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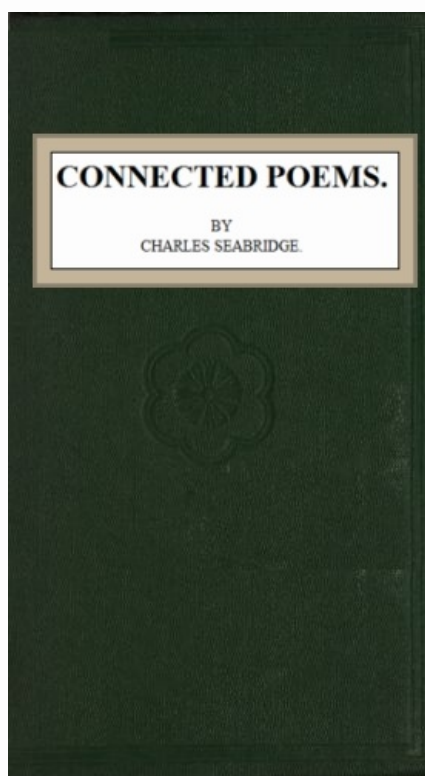
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CONNECTED POEMS ***

CONNECTED POEMS.



CONNECTED POEMS.

BY
CHARLES SEABRIDGE.

Oubliant tout à fait la race humaine, je me fis des sociétés de créatures parfaites, aussi celestes par leurs vertus que par leurs beautés, d'amis sûrs, tendres, fidèles, tels que je n'en trouvai jamais ici-bas.—*Confessions de Rousseau, Partie II., livre 9.*

Qui Deum amat, conari non potest, ut Deus ipsum contra amet.—*B. de Spinoza, Ethica, Pars. V.*

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1866.

CONNECTED POEMS.

O poor preludings to some happier praise,
Thou frail decoy to merit myriad-hued,
The violets of whose virtue pave your ways,
Breathing beneficence on your sullen mood;
Go, test your worth, nor once obtrude the award
On who, unanxious, cannot pant for fame;
His only verdict, whom these lines applaud,
Shall touch my soul with sense of praise or blame,
Howe'er it be; this verse has frighted woe,
And caught the glimpses of a banished Heaven,
Haply surpassing in its quiet glow
Life's fickle transports, nourishment and leaven;
If here is aught, its dues shall be allow'd;
I rest content, but of my office proud.

Aye fashioned from the mirror of the soul
That lends its shadow to this fleeting world,
How doth thy beauty in itself control
The spirit and the form wherein 'tis whirled;
In others earth beneath the inward fire
Sinks down, abashed, nor knows to bear the fame,
While some more mean exalt the entrancing mire,
Smothering the sparkles of celestial flame;
Yet either wanting, for, with those of earth,
Earth's purer mixture hallows what it lends,
And easier leads the sons of self-same birth
To fathom beauty in its heavenlier ends:
'Tis fit Nature should find a lovely hearse,
When man by death springs from the Universe.

III.

If there be some true meaning and a sign
In all the altars where sad suppliants pray,
And if the words they sometime subtly twine,
Be not unpregnant of a deeper lay,
What depths of mystery might not then be read,
What gages of new hope lie undiscerned,
In all the purpose that thy beauties wed,
And all the thought in glowing shrine inurned,
In the unfathomable music, weaving
The young glad utterance of unconscious vows,
And in the eloquence, quickening and relieving,
Like sunset lingering round becalmèd prow;
The heaven that woos, now flashes, from that eye
Hath stol'n Jove's lightning and his joys from high.

Fain would I speak of all thy hopes disclose,
My pen, charm'd with delights, scarce will steal on,
Lingering about the rapture which it knows
It dallies coyly with an idle song;
Too long the prospect which mine eye surveys,
How shall I mark each flower or stay to cull?
Through light, through shade, Perfection planes the ways
With sweet variety, that grows not dull;
Each new enchantment seems itself so fair,
That the last pride spoils his ancestor's aims:
So justly tempered all, none can impair
Concent'ring beauty's just imperial claims;
Each borrows new delight while it conveys,
And leads to harmony by various ways.

