue sky.
"Heaven speed his voyage!—though absent long,
The painful vigil's o'er—
The skies are clear—the breeze is strong—
We meet to part no more!"

[Pg 124]

While yet she spoke a sudden chill
O'er her ardent spirit crept;
A sad presentiment of ill—
She turned away and wept.
Far off the sigh of ocean stole—
The sweeping of the sounding surge—
In plaintive murmurs o'er her soul,
Like wailing of a funeral dirge.

And in the wind there is a tone
Which whispers to her sinking heart—
"Mary we meet in death alone;
In realms of bliss no more to part."
The moon has sunk in her ocean cave,
Fled are the shades of night,
And morning bursts on the purple wave
In floods of golden-light.

[Pg 125]

The sudden stroke of the village bell
Checks the fisher's blithesome song;
He pauses to hear how rock and fell
Its sullen tones prolong.
"Some soul to its last account has sped:
Dost thou hear that solemn sound?"
"'Tis Mary Hume!"—his comrade said—
"Last night her love was drowned!"

[Pg 126]

THE SPIRIT OF MOTION.

Spirit of eternal motion!
Ruler of the stormy ocean,
Lifter of the restless waves,
Rider of the blast that raves
Hoarsely through yon lofty oak,
Bending to thy mystic stroke;
Man from age to age has sought
Thy secret—but it baffles thought!

[Pg 127]

Agent of the Deity!
Offspring of eternity,
Guider of the steeds of time
Along the starry track sublime,
Founder of each wondrous art,
Mover of the human heart;
Since the world's primeval day
All nature has confessed thy sway.

They who strive thy laws to find
Might as well arrest the wind,
Measure out the drops of rain,
Count the sands which bound the main,
Quell the earthquake's sullen shock,
Chain the eagle to the rock,
Bid the sun his heat assuage,
The mountain torrent cease to rage.
Spirit, active and divine—
Life and all its powers are thine!
Guided by the first great cause,
Sun and moon obey thy laws,
Which to man must ever be
A wonder and a mystery,
Known alone to him who gave
Thee sovereignty o'er wind and wave
And only chained thee in the grave!

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LINES

WRITTEN DURING

A GALE OF WIND.

Oh nature! though the blast is yelling,
Loud roaring through the bending tree,
There's sorrow in man's darksome dwelling,
There's rapture still with thee!

I gaze upon the clouds wind-driven,
The white storm-crested deep;
My heart with human cares is riven—
O'er these—I cannot weep.

[Pg 130]

'Tis not the rush of wave or wind
That wakes my anxious fears,
That presses on my troubled mind,

And fills my eyes with tears;

I feel the icy breath of sorrow
My ardent spirit chill,
The dark—dark presage of the morrow,
The sense of coming ill.

I hear the mighty billows rave;
There's music in their roar,
When strong in wrath the wind-lashed wave
Springs on the groaning shore;

A solemn pleasure in the tone
That shakes the lonely woods,
As winter mounts his icy throne
'Mid storms and wasting floods.

[Pg 131]

The trumpet of the angry blast
Peals loud o'er earth and main;
The elemental strife is past,
The heavens are bright again.

And shall I doubt the healing power
Of Him who lives to save,
Who in this dark appalling hour
Can silence wind and wave?

Almighty Ruler of the storm!
One beam of grace display,
And the fierce tempests that deform
My soul, shall pass away.

[Pg 132]

THE SPIRIT OF THE SPRING.

The spirit of the shower,
Of the sunshine and the breeze,
Of the dewy twilight hour,
Of the bud and opening flower,
My soul delighted sees.
Stern winter's robe of gray,
Beneath thy balmy sigh,
Like mist-wreaths melt away,
When the rosy laughing day
Lifts up his golden eye.—

[Pg 133]

Spirit of ethereal birth,
Thy azure banner floats,
In lucid folds, o'er air and earth,
And budding woods pour forth their mirth
In rapture-breathing notes.
I see upon the fleecy cloud
The spreading of thy wings;
The hills and vales rejoice aloud,
And Nature, starting from her shroud,
To meet her bridegroom springs.

Spirit of the rainbow zone,
Of the fresh and breezy morn,—
Spirit of climes where joy alone
For ever hovers round thy throne,
On wings of light upborne,
Eternal youth is in thy train
With rapture-beaming eyes,
And Beauty, with her magic chain,
And Hope, that laughs at present pain,
Points up to cloudless skies.

[Pg 134]

Spirit of love, of life, and light!
Each year we hail thy birth—
The day-star from the grave of night
That set to rise in skies more bright,—
To bless the sons of earth
With leaf—and bud—and perfumed flower,
Still deck the barren sod;
In thee we trace a higher power,
In thee we claim a brighter dower,
The day-spring of our God!—

[Pg 135]

O COME TO THE MEADOWS.

O come to the meadows! I'll show you where
Primrose and violet blow,
And the hawthorn spreads its blossoms fair,
White as the driven snow.
I'll show you where the daisies dot
With silver stars the lea,
The orchis, and forget-me-not,
The flower of memory!

The gold-cup and the meadow-sweet,
That love the river's side,
The reed that bows the wave to meet,
And sighs above the tide.
The stately flag that gaily rears
Aloft its yellow crest,
The lily in whose cup the tears
Of morn delight to rest.

[Pg 136]

The first in Nature's dainty wreath,
We'll cull the brier-rose,
The crowfoot and the purple heath,
And pink that sweetly blows.
The hare-bell with its airy flowers
Shall deck my Laura's breast,—
Of all that bud in woodland bowers
I love the hare-bell best!

I'll pull the bonny golden broom
To bind thy flowing hair;
For thee the eglantine shall bloom,
Whose fragrance fills the air.
We'll sit beside yon wooded knoll,

[Pg 137]

To hear the blackbird sing,
And fancy in his merry troll
The joyous voice of spring!

We'll sit and watch the sparkling waves
That leap exulting by,
Whilst in the pines above us raves
The wind's wild minstrelsy.
It swells the echoes of the grove,
'Tis Nature's plaintive voice;
The winds and waters breathe of love,
And all her tribes rejoice.