Who hath not seen the morning breaking gaily,
The rivers leaping into dazzling light?
Who hath not view'd the eve declining palely,
Flouting her rosy stillness with black night?
Who then hath mark'd thee not in joy delightful,
Careering on thy young soul's restless flow?
Or who hath, sadly, blam'd not sorrow spiteful,
Tempering thy beauty with a heavenly glow?
The even tenor of thy bosom led past,
Nor brook'd those tremors that disturb light breasts;
But, like a holy ocean, calm, pure, steadfast,
Just heav'd beneath its load which on it rests;
Streaked with faint tints of long delicious light,
Whose radiance lures but never tires the sight.

Bound in a little room, my heart exulting,
Surveys the treasures of unmeasured space;
A thousand pathways in one spot resulting,
Disclose the errors of the human race;
What all men seek within that centre lies,
Whose ripening virtues shun the general view,
Lest all should dub them beautiful and wise,
And all that nature has of good and true:
O well for me that worth all would admire
Most should unconscious leave to my employ;
So may thy budding beauties breathe their fire,
All unattempted by the world's annoy:
So nature crowns her gifts by liberal growth,
She owes success and sanctifies her troth.

But soon the rosebud, in developed beauty,
Unfolds its maiden, luring charms to light;
Soon love usurps the walks of tired duty,
And shows its godlike fulness to the sight;
The eaglet soon gladdens his golden plumage,
In the intensest orient of the sun;
Even the meek violet gently must assume age,
And glance through leaves the merit she hath won;
The noon it stealeth from the dewy morning,
And amorous night catcheth the trembling day,
The spring must ripen, and the summer's warning
That autumn shall not linger more than May;
Thou too must change, developed till all love thee,
And yet a change shall hover just above thee.

VIII.

If thou must change, beauty shall form the groove,
And nourish promise in a firmer mould,
Which, all unchequered, onward still shall move,
Informed with wisdom and in virtue old:
Thus shalt thou live, but no, what years can add
To the keen edge of thy unbated mind?
Or what hath wisdom, more than reason had,
When in thy form she mustered all her kind?
Within the acorn lies the oak's whole essence,
Man can accomplish but what in man dwells;
The iron that supples with its incalescence,
Yet wears the nature that its coldness tells;
So, yet unfashioned, in thy youth reposes
The germ that turns to use young nature's roses.

'Tis thou hast taught me what of truth I know,
Kind debt, that binds me nearer unto thee,
That worth's best triumph scorns all outward show
And works within its quiet mystery;
That the same virtues walk in various light,
Accomplishing by each their several ends,
That as the sun to day, the moon to night,
This, its pale lustre, that, its ardour lends;
So with each mortal's differing merits twined,
A separate glory crowns peculiar aims,
And myriad fates, in one deep urn combined,
Stamp, with one issue, more than million claims;
Some only tower, above the rest, supreme,
That such thy lot, methinks, it well would seem.

Rare lot where reason is with fate combined,
Where envy enters not, but only love;
Thought, expectation, fancy, intertwined,
All could not fashion, that which thou dost prove:
Where then is time for jealous jarring thought
To ruffle the full transport of our heaven,
Or clog the wings of adoration fraught
With purity and hope's exulting leaven?
Sunk in the sense of that supremest pleasure,
Here let me lose myself to live in thee;
A priceless boon, I only know to measure,
By what it costs my soul again to flee:
From heaven I fall, and this must, sure, be hell,
Earth never looked so void, I know full well.

Spirit of youth and joy and hope and love,
All this thy essence is and dwells in thee,
This praise but mocks thee, whilst thou soar'st above
Such vague assaults, in nature's witchery!
Thou art a pearl, snatched from the angry deep,
A star, which envy hurled from comrade suns,
An opal, where all rays reflected sleep,
The summer lightning, glistening as it runs;
All things that loveable and lovely are,
Such thou appearest, in thy joyous hour;
Oft frolicsome as leaves, that dance from far,
When the wind dallies with some pensive flower;
All these thou art yet all of these express
Nought of the magic of thy loveliness.