Whilst youth, and hope, and health are ours,
We'll rove the verdant glade;
But ah! spring's sweetest, loveliest flowers,
Like us, but bloom to fade.
They spread their beauties to the sun,
And live their little day,
Then droop, and wither, one by one,
Till all are passed away.

[Pg 138]

Already scattered in the dust
My first May garland lies;
The hope that owns a mortal trust,
As quickly fades and dies.
Then let us seek a brighter wreath
Than Nature here has given;
The flowers of virtue bud beneath,
But only bloom in heaven!

[Pg 139]

THOU WILT THINK OF ME, LOVE.

When these eyes, long dimmed with weeping,
In the silent dust are sleeping;
When above my narrow bed
The breeze shall wave the thistle's head—
Thou wilt think of me, love!

When the queen of beams and showers
Comes to dress the earth with flowers;
When the days are long and bright,
And the moon shines all the night—
Thou wilt think of me, love!

[Pg 140]

When the tender corn is springing,
And the merry thrush is singing;
When the swallows come and go,
On light wings flitting to and fro—
Thou wilt think of me, love!

When laughing childhood learns by rote
The cuckoo's oft-repeated note;
When the meads are fresh and green,
And the hawthorn buds are seen—
Thou wilt think of me, love!

When 'neath April's rainbow skies
Violets ope their purple eyes;
When mossy bank and verdant mound
Sweet knots of primroses have crowned—
 Thou wilt think of me, love!

[Pg 141]

When the meadows glitter white,
Like a sheet of silver light;
When blue bells gay and cowslips bloom,
Sweet-scented brier, and golden broom—
 Thou wilt think of me, love!

Each bud shall be to thee a token
Of a fond heart reft and broken;
And the month of joy and gladness
Shall but fill thy soul with sadness—
 And thou wilt sigh for me, love!

When thou rov'st the woodland bowers,
Thou shalt cull spring's sweetest flowers,
And shalt strew with bitter weeping
The lonely bed where I am sleeping—
 And sadly mourn for me, love!

[Pg 142]

THE FOREST RILL.

Young Naiad of the sparry grot,
 Whose azure eyes before me burn,
In what sequestered lonely spot
 Lies hid thy flower-enwreathed urn?
Beneath what mossy bank enshrined,
 Within what ivy-mantled nook,
Sheltered alike from sun and wind,
 Lies hid thy source, sweet murmuring brook?

[Pg 143]

Deep buried lies thy airy shell
 Beneath thy waters clear;
Far echoing up the woodland dell
 Thy wind-swept harp I hear.
I catch its soft and mellow tones
 Amid the long grass gliding,
Now broken 'gainst the rugged stones,
 In hoarse, deep accents chiding.

The wandering breeze that stirs the grove,
 In plaintive moans replying,
To every leafy bough above
 His tender tale is sighing;
Ruffled beneath his viewless wing
 Thy wavelets fret and wimple,
Now forth rejoicingly they spring
 In many a laughing dimple.

[Pg 144]

To nature's timid lovely queen
 Thy sylvan haunts are known;

She seeks thy rushy margin green
To weave her flowery zone;
Light waving o'er thy fairy flood
In all their vernal pride,
She sees her crown of opening buds
Reflected in the tide.

On—on!—for ever brightly on!
Thy lucid waves are flowing,
Thy waters sparkle as they run,
Their long, long journey going;
Bright flashing in the noon-tide beam
O'er stone and pebble breaking,
And onward to some mightier stream
Their slender tribute taking.

[Pg 145]

Oh such is life! a slender rill,
A stream impelled by Time;
To death's dark caverns flowing still,
To seek a brighter clime.
Though blackened by the stains of earth,
And broken be its course,
From life's pure fount we trace its birth,
Eternity its source!

While floating down the tide of years,
The Christian will not mourn her lot;
There is a hand will dry her tears,
A land where sorrows are forgot.
Though in the crowded page of time
The record of her name may die,
'Tis traced in annals more sublime,
The volume of Eternity!

[Pg 146]

TO WATER LILIES.

Beautiful flowers! with your petals bright,
Ye float on the waves like spirits of light,
Wooing the zephyr that ruffles your leaves
With a gentle sigh, like a lover that grieves,
When his mistress, blushing, turns away
From his pleading voice and impassioned lay.

Beautiful flowers! the sun's westward beam,
Still lingering, plays on the crystal stream,
And ye look like some Naiad's golden shrine,
That is lighted up with a flame divine;
Or a bark in which love might safely glide,
Impelled by the breeze o'er the purple tide.

[Pg 147]

Beautiful flowers! how I love to gaze
On your glorious hues, in the noon-tide blaze,
And to see them reflected far below
In the azure waves, as they onward flow;
When the spirit who moves them sighing turns
Where his golden crown on the water burns.

Beautiful flowers! in the rosy west
The sun has sunk in his crimson vest,
And the pearly tears of the weeping night
Have spangled your petals with gems of light,
And turned to stars every wandering beam
Which the pale moon throws on the silver stream.

Beautiful flowers!—yet a little while,
And the sun on your faded buds shall smile;
And the balm-laden zephyr that o'er you sighed
Shall scatter your leaves o'er the glassy tide,
And the spirit that moved the stream shall spread
His lucid robe o'er your watery bed.

[Pg 148]

Beautiful flowers! our youth is as brief
As the short-lived date of your golden leaf.
The summer will come, and each amber urn,
Like a love-lighted torch, on the waves shall burn;
But when the first bloom of our life is o'er
No after spring can its freshness restore,
But faith can twine round the hoary head
A garland of beauty when youth is fled!

[Pg 149]

AUTUMN.

Autumn, thy rushing blast
Sweeps in wild eddies by,
Whirling the sear leaves past,
Beneath my feet, to die.
Nature her requiem sings
In many a plaintive tone,
As to the wind she flings
Sad music, all her own.

The murmur of the rill
Is hoarse and sullen now,
And the voice of joy is still
In grove and leafy bough.
There's not a single wreath,
Of all Spring's thousand flowers,
To strew her bier in death,
Or deck her faded bowers.

[Pg 150]

I hear a spirit sigh
Where the meeting pines resound,
Which tells me all must die,
As the leaf dies on the ground.
The brightest hopes we cherish,
Which own a mortal trust,
But bloom awhile to perish
And moulder in the dust.