Lovely in joy but grander yet when rage
O'erflows the dams that reason interposed,
The barriers past, themselves must, loath, engage
And swell the tumult they'd have fain opposed;
There, once enlisted, shows the scene so fair,
Such modulation of impetuous wrath,
That what was scorn'd, now claims their tenderest care,
And arm'd in conscious worth they sally forth.
Aye, ever did thy just soul scorn the wrong,
'Twas only virtue lured thee thus astray;
How oft to goodness did'st thou wile the strong,
By young enticement's headstrong, winning way,
Till all of theirs was thine, and thou could'st pour
At love's high altar gifts of virgin ore.

XIII.

Young spirit, thou hast taught me what is joy,
And fathomed nature with a larger line;
How sweet to learn when nature's powers deploy,
And o'er thy frame their dalliance combine:
Ye passions soothed to one unanimous end,
Thou concord breath'd through avenues of sound,
Witchery, ever winning, from its power to blend
Fancy's light hints with intuition's ground:
Fulness of power lives not with those who roam,
Dandling the toy of a fantastic grief,
Iconoclast of woe, it builds its home
In joy's ebullience at its own relief;
Youth founds the pile where age contented dwells,
And drowns his dearth with draughts from childhood's wells.

A young Apollo flush'd with love and beauty,
The world shall wonder owning thy command;
Now, the boy Eros, scorning rugged duty,
And mocking forms poor custom's sole demand:
His archness blended with his sprightly grace,
His glance of love and fitfulness and sport,
His human godhead and heaven-moulded face;
These all are mingled in thy witching port:
And, more than these, the eloquence of thy look,
The energy whose fire informs thy frame;
Well might man read thee as the favourite book,
Wherein maternal nature graves her name.
In thy humanity perfection lives,
And kills th' ideals which rash fiction gives.

Youth is the torch that lights up beauty's forms,
The sail that wafts us where our hopes repose,
Now steals it towards the heart which now it storms,
And gradual towards its own ideal grows;
It sifts the sands, and clasps the golden grains;
It weaves a rainbow through the mists of life;
Sluggard desire that faints, even as it strains,
And wears fulfilment, as a tedious wife,
Feels but the touch of youth, and rapturous soars
To other heights, imagining brighter views;
Youth is a woodland slope, whose mossy pores
Are bursting with the life of violet hues;
Melodious changes of a harp's reply
To its sweet theme of mutability.

Art thou not goddess of this world, O Change?
Expound the riddle, otherwise who may,
Yet can I never from thy altar range,
Nature, artificer in a various way!
Enough for me if I may still adore
Each touch that throbs from thy maternal breast;
If I may linger by the lonely shore,
And find a universe of Elysian rest.
If that with hands reverent and pure and holy
I drag some relics from the unworthy shade,
Thou wilt assist, and fashion visions wholly
After the pattern which thyself hast made!
How more than mortal poor mankind should be,
If taught to crown the yearnings found in thee.

There is a virtue loftier than the rules
By which belief squares what it would digest,
There is a process which the subtler schools
Believe too simple for their high bequest;
A goddess hovers o'er this giddy earth,
Her snowy breasts are budding to the air,
Her sad smile 's conquered peace yet shrinks from mirth,
Reclines she, and her arms invite, her hair,
Sole garment of her loveliness, conformed
To the semblance of a golden lap, the shrine
And cradle of all promise; here are formed
All creeds of holiness, beauty, divine
Truth, and immortal strivings unfulfilled,
And through the whole rich charity's distilled.

Man varies, ages change, and time unfolds
A different name writ on the selfsame scroll;
And one shall hate what his descendant holds
Immoveable, as the antithesis of the pole:
Then, wherefore snarl, wrangling o'er half-starved names,
That do but mock the thing which most believe?
Such jarring furthers not, but rather lames
The substance man would from the eternal weave:
Love, Beauty, Joy, echoes from inmost Nature,
Howe'er miscalled, must still remain the same;
Let man develop each distinctive feature,
And all shall worship then, what none dare blame:
Most born without the pale, yet linger there,
Nor mourn as lost, what ne'er employed their care.