Sweep on, thou rushing wind,
Thou art music to mine ear,
Awakening in my mind
A voice I love to hear.

[Pg 151]

The branches o'er my head
Send forth a tender moan;
Like the wail above the dead
Is that sad and solemn tone.

Though all things perish here,
The spirit cannot die,
It owns a brighter sphere,
A home in yon fair sky.
The soul will flee away,
And when the silent clod
Enfolds my mouldering clay,
Shall live again with God;

Where Autumn's chilly blast
Shall never strip the bowers,
Or icy Winter cast
A blight upon the flowers;
But Spring, in all her bloom,
For ever flourish there,
And the children of the tomb
Forget this world of care.—

The children who have passed
Death's tideless ocean o'er,
And Hope's blest anchor cast
On that bright eternal shore;
Who sought, through Him who bled
Their erring race to save,
A Sun, whose beams shall shed
A light upon the grave!

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[Pg 153]

THE REAPERS' SONG.

The harvest is nodding on valley and plain,
To the scythe and the sickle its treasures must yield;
Through sunshine and shower we have tended the grain;
'Tis ripe to our hand!—to the field—to the field!
If the sun on our labours too warmly should smile,
Why a horn of good ale shall the long hours beguile.
Then, a largess! a largess!—kind stranger, we pray,
We have toiled through the heat of the long summer day!

[Pg 154]

With his garland of poppies red August is here,
And the forest is losing its first tender green;
Pale Autumn will reap the last fruits of the year,
And Winter's white mantle will cover the scene.
To the field!—to the field! whilst the Summer is ours
We will reap her ripe corn—we will cull her bright flowers.
Then, a largess! a largess! kind stranger, we pray,
For your sake we have toiled through the long summer day.

Ere the first blush of morning is red in the skies,
Ere the lark plumes his wing, or the dew drops are dry,
Ere the sun walks abroad, must the harvestman rise,
With stout heart, unwearied, the sickle to ply:

He exults in his strength, when the ale-horn is crown'd,
And the reapers' glad shouts swell the echoes around.
Then, a largess! a largess!—kind stranger, we pray,
For your sake we have toiled through the long summer day!

[Pg 155]

WINTER.

Majestic King of storms! around
Thy wan and hoary brow
A spotless diadem is bound
Of everlasting snow:
Time, which dissolves all earthly things,
O'er thee hath vainly waved his wings!

The sun, with his refulgent beams,
Thaws not thy icy zone;
Lord of ten thousand frozen streams,
That sleep around thy throne,
Whose crystal barriers may defy
The genial warmth of summer's sky.

[Pg 156]

What human foot shall dare intrude
Beyond the howling waste,
Or view the untrodden solitude,
Where thy dark home is placed;
In those far realms of death where light
Shrieks from thy glance and all is night?

The earth has felt thine iron tread,
The streams have ceased to flow,
The leaves beneath thy feet lie dead,
And keen the north winds blow:
Nature lies in her winding sheet
Of dazzling snow, and blinding sleet.

Thy voice has chained the troubled deep;
Within thy mighty hand,
The restless world of waters sleep
On Greenland's barren strand.
Thy stormy heralds, loud and shrill,
Have bid the foaming waves lie still.

[Pg 157]

Where lately many a gallant prow
Spurned back the whitening spray,
An icy desert glitters now,
Beneath the moon's wan ray:
Full many a fathom deep below
The dark imprisoned waters flow.

How gloriously above thee gleam
The planetary train,
And the pale moon with clearer beam
Chequers the frost-bound plain;
The sparkling diadem of night
Circles thy brow with tenfold light.

I love thee not—yet when I raise

To heaven my wondering eyes,
I feel transported at the blaze
Of beauty in the skies,
And laud the power that, e'en to thee,
Hath given such pomp and majesty!

[Pg 158]

I turn and shrink before the blast
That sweeps the leafless tree,
Careering on the tempest past,
Thy snowy wreath I see;
But Spring will come in beauty forth
And chase thee to the frozen north!

[Pg 159]

FANCY AND THE POET.

POET.

Enchanting spirit! at thy votive shrine
I lowly bend one simple wreath to twine;
O come from thy ideal world and fling
Thy airy fingers o'er my rugged string;
Sweep the dark chords of thought and give to earth
The wild sweet song that tells thy heavenly birth—

FANCY.

[Pg 160]

Happiness, when from earth she fled,
I passed on her heaven-ward flight,—
"Take this wreath," the spirit said,
"And bathe it in floods of light;
To the sons of sorrow this token give,
And bid them follow my steps and live!"

I took the wreath from her radiant hand,
Each flower was a silver star;
I turned this dark earth to a fairy land,
When I hither drove my car;
But I wove the wreath round my tresses bright,
And man only saw its reflected light.

Many a lovely dream I've given,
And many a song divine,
But never—oh never!—that wreath from heaven
Shall mortal temples twine.

Hope and love in the chaplet glow:
'Tis all too bright for a world of woe!

[Pg 161]

POET.

Hist—Beautiful spirit! why silent so soon?
My soul drinks each word of thy magical tune;
My lyre owns thy touch, and its tremulous strings
Still vibrate beneath the soft play of thy wings!
Resume thy sweet lay, and reveal, ere we part,
Thy home, lovely spirit,—and say what thou art.

FANCY.

The gleam of a star which thou canst not see,
Or an eye 'neath its sleeping lid,
The tune of a far off melody,
The voice of a stream that's hid;
Such must I still remain to thee,
A wonder and a mystery.

[Pg 162]

I live in the poet's dream,
I flash on the painter's eye,
I dwell in the moon's pale beam,
In the depths of the star-lit sky;
I traverse the earth, the air, the main,
And bind young hearts in my golden chain.

I float on the crimson cloud,
My voice is in every breeze,
I speak in the tempest loud,
In the sigh of the wind-stirred trees;
To the sons of earth, in a magic tone,
I tell of a world more bright than their own!

[Pg 163]

NIGHT'S PHANTASIES.

A FRAGMENT.

I have dreamed sweet dreams of a summer night,
When the moon was walking in cloudless light,
And my soul to the regions of Fancy sprung,
While the spirits of air their soft anthems sung,
Strains wafted down from those heavenly spheres
Which may not be warbled in waking ears;
More sweet than the voice of waters flowing,
Than the breeze over beds of violets blowing,
When it stirs the pines, and sultry day
Fans himself cool with their tremulous play.
On the sleeper's ear those rich notes stealing,
Speak of purer and holier feeling
Than man in his pilgrimage here below,
In the bondage of sin, can ever know.

[Pg 164]

I heard in my slumbers the ceaseless roar
Of the sparkling waves, as they met the shore,
Till lulled by the surge of the moon-lit deep,
By the heaving ocean I sank to sleep.
And a magic spell on my spirit was cast,
And forms that had perished in ages past,
Were by Fancy revealed to my wondering view,
As the veil of Oblivion she backward drew,
And showed me a glorious vision, dressed
In the rosy light of the glowing west.
Such colours at parting the day-god throws,
To gild his path, as rejoicing he goes,
Like a victor red with the spoils of fight,
To raise through darkness the banner of light!

Slowly and soothingly stole on my ear

Strains such as spirits in ecstasy hear,
When they tune their harps at the jasper throne
Of eternal light, with its rainbow zone;
And the harmony drawn from those living strings
Gushes forth from the fountain whence music springs;
But those songs divine, of heavenly birth,
Are seldom repeated to sons of earth.
Such sounds as I heard by that summer sea
Were never produced by man's minstrelsy;
Which rose and sank by the billowy motion
Of the breaking wave and the heaving ocean:
Now borne on the night-breeze was wafted high,
Through the glowing depths of the star-lit sky;
Now mournfully wailing, like plaintive dirge,
Rushed to the shore, with the rush of the surge.

[Pg 165]

And I saw a figure, all radiantly bright,
Float over the waves in the pale moonlight;
She moved to the notes of a magical song,
And the billows scarce murmured that bore her along;
The winds became mute—and the snowy wreath,
That crested the billows, looked dim beneath
Her silvery feet—that as lightly trod
The heaving deep, as the emerald sod.
A garland of coral her temples bound,
And her glittering robes floated lightly round,
Veiling her form in a shadowy shroud,
Like the mist that hangs on the morning cloud,
Ere the sun dispels, with his rising beam,
The vapours exhaled from the marshy stream.
The breeze wafted back from her forehead fair
Her long flowing tresses of shining hair,
Which cast on her features a lambent glow,
Like a halo encircling her brow of snow;
Revealing a face of such faultless mould
As that sea-born goddess possessed of old,
The morning she rose from the purple tide,
The queen of beauty and joy's fair bride—
But her cheek was as pale as the ocean spray
Ere it catches a flush from the rosy day;
And the shade of a deathless grief was there,
Which spake more of ages than years of care;
As though she had borne, since the world began,
Every sorrow and trial that waits upon man.

[Pg 166]

Such was the shadow that haunted my dream;
Such was the figure that rose from the stream;
And I felt a strange and electric thrill
Of unearthly delight my bosom fill,
As she neared the shore, and I heard the strain
That charmed into silence the listening main.

[Pg 167]

Child of the earth! behold in me
The desolate spirit of things that were:
I keep Oblivion's iron key,
Far, far below in the pathless sea,
Where never a sound from the upper air

Is heard in those realms where, in darkness hurled,
Lie the shattered domes of the ancient world!

A thousand ages have slowly rolled
O'er temple and tower and fortress strong,
By the giant kings possessed of old,
That buried beneath the waters cold,
Only echo the mermaids' plaintive song,
When they weep o'er the form of some child of clay,
'Mid the wreck of a world that has passed away.

[Pg 168]

The spirits of earth and air have sighed
To traverse those halls, in vain;
The rolling waters those ruins hide,
And buried beneath the oozy tide,
They sleep in my icy chain;
And if thou canst banish all mortal dread,
Thou shalt view that world of the mighty dead.—

Far over the breast of the waters wide
That song's plaintive cadence in distance died,
And I heard but the tremulous, mournful sweep
Of the night-winds ruffling the azure deep!—

[Pg 169]

SONGS OF THE HOURS.

THE TWILIGHT HOUR.

Slowly I dawn on the sleepless eye,
Like a dreaming thought of eternity;
But darkness hangs on my misty vest,
Like the shade of care on the sleeper's breast;
A light that is felt—but dimly seen,
Like hope that hangs life and death between;
And the weary watcher will sighing say,
"Lord, I thank thee! 'twill soon be day;"
The lingering night of pain is past,
Morning breaks in the east at last.

[Pg 170]

Mortal!—thou mayst see in me
A type of feeble infancy,—
A dim, uncertain, struggling ray,
The promise of a future day!

THE MORNING HOUR.

Like a maid on her bridal morn I rise,
With the smile on her lip and the tear in her eyes;
Whilst the breeze my crimson banner unfurls,
I wreath my locks with the purest pearls;
Brighter diamonds never were seen
Encircling the neck of an Indian queen!
I traverse the east on my glittering wing,
And my smiles awake every living thing;
And the twilight hour like a pilgrim gray,
Follows the night on her weeping way.
I raise the veil from the saffron bed,

Where the young sun pillows his golden head;
He lifts from the ocean his burning eye,
And his glory lights up the earth and sky.

[Pg 171]

Ah, I am like that dewy prime,
Ere youth hath shaken hands with time;
Ere the fresh tide of life has wasted low,
And discovered the hidden rocks of woe:
When like the rosy beams of morn,
Joy and gladness and love were born,
Hope divine, of heavenly birth,
And pleasure that lightens the cares of earth!

THE NOONTIDE HOUR.

I come like an Eastern monarch dight
In my crown of beams, in my robe of light;
And nature droops at my ardent gaze,
And wraps the woods in a purple haze;
From my fiery glance the strong man shrinks,
Like a babe on the bosom of earth he sinks;
Yet cries, as he turns from the glowing ray,
"This is a glorious summer day!"

[Pg 172]

Such is manhood's fiery dower,
Passion's all-consuming power;
Glorious, beautiful, and bright,
But too dazzling to the sight!

THE EVENING HOUR.