There is a spirit that sanctifies the dulness
Of those, unconscious of the charm they boast;
There is a soul, sparkling in nature's fulness,
Which laughs at custom's quibbles, trembling ghost;
A love there is, whose breath trembles with godhead,
Which robs the desert of the wanderer's fears;
The inexpressible pathways it hath trod, led
By intense silence, boding o'er the years:
It will not lend its harmony to words,
Nor lower reality by visions, torn
From knowledge fitful, that but speaks to herds,
Quivering with mutual wonder, mutual scorn.
Yet love is there, and will, in time, inform
All who have passed to sunshine out of storm.

Wandering to other strains, my fancy dwells
Yet about the musings that enwrap thy name;
Aught that awakes some peal from far joy-bells,
Youth's hopes, and holydays, recalls thy fame:
This hast thou sanctified by eloquent words,
And that enshrined in thy beauty lies;
As spring awakes and calls the joyous birds,
Truth comes with thee, at thy departure flies:
Yet gladlier o'er thy image would I pause,
Swelling the verse with music of thy name,
If once my efforts might support the cause,
Nor blot thy merits with my failure's shame:
Enough, if indirect and faltering praise
Attest my love, failing thy fame to raise.

O the glad days, the promise of our spring,
When wandering by thy side I lived in thee!
Yet, can I hear the light winds carolling,
About the woods that echoed to our glee,
The heather on the hills, the long green downs,
The slopes, the glades, the sunshine and the shade,
The spring-time earth, the heaven that seldom frowns,
The love, whose substance dazzled all parade;
All is yet there, nor change hath marred the spot;
Remembrance fashions all as once it stood:
'Tis not the same, the heather knows me not,
The dancing water, nor the talking wood;
And all is changed, and I am not the same,
Nought speaks of self, save some unreal name.

And can I rest the same and thou not here,
Whose essence flowed through, new-creating all?
Fancy dreamt not, thou wast indeed so dear,
Thy very presence made its splendour's pall:
I held thee, as the substance of my hope,
The lovelier part of what to me belonged,
The very essence, and the eternal scope,
For which my thought and being were prolonged:
Witness thou heaven, what joy have I e'er found
In aught, that unto hope delightful seems,
Save when joy held us both in larger bound?
Thou wast the source of all young longing dreams:
If such my joy, how bitter sorrow's blow,
That christens thy once haunts by terms of woe?

But, pausing o'er the relics of past days,
A deadlier mischief strikes my bosom chill:
No more, alas! no more, my bosom sways
With joys, fresh-flowing from the heaven-capt hill;
No more, the quickening pulses of the world
May teach my soul to madden with its joy;
No more, its echoes, all confus'dly whirl'd,
O'erpower the troubling of each weak annoy:
'Tis past; the voice is silent, and if now
A quiet bliss steals o'er declining years;
'Tis but, that reason smooths the rugged brow,
Kissing the sources of uncertain tears:
The cup of rapture's equal lent to all,
Drink once of bliss, and poor content must pall.

And in this stream thy youthful limbs were borne,
Dear stream, I drink thy waters for his sake;
And on this grass, and by this flowering thorn,
His noon-day couch, we murmur'd half awake:
River, why flow'st thou on, so placid gleaming?
Why waves the grass its green and nymph-like hair?
Why both so tender and complacent seeming,
When he is gone who made you trebly fair?
Warm not thy waters with the love he gave,
O all unconscious or ungrateful stream?
Here would he sit, tempting the lazy wave,
With feet, whose ivory shamed some mermaid's dream:
'Tis I, not nature, err; she clasps her child,
And wins divinely, even as then she smiled.

Bosomed in the young years, perchance repose
As lovely forms, and spirits as divine;
He in the perfectness of youth arose,
Soon death may hold him in her mystic twine;
Nature that gave him to mankind, not long
Endures his absence from her ravished breast;
Sick for the love of what she looks upon,
She opes her veins to engulf him to sweet rest:
Now the keen chords of love, with thrilling touch,
Tremble intense music all along thy wings;
Now thou dost all pervade, and hallow such
As thought of joyance, and of beauty brings:
Swell now the thronging harmonies that roll
The breath of love and beauty through the soul!