Like the herald hope of a fairer clime,
The brightest link in the chain of time,
The youngest and loveliest child of day,
I mingle and soften each glowing ray;
Weaving together a tissue bright
Of the beams of day and the gems of night.—
I pitch my tent in the glowing west,
And receive the sun as he sinks to rest;
He flings in my lap his ruby crown,
And lays at my feet his glory down;
But ere his burning eyelids close,
His farewell glance the day-king throws
On Nature's face—till the twilight shrouds
The monarch's brow in a veil of clouds—
Oh then, by the light of mine own fair star,
I unyoke the steeds from his beamy car.
Away they start from the fiery rein,
With flashing hoofs, and flying mane,
Like meteors speeding on the wind,
They leave a glowing track behind,
Till the dark caverns of the night
Receive the heaven-born steeds of light!

[Pg 173]

While Nature broods o'er the soft repose
Of the dewy mead, and the half-shut rose,
Does not that lovely hour give birth
To thoughts more allied to heaven than earth?

When things that have been in perspective pass,
Like the sun's last rays over memory's glass;
When life's cares are forgot, when its joys are our own,
And the mild beams of faith round the future are thrown;
When all that awakened remorse or regret,
Like a stormy morn, has in splendour set;
When the sorrows of time and the hopes of heaven
Blend in the soul like the hues of even,
And the spirit looks back on this troubled scene
With a glance as bright as it ne'er had been!

[Pg 174]

NIGHT.

I come, like Oblivion, to sweep away
The scattered beams from the car of day:
The gems which the evening has lavishly strown
Light up the lamps round my ebon throne.
Slowly I float through the realms of space,
Casting my mantle o'er Nature's face,
Weaving the stars in my raven hair,
As I sail through the shadowy fields of air.
All the wild fancies that thought can bring
Lie hid in the folds of my sable wing:
Terror is mine with his phrensied crew,
Fear with her cheek of marble hue,
And sorrow, that shuns the eye of day,
Pours out to me her plaintive lay.
I am the type of that awful gloom
Which involves the cradle and wraps the tomb;
Chilling the soul with its mystical sway;
Chasing the day-dreams of beauty away;
Till man views the banner by me unfurled,
As the awful veil of the unknown world;
The emblem of all he fears beneath
The solemn garb of the spoiler death!

[Pg 175]

CHORUS OF HOURS.

Born with the sun, the fair daughters of time,
We silently lead to a lovelier clime,
Where the day is undimmed by the shadows of night,
But eternally beams from the fountain of light;
Where the sorrows of time and its cares are unknown
To the beautiful forms that encircle the throne
Of the mighty Creator! the First and the Last!
Who the wonderful frame of the universe cast,
And composed every link of the mystical chain
Of minutes, and hours, which are numbered in vain
By the children of dust, in their frantic career,
When their moments are wasted unthinkingly here,
Lavished on earth which in mercy were given
That men might prepare for the joys of heaven!—

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[Pg 177]

THE LUMINOUS BOW.

THIS REMARKABLE PHENOMENON WAS WITNESSED BY THE AUTHOR

ON THE NIGHT OF THE 29th OF SEPTEMBER, 1829.

Vision of beauty! there floats not a cloud
O'er the blue vault of heaven thy glory to shroud;
The star-gemmed horizon thou spannest sublime,
Like the path to a better and lovelier clime.

Thy light, unreflected by planet or star,
Still widens and brightens round night's spangled car;
In radiance resembling the moon's placid beam,
When she smiles through the soft mist that hangs on the stream.

[Pg 178]

Thou sittest enthroned, like the spirit of night,
And the stars through thy zone shed a tremulous light;
The moon is still sleeping beneath the wide sea,
Whilst wonder is keeping her vigils with me.

The bow of the covenant brightens the storm,
When its dark wings are shading the brow of the morn;
But thou art uncradled by vapour or cloud,
Thy glory's unshaded by night's sable shroud.

Oh whence is thy splendour, fair luminous bow?
From light's golden chalice thy radiance must flow;
Thou look'st from the throne of thy beauty above
On this desolate earth, like the spirit of love!

[Pg 179]

THE SUGAR BIRD. [C]

Thou splendid child of southern skies!
Thy brilliant plumes and graceful form
Are not so precious in mine eyes
As those gray heralds of the morn,
Which in my own beloved land
Welcome the azure car of spring,
When budding flowers and leaves expand
On hawthorn boughs, and sweetly sing.

[Pg 180]

But thou art suited to the clime,
The golden clime, that gave thee birth;
Where beauty reigns o'er scenes sublime,
And fadeless verdure decks the earth;
Where nature faints beneath the blaze
Of her own gorgeous crown of light,
And exiled eyes, with aching gaze,
Sigh for the softer shades of night,

That memory to their dreams may bring
Past scenes, to cheer their sleeping eye,
The dark green woods where linnets sing,
And echo wafts the faint reply.
Ah, from those voiceless birds that glow,
Like living gems 'mid blossoms rare,
The captive turns in sullen woe
To climes more dear and scenes less fair!

FOOTNOTES:

[C] This elegant bird is a native of Van Dieman's land.

[Pg 181]

THE DREAM.

Methought last night I saw thee lowly laid,
Thy pallid cheek yet paler, on the bier;
And scattered round thee many a lovely braid
Of flowers, the brightest of the closing year;
Whilst on thy lips the placid smile that played,
Proved thy soul's exit to a happier sphere,
In silent eloquence reproaching those
Who watched in agony thy last repose.

A pensive, wandering, melancholy light
The moon's pale radiance on thy features cast,
Which, through the awful stillness of the night,
Gleamed like some lovely vision of the past,
Recalling hopes once beautiful and bright,
Now, like that struggling beam, receding fast,
Which o'er the scene a softening glory shed,
And kissed the brow of the unconscious dead.

[Pg 182]

Yes—it was thou!—and we were doomed to part,
Never in this wide world to meet again.
The blow that levelled thee was in my heart,
And thrilled my breast with more than mortal pain.
Despair forbade the gathering tears to start;
But soon the gushing torrents fell like rain
O'er thy pale form, as free and unrepressed
As the rash shower that rocks the storm to rest.

For all this goodly earth contained for me,
Of bright or beautiful, lay withering there:
What were its gayest scenes bereft of thee—
What were its joys in which thou couldst not share?
While memory recalled each spot, where we
Had twined together many a garland fair,
Of hope's own wreathing, and the summer hours
Smiled not on happier, gayer hearts than ours.

[Pg 183]

Hearts, chilled and silent, as the pensive beam,
Whose shadowy glory resting on the pall,
Casts on the dead a sad portentous gleam,
And serves past hours of rapture to recall,
Till the soul roused herself with one wild scream,
As shuddering nature felt the powerful call,
And I awoke in ecstasy to find
'Twas but a fleeting phantom of the mind!

[Pg 184]

THE RUIN.

I know a cliff, whose steep and craggy brow

O'erlooks the troubled ocean, and spurns back
The advancing billow from its rugged base;
Yet many a goodly rood of land lies deep
Beneath the wild wave buried, which rolls on
Its course exulting o'er the prostrate towers
Of high cathedral—church—and abbey fair,—
Lifting its loud and everlasting voice
Over the ruins, which its depths enshroud,
As if it called on Time, to render back
The things that were, and give to life again
All that in dark oblivion sleeps below:—
Perched on the summit of that lofty cliff
A time-worn edifice o'erlooks the wave,
"Which greets the fisher's home-returning bark,"
And the young seaman checks his blithesome song
To hail the lonely ruin from the deep.

[Pg 185]

Majestic in decay, that roofless pile
Survives the wreck of ages, rising still
A mournful beacon o'er the sea of time,
The lonely record of departed years:—
Yes—those who view that ruin feel an awe
Sink in the heart, like those who look on death
For the first time, and hear within the soul
A voice of warning whisper,—"Thus, e'en thus,
All human glories perish—rent from time,
And swallowed up in that unmeasured void,
O'er which oblivion rolls his sable tide."—
Such thoughts as these that moss-grown pile calls forth
To those who gaze upon its shattered walls,
Or, musing, tread its grass-grown aisles, or pause
To contemplate the wide and barren heath,
Spreading in rude magnificence around,
With scarce a tree or shrub to intersect
Its gloomy aspect, save the noble ash
That fronts the ruins, on whose hoary trunk
The hurricanes of years have vainly burst,
To mar its beauty;—there sublime it stands,
Waving its graceful branches o'er the soil
That wraps the mouldering children of the land.

[Pg 186]

The shadowy splendour of an autumn sky
Was radiant with the hues of parting day;
The glorious sun seemed loth to leave the west,
That glowed like molten gold—a saffron sea
Fretted with crimson billows, whose rich tints
Gave to the rugged cliff and barren heath
A ruddy diadem of living light!

[Pg 187]

Hark!—'tis the lonely genius of the place
Sighs through the wind-stirred branches and bewails
Its desolation to the moaning blast,
That sweeps the ivy on the dark gray walls!—
No—'twas a sound of bitter agony
Wrung from the depths of some o'erburdened heart,
Which in life's early morning had received
A sad inheritance of sighs and tears.

Starting, I turned—and seated on the ground
Beside the broken altar I beheld
A female figure, whose fantastic dress
And hair entwined with sprigs of ash and yew
Bespoke a mind in ruins. On her brow
Despair had stamped his iron seal; her cheek
Was pale as moonlight on the misty wave;
Her hollow eyes were fixed on vacancy,
Or wildly sent their hurried glances round
With quick impatient gesture, as in quest
Of some loved object, present to her mind,
But shut for ever from her longing view.

[Pg 188]

The sun went down. She slowly left her seat
And cast one long sad look upon the wave;
Then poured the anguish of her breaking heart
In a low plaintive strain of melody,
That rose and died away upon the breeze,
The mournful requiem of her perished hopes:—

Hark! the restless spirits of ocean sigh;
I can hear them speak as the wind sweeps by.
See, the ivy has heard their mystic call,
And shivering clings to the broken wall,
The dark green leaves take a sadder shade,
And the flowers turn pale and begin to fade;
The landscape grows dim in the deepening gloom,
And the dead awake in the silent tomb.
I have watched the return of my true-love's bark,
From the sun's uprising till midnight dark;
I have watched and wept through the weary day,
But his ship on the deep is far away;
I have gazed for hours on the whitening track
Of the pathless waters, and called him back,
But my voice returned on the moaning blast,
And the vessel I sought still glided past.

[Pg 189]

We parted on just such a lovely night:
The billows were tossing in cloudless light,
And the full bright moon on the waters slept;
And the stars above us their vigils kept,
And the surges whispered a lullaby,
As low and as sweet as a lover's sigh—
And he promised, as gently he pressed my hand,
He would soon return to his native land.

But long months have fled, and this burning brain
Is seared with weeping and watching in vain.
A dark dark shade on my bosom lies,
And nights of sorrow have dimmed these eyes;
The roses have fled from my pallid cheek,
And the grief that I feel no words can speak;
I have made my home with the graves of the dead,
And the cold earth pillows my aching head!

[Pg 190]

He will come!—he will come!—I know it now;
The waves are dancing before his prow;

He comes to speak peace to my aching heart,
To tell me we never again shall part;
I can hear his voice in the freshening breeze,
As his bark glides o'er the rippling seas,
And my heart will break forth into laughter and song,
When I lead him back through the gazing throng.

Ah, no—where yon shade on the water lies
The slow-rising moon deceives my eyes,
And the tide of sorrow within my breast
Rolls on like the billows that never rest;
I will look no more on the heaving deep,
But return to my lowly bed and weep:
He will come to my dreams in the darksome night,
And his bark will be here with the dawn of light!

[Pg 191]

When the song ceased, she turned her heavy eyes
With such a piteous glance upon my face;
It pierced my heart, and fast the gathering tears
Blinded my sight. Alas! poor maniac;
For thee no hope shall dawn—no tender thought
Wake in thy blighted heart a thrill of joy.
The immortal mind is levelled with the dust,
Ere the tenacious cords of life give way.
Hers was a common tale—she early owned
The ardent love that youthful spirits feel,
And gave her soul in blind idolatry
To one dear object; and his ship was lost
In sight of port—lost on the very morn
That should have smiled upon their bridal rite.
She saw the dreadful accident like one
Who saw it not; and from that fatal hour
All memory of it faded from her mind,
And still she watches for the distant sail
Of him, who never, never can return!