I will not mourn thee; when thou art not here,
Yet is thy influence present to my heart;
I will not moisten more wet memory's bier,
Only some flowers shall play my saddening part;
Full well I know that, bursting distance's chains,
A guardian angel, thou'lt attend my ways;
And I shall hear thee in the loftiest strains
That wake this world to muse on grander days:
A voice, whose silence is more strong than storms,
Shall conquer midnight in its soothing power;
The golden stars, from out their mazy swarms,
Chime with innumerable tongues the passing hour!
Nature's epitome and Nature's crown!
Replete with thee heaven's minstrels murmur down.

Thy words, with what sweet purport oft they come,
Breathing, like scented gales, along the years;
Their wafted odours still increase their sum,
And steal the music of delicious tears:
Each bank, whose reeds speak to the clear calm wave,
Whose rippling emulates thy softer tone,
Each tree, that beckons to some sheltering cave,
The torrent near, whose ardour's like thy own;
By each of these, a separate tale was told,
Each claims the tribute of distinctive thought;
Here poetry's witchcraft grew, with fostering, bold,
Here youth waxed amorous of what nature taught:
These still remain, nurturing such goodly seed,
Recall each word, and meditate each deed.

When, all unswayed by passion, or by thought,
When love nor care disturb'd thy even breast,
How dropp'd the golden words, with wisdom fraught,
Like the light flashing on Athena's crest!
Here, by this stream, that wantons by this willow,
(By such a stream, the sage beguiled the day,
Wooping with mellifluous words the crisping billow,
Thy sweetest art compels the grave to gay;
Ah! me, the words have lost the charm they ow'd
To disposition, nature, eloquence, tone;
The gesture, that from o'erwrought feeling flow'd,
The music of the voice, is all thine own;
And the poor tenement of a troubled brain
Confuses all, and cannot much retain.

Beauty, a thing of nought, the sages say,
But relative to sense, blood, pulse, ear, eye;
The mockery of life, fool nature's play,
Who trifles kingdoms on a wanton's sigh;
It lives not in the object it endues,
It takes its colour from the lover's breast;
Yet 'tis not there, it flits between, and woos
Existence unexplained, and ne'er exprest:
Steal from it colour, smoothness, odour, shape,
The empty phantom who would care to clasp?
It plays its gambols, a fantastic ape,
Deriding those, who for its presence gasp;
Even the form exists not, all things lie
'Twixt outward nothing, inward mystery.

'Tis a fond creed, and drags into the stream
Truth, who sits by, and varies with the wave;
But fate decrees, that still the froward dream
Shall enthrall nature, and dig pride his grave:
If the form change, and colour be the dye
Of the sun's brilliance breathing through the air;
If men still vary, and if all things fly,
Shifting from real base to seeming fair;
If truth should seem to change and God to stain
His snowy vesture in the winnowing years;
Yet, something godlike ever shall remain,
This well I know, confirm it, O ye spheres;
Yet, beauty's form shall beckon, and inspire,
Exalting earth with its spiritual fire.

O reason, best ally, and first assistant,
Of beauty, wandering in his own sweet maze;
Arise, great empress, and dear spirit ministrant,
O glance thy sunshine, quickening this foul haze;
If beauty knows to conquer human hearts,
Lurking in virtue, wisdom, face or form,
Or sanctifying success in nature's parts,
In the blue heaven, on earth, in calm or storm,
Declare its essence; by what power it bends
Each stubborn element to its strong hint:
Is this too hard? then whither beauty tends;
Assure at least divine its fateful dint:
Give some rich medicine that may scorn its hold,
And frothing warm the chalice; here all's cold.

Beauty by his own light shines forth and wins
Consent of all men to his supreme power;
Who will not think so, unagreeing, sins
'Gainst love that hails each beauty of an hour:
For love is only constant, when it sways
With the uncertain hues, that beauty gives,
Even admiration, swerving various ways,
Imagines change, and elsewhere straight lives:
The ficklest thing beneath the inconstant moon
Is the sigh swelling from a lover's breast;
It pants, nor thinks that it must die full soon,
Even by its own luxuriance opprest.
Love like an o'erstrung bow, now snaps and breaks,
And now, o'erwrought, relaxes, yields, and shakes.