[Pg 192]

Poor stricken maid! thy best affections,
Thy hopes, thy wishes centred all in earth—
Earth has repaid thee with a broken heart!
Love to thy God had known no rash excess,
For in his service there is joy and peace;
A light, which on thy troubled mind had shed
Its holy influence, and those tearful eyes
Had then been raised in gratitude to heaven,
Nor chased delusive phantoms o'er the deep!

[Pg 193]

WINTER

CALLING UP HIS LEGIONS.

WINTER.

Awake—arise! all my stormy powers,
The earth, the fair earth, again is ours!
At my stern approach, pale Autumn flings down
In the dust her broken and faded crown;

At my glance the terrified mourner flies,
And the earth is filled with her doleful cries.
Awake!—for the season of flowers is o'er,—
My white banner unfurl on each northern shore!
Ye have slumbered long in my icy chain—
Ye are free to travel the land and main.
Spirits of frost! quit your mountains of snow—
Will ye longer suffer the streams to flow?
Up, up, and away from your rocky caves
And herald me over the pathless waves!

[Pg 194]

He ceased, and rose from his craggy throne
And girt around him his icy zone;
And his meteor-eye grew wildly bright
As he threw his glance o'er those realms of night.
He sent forth his voice with a mighty sound,
And the snows of ages were scattered around;
And the hollow murmurs that shook the sky
Told to the monarch, his band was nigh.

THE WIND FROST.

I come o'er the hills of the frozen North,
To call to the battle thy armies forth:
I have swept the shores of the Baltic sea,
And the billows have felt my mastery;
They resisted my power, but strove in vain—
I have curbed their might with my crystal chain.
I roused the northwind in his stormy cave,
Together we passed over land and wave;
I sharpened his breath and gave him power
To crush and destroy every herb and flower;
He obeyed my voice, and is rending now
The fallow leaves from the groaning bough;
And he shouts aloud in his wild disdain,
As he whirls them down to the frozen plain:
Those beautiful leaves to which Spring gave birth
Are scattered abroad on the face of the earth.
I have visited many a creek and bay,
And curdled the streams in my stormy way;
I have chilled into hail the genial shower:—
All this I have done to increase thy power.

[Pg 195]

THE RIME FROST.

I stood by the stream in the deep midnight.
The moon through the fog shed a misty light;
I arrested the vapours that floated by,
And wove them in garlands and hung them on high;
I bound the trees in a feathery zone,
And turned the soft dews of heaven to stone;
I spangled with gems every leaf and spray,
As onward I passed on my noiseless way;
And I came to thee when my work was done,
To see how they shone in the morning sun!

[Pg 196]

THE NORTH WIND.

I have borne the clouds on my restless wings,
And my sullen voice through the desert rings;
I sent through the forest a rushing blast,
And the foliage fled as I onward passed
From the desolate regions of woe and death,
In adamant bound by my freezing breath:
From the crystal mountains where silence reigns,
And nature sleeps on the sterile plains,
I have brought the snow from thy mighty store
To whiten and cover each northern shore.

[Pg 197]

THE EAST WIND.

I woke like a giant refreshed with sleep,
And lifted the waves of the troubled deep;
I clouded the heavens with vapours dark,
And rolled the tide o'er the foundering bark,
Then mocked in hoarse murmurs the hollow cry
Of the drowning wretch in his agony:
I have leagued with the North to assert thy right
On the land and the wave both by day and by night!

THE SNOW.

[Pg 198]

I heard thy summons and hastened fast,
And floated hither before the blast,
To wave thy white banner o'er tower and town,
O'er the level plain and the mountain brown.
I have crowned the woods with a spotless wreath,
And loaded the avalanche with death;
I have wrapped the earth in a winding sheet,
And Nature lies dead beneath my feet.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

All hail, mighty monarch! our tasks are o'er;
Thy power is confessed on each northern shore;
From the rock's stern brow to the rolling sea
The spirits of earth have bowed to thee.
In the cradle of Nature the young Spring lies
With the slumber of death on her azure eyes;
And we wander at will through the wide domain,
Which in beauty and verdure shall flourish again,
When she bursts from her shroud like a sun-beam forth
'To chase us back to the frozen North!'

[Pg 199]

With darkness and storms for thy panoply,
Stern Winter, what power may contend with thee?
Thy sceptre commands both the wind and the tide,
And thy empire extends over regions wide;
With thy star-gemmed crown and eagle wings,
The strongest of nature's potent kings!
But thy power for a season alone is lent,
Thou art but a ministering spirit sent
By the mighty Creator of thine and thee,
Who fills with his presence immensity!

[Pg 200]

THERE'S JOY, &c.

There's joy when the rosy morning floods
The purple east with light,
When the zephyr sweeps from a thousand buds
The pearly tears of night.
There's joy when the lark exulting springs
To pour his matin lay,
From the blossomed thorn when the blackbird sings,
And the merry month is May.

There's joy abroad when the wintry snow
Melts as it ne'er had been,
When cowslips bud and violets blow,
And leaves are fresh and green.
There's joy in the swallow's airy flight,
In the cuckoo's blithesome cry,
When the floating clouds reflect the light
Of evening's glowing sky.

[Pg 201]

There's joy in April's balmy showers
'Mid gleam of sunshine shed,
When May calls forth a thousand flowers
To deck the earth's green bed.
There's joy when the harvest moon comes out
With all her starry train,
When the woods return the reaper's shout
And echo shouts again.

There's joy in childhood's merry voice
When the laugh rings blithe and clear;
And the sounds that bid young hearts rejoice
Are music to the ear.
There's joy in the dreams of early youth,
Ere care has cast a shade
O'er scenes which, though drest in the guise of truth,
Our reason dooms to fade.

[Pg 202]

There's joy in the youthful lover's breast
When his bride by the altar stands,
When his trembling lip to hers is pressed
And the priest has joined their hands.
There's joy in the smiling mother's heart
When she clasps her first-born son,
When the holy tears of rapture start
To bless the lovely one.

There's joy when the war-worn soldier hears
The notes that breathe of peace,
That dry the anxious matron's tears,
And bid stern slaughter cease.
There's joy when he treads the village green
And views his father's cot;
The horrors of the battle-scene
Are in that hour forgot.

[Pg 203]

There's joy in the shipwrecked seaman's heart,
Who has clung all night to the shrouds;

When the morning breeze rives the rack apart,
And the sun breaks through the clouds.
There's joy when he nears his native land,
And the tedious voyage is o'er,
And he feels the grasp of the kindred hand
He thought to enfold no more.

There's joy above, around, beneath,
But tis a fleeting ray;
The world's stern strife, the hand of death,
Bid mortal hopes decay.
But there's a better joy than earth,
With all her charms, can give,
Which marks the Christian's second birth,
When man but dies to live!

[Pg 204]

[Pg 205]

LOVE.

Oh Love! how fondly, tenderly enshrined
In human hearts, how with our being twined!
Immortal principle, in mercy given,
The brightest mirror of the joys of heaven.
Child of Eternity's unclouded clime,
Too fair for earth, too infinite for time:
A seraph watching o'er Death's sullen shroud,
A sunbeam streaming through a stormy cloud;
An angel hovering o'er the paths of life,
But sought in vain amidst its cares and strife;
Claimed by the many—known but to the few
Who keep thy great Original in view;
Who, void of passion's dross, behold in thee
A glorious attribute of Deity!

[Pg 206]

MORNING HYMN.

O'er Time's mighty billows borne,
Angels lead the purple morn;
Chasing far the shades of night
From the burning throne of light:
Where their glorious wings unfold,
There the east is streaked with gold;
Gilding with celestial dyes
The azure curtain of the skies.
High in air their matin song
Floats the ethereal fields along;
Ere creation wakes they sing,
Glory to the eternal King!
Till silent woods and sleeping plains
Echo far, Jehovah reigns!

[Pg 207]

Rising from the arms of night,
Nature hails the birth of light;
Smiling sweetly through her tears,
High her verdant crown she rears;

At her call the sunny hours
Wreath her humid locks with flowers;
Bright with many a lucid gem
Shines her spotless diadem:
Every grove hath found a voice,
Countless tribes in Thee rejoice!
In melody untaught they sing
Glory to the eternal King!
Earth and heaven respond their strains,
Lord of all, Jehovah reigns!

On man's sin-bound soul and eyes
Alone the shade of darkness lies:
The last of nature's children he,
To laud the eternal Deity!
The last his sullen voice to raise,
The Lord of life and light to praise—
Slumberer, wake!—arise! arise!
Join the chorus of the skies!—
Dost thou sleep? to whom is given
The privilege of sons of heaven?
Wake with angel choirs to sing
Glory to the Almighty King,
Who life within himself retains—
Lord of all, Jehovah reigns!

[Pg 208]

Rising o'er the tide of years,
Lo, a morn more blessed appears:
When yon burning orb of fire,
And moon, and stars, and heavens expire,
And all that once had life and breath,
Emerging from the arms of death,
Shall animate the heaving sod,
And countless millions meet their God!
Whose hand the links of time shall sever,
And man shall wake—to live for ever!
When souls redeemed with angels sing,
Glory to the eternal king!
Vanquished death is led in chains—
Lord of life, Jehovah, reigns!

[Pg 209]

[Pg 210]

EVENING HYMN.

Sinking now in floods of light,
The sun resigns the world to night;
When a lingering glance he turns,
The glowing west with glory burns,
And the blushing heavens awhile
Long retain his parting smile.
Ere gray evening's sullen eye,
Bids those tints of beauty die;
Ere her tears have washed away
The footsteps of departing day,
Nature from her verdant bowers
Her last long strain of rapture pours;

[Pg 211]

Shrouded in her misty vest,
She sings a drowsy world to rest,
And tells to man, in thrilling strains,
That the Lord Jehovah reigns!

Lingering twilight dies away,
Night resumes her ancient sway,
Round her sable tresses twining
Countless hosts of stars are shining;
Weaving round the brow of night
A coronet of living light:
O'er the couch of nature bending,
Their beauteous glances downward sending,
A silent watch of glory keeping,
Guard the earth whilst life is sleeping.
Strains unheard by mortal ears,
Echo through the starry spheres;
Other worlds awake to sing,
Glory to the eternal King!
Till azure fields and liquid plains
Echo far, Jehovah reigns!

[Pg 212]

Creation sleeps—but many a sound
Of melody is floating round—
Where the moon-lit sea is flinging
Its snowy foam and upward springing
To meet the shore advancing nigh,
Pours, in many a broken sigh,
A mournful dirge o'er those who rest
Forgotten in its stormy breast.
Restless ocean, onward rave;
He who trod the boisterous wave,
Shall to life those forms restore,
Thy tides have rolled for ages o'er;
Those sleepers from thy depths shall spring
To meet in air their mighty King,
Whilst shrinking seas repeat their strains,
Lord of all, Jehovah, reigns!

[Pg 213]

This is night;—her mantle gray
She flings across the brow of day
To hide from mortal ken awhile
The splendour of his kingly smile.
But what magic beauties lie
In her dark and shadowy eye,
When the moon with glory crowned
Checkers o'er the distant ground;
Bathing now in floods of light,
Now retreating from the sight,
As the heavy vapoury cloud
Flings athwart its sable shroud;
Onward as her course is steering,
Now through broken cliffs appearing,
She shows the brightness of her form
And laughs exulting at the storm;
Whilst misty hills and moon-lit plains
Echo far, Jehovah reigns!

Night,—thy end is hastening fast,
 Eternal day will dawn at last;
 The Sun of righteousness shall rise,
 Triumphant through his native skies;
 And men redeemed from dust shall spring
 To hail the advent of their King;
 Till heaven's wide arch repeats their strains,
 Christ, our own Immanuel, reigns!

THE END.

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Transcriber's Notes

Spelling, hyphenation, punctuation, and indentation inconsistencies have been retained from the original book. Minor changes were made to the Table of Contents to match the poem titles.

The following typos have been corrected:

Page [19](#): An changed to And:
 (An Alexander's victories, compared).

Page [30](#): ceas changed to cease:
 (Lost in immensity, would ceas to feel!).

Page [125](#): apostrophe added before Tis:
 ("Tis Mary Hume!"—his comrade said—).

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ENTHUSIASM AND OTHER POEMS ***

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