I ask'd the echoes, that recall the past,
I ask'd the thrilling voice of those who live,
I ask'd the forms that mother nature cast
And feeds within the mind, aye yet can give,
Must love be fostered by its own despair?
Must the mere shadow mark where we adored?
Must we be drunk even with the wanton air,
Because both breathe it;—and our hearts be gored?
Where lies the fault? even in this, replies
The voice of Wisdom; thrifty Nature lends
Rude sketches, undeveloped, which thy sighs,
Thy fancy, thought, or lonely pride pretends
To draw to their full scope; oft must thou err,
Even though successful, nature will not stir.

What's more delightful than young love disporting
In the commutual bond of first breathed sighs?
What is more lovely than the passion, courting
Such sweet succession of carnation dyes,
When love grows pale and red, yet knows not why,
And sorrow kisses joy and both are glad?
What fame, or wealth, or power, or all, can buy
Aught but compared to this looks sourly-sad?
'Tis a brief joy, yet all that mortals know;
Happy who even this, unmixed, can find,
Who will not doubt the substance in the show,
Nor ruffle pleasure with unquiet mind:
Sift but enjoyment with too strict a hand,
It mocks your fingers, and escapes to sand.

O rarest interchange of truth and lies,
Love, ever pandering to thine own deceit!
Thou sweet chameleon of a thousand dyes!
Truth still is varying with thy wayward heat;
Truth long ago has banish'd thee his court,
Yet by thy essence Truth thou still must be;
Though different winds waft to a changeful port,
If Truth be gone, then it departs with thee;
Lo! thou art Truth, and Truth developed lies
In Love, whose home is Beauty, and the world,
And the quick sympathy of unfathomed eyes,
And maddening forms out of their orbits hurl'd;
And all are drunken for a little space,
Then drink disgust, quite sickened of the chase.

Love takes its impress from the formless hues
That signify the thing they yet conceal;
Love leads that heart to life, which it endues
With joys that aggravate the harm they heal;
Love's treasures are not priceless to all eyes,
All may not learn what their full magic means:
By various grades of hopes, and fears, and sighs,
And ecstasies, and woes, raptures, and dreams,
The soul of man ascends to that it loves,
And is developed into something more;
In a more rich creation now it moves,
And seeks in other souls a priceless ore:
Something it finds, yet loses what it lacks,
So must the conqueror in the town he sacks.

Love gain'd is love unlovely, joy ne'er seeth'd
But in desire, still with possession cloy'd;
If that the vows whose once perfection breath'd,
Could hide with words the margin of their void,
Then Love were hope, fulfilment, peace, combined,
Into a concord of unearthly bliss;
Then were the roses of enjoyment twined
Around the satire on young Love's first kiss:
But Love says, no, and Nature too denies;
For Rapture rises but by woe's decline:
And too much bliss, with a brief respite, dies
By coldness, that shall make love dimlier shine.
All love betrays man past its paltry base,
He mounts his bubble, soars, and falls apace.

Puff'd with the pride that feeds on lonely thoughts,
In seeking secure harbours, thou must fail
Of all the aim which with such toil thou sought'st:
Either thy lot be wretchedness, or hail
The empty, fond creations of the brain,
For the warm, glowing, living forms of flesh.
I smile at danger, and such fears as reign,
In some men's brooding minds entangled mesh;
I have a pleasant harbour, and a hope,
For ever wooed by an ethereal breeze;
Not Love but Friendship's my ambitious scope,
Ne'er shall such fantasies my bosom tease:
Yet if I knew not Friendship, I would rest,
Sad, not despairing, on Creation's breast.

Theme of my thought, and beacon to my verse,
Too long thy words have stolen me from thy praise;
Yet now I'll linger round thee, and rehearse
All that thou wast in past delightful days:
As one, a boy, who leaves his home, his friends,
And thinks he knows them well, sudden discerns
A charm in what seem'd dead, he stops and sends
Message to tree and stone, yet weeps not, turns
Only one parting glance on what, review'd
After few years, heaps quick Eternity
On the bright Past, severing it from the brood
Of the moody Future and the Present's pity:
So thick, so warm, the thoughts that press my heart,
And goad the gain their frequency fails to impart.

How loathing's germ is longing, grief woos joy,
'Tis but a comment on the hurrying world;
Man knows such shiftings and is only coy
To match them to the stage, whereon he's hurl'd:
But thou, immutable substance of all beauty,
Shalt yet defeat the purpose of this change,
Shalt purge the essence of its vestment sooty,
And guide its explorations quick and strange;
Thou shalt inhabit and invest a soul,
Whose myriad, intricate voices know one tone;
And I, where'er wavers my wintry pole,
Shall hail that music's influence as my own:
All Beauty, and all Love radiate from thee,
Thou centre of my soul's full harmony.

Bring me to some waste, whose stream's Lethean trail,
Scarce stirs its islands of monotonous grass;
Where circling hills heal their huge tattered mail,
With foliage fringing all the mountain pass;
Where the quire that sings, deepens the deadly lull;
Where Time responds, chiming a sullen note;
Where Phœbus, mellowing, blends a glory dull,
With shades that on the wings of darkness float;
Where a gloom of mystery wears strange, luminous, shapes,
Shadowing unholy, ghastly, wizard forms;
Growing into the pulsing life, whose pregnancy apes
Fierce fascinations, foul unspeaking storms;
Where, in brief space, myriads of demons urge
One quivering form to Hell's red hideous verge.

Methought, a breath stole and unsealed my eyes
And bared the workings of the carcase world;
An engine, like a skeleton, ever plies
A trade infernal, Death's flag stood unfurled;
With iron teeth, I mark'd, this hell-fiend tore
The gaspings relics of Creation's throes;
Fitted to a rack each substance, looming more,
Lengthens unnatural shapes, in awful rows;
And howlings, tears, and shriekings thrill'd the night,
That mourn'd for ever, dumbly consonant;
Each shape, to other bound in pitiless plight,
Reluctant, must destroy, foster, or plant,
What, it knows not, and cares not; whizzing wheels
Whirl, till the sick heart pants, the mad brain reels.

I gazed, with unaccustomed eyes, on night,
Whose blackness dazzled more than midday sun,
It rather seem'd, some new intenser light,
Through which immortal powers, far wandering, run:
I gazed, and hurled my curses at the rage,
That traced its will on such a reckless course;
Methought, a golden form of light did cage
My utterance' portals, strengthening vision's source;
And, fool, it cried, look nearer, nor despair.
I saw, 'twas, as the thunder-cloud, that burst
Is glorious with the lightning, a child's hair
Within whose gold entwined sunbeams are nurst,
No cradle else so sweet; it was the breath
Whose loveliness of life scares dreary death.

Dreams, visions, foolish echoings to the thought,
That homeless wanders for the thing it loves:
The fancies of man's waking are so fraught
With folly, or philosophy that roves
It knows not where, that 'tis no marvel sleep
Should pass its coinage as the current dross:
Could man contain his dreamings in their keep,
How great a gain should balance little loss:
The world is wearied, to know why it plods
The equal tenour of a various way;
But half attends, smiles sometimes, sometimes nods
O'er its dissection, while its head is grey.
It clears the rubble from its own high-road,
And asks but truth, nor cares to increase its load.

Life is a river, that hath caught its gleam
From age's lingering years, and youth's proud date,
From dull despair, and from the hopes, that seem
To form their longing, and to hide their hate;
From sickness, quailing underneath her pains;
And health, exulting in his pride of life;
From black meláncoly, that turns her gains,
All to the theme of an unending strife;
From that fine frame of beauty and of bliss,
That, over-sensitive, will not distort
Nature's delights to Hell's triumphant hiss,
That, 'mid its sorrows, lives near joy's high court:
From genius, freedom, beauty it assumes
As many forms, as hate's dark hell consumes.

I once inquired, whence the cicada brought
The joy whose music prattles through the day;
I wished that the glad lark would but have taught,
Whence came the glee that could incite his lay;
And, as the rolling streams of music flow,
Building all heaven along the deep blue wave,
I prayed, that I might e'er thus rapturous glow
And wholly live within the bliss they gave,
When, on the dancing waters, the white sail
Grows big with kisses of the lustful wind,
Blushing at sunrise, and at midnight pale,
All for some lurking love that match'd their kind;
Then, anxiously, I sought that blissful bound;
That was long since e'er thou, my friend, wast found.

To some the world is but a ragged screen,
Hiding the essence of eternal fire;
They tear its tatters, and would peep between;
The unknown is lovely, and the rest is mire.
And other some glory in Nature's robe,
Dare scorn ideal monsters of the mind,
Where man would test the heart with his nice probe,
Suit his sick taste, and leave the rest behind;
And some are drunken of they know not what,
And cull what sweets may hang from every hour,
Nor hope, nor pause, but magnify the sot;
Know not the weed, or train it as their flower.
Let these rejoice, yet happier, by far,
The silly brutes, that gorge at pleasure, are.

All pleasures and all hopes are their own scorn,
And man's a measure, filling, never fill'd;
Who'd not sell life, its promise something worn,
For one week's bliss with no awakening chill'd?
It cannot be; and some, foil'd or despis'd,
Or craving peace, life's courted joys all spann'd,
Have scouted all things which the world e'er prized;
Dreaming of life, through the dead cloister scann'd,
Fair sounds this, luring; yet, methinks, that shows
A creed nor hard, nor healthy, which unscrews
The rivets, that should pin us to the throes,
That nature in begetting man renews:
The earthly mind, fed on unearthly leaven,
Diffuses Hell through earth, and earth through Heaven.

Who ponders on eternity, can draw
Its shadow o'er the strangeness of this earth,
And, quite immersed in future bliss, can store
His fancy's dreams with fables of new birth;
And men have tortured, altering holiest phrase,
And sanctified the hopes which they adored;
Have made their souls more worthless than their praise,
Saying, that perfect love to Heaven outpoured,
Must hold its flood, nor risk the Heaven it decks,
Making love less lovely than the hope of bliss;
Fostering the demon Self, whose presence checks,
And dulls each noble prompting with his kiss.
Say ye, who steal the jewels from Heaven's crown,
Where lies the rigour of Hell's fancied frown?

Heaven! 'tis a name, that as inconstant sways,
As fame or love, the changes of the moon,
Or, whatsoever wanders by dim ways
To a goal, fashioned by youth's treacherous noon:
Heaven! 'tis a sound that in its uttering mocks
The hopes, reposing round that various base;
Adroitly differing, tempered to the shocks,
That mind the slow world of its desperate case!
The flattery of an echo from each heart,
A mirror, where each soul, reflected, shows
Unnatural choice of some unworthy part,
Which nature's whole must loathingly depose:
Seek virtue for itself, or, seeking, lose
A Heaven apart, else Hell would Heaven confuse.

Life is a brook, that over pebbles glides,
And tints with colour of the cloud his wave;
Now, the East blazes, now, sad Phœbus slides
Down the red hills, that shroud him for his grave;
The waters now are calm, now, troubled, foam,
Exult on ridges, now o'er slopes decline,
Now, in their summer sprightliness, they roam,
Now, stand, congealed, in winter's icy twine;
Full many a flower is often mirror'd there,
And the fresh grass, and the green shady trees,
Full many a pebble glistens through them, fair,
All in confusion, toss'd by wave and breeze;
'Tis strange, though many stones are form'd to fit,
Few meet their mates, most roll confus'dly knit.

The world's but a rude frame, whose substance takes
Colouring from all who flatter, or who curse;
How oft man's heart, all discontented wakes,
His frame's a coffin, and the world's his hearse;
How oft, despairing, he goes forth to find
Yet more assurance of the thing he hates;
How oft he leaves misanthropy behind,
New folly found, of former folly prates:
Needs but some precept, touch, face, form, or word
To dam the current, and to turn its course;
Earth, in her loveliness, or music heard,
While low sweet voices harmonize its force:
There's nought so small in Nature, but can sum
Earth's total process, which it seems to numb.

Lo! thus, that life, which seem'd to me a void,
E'er thou my sun did'st gild it with thy light,
Now looks as merry, as the bubble buoy'd
On summer's billow, whose quick glory's bright:
My scouted woe now glares as sourly-strange,
As once joy show'd to my grief-fashioned breast;
Each act, each thought, as through the world I range,
Finds new commencement, in young vigour drest:
Rich centre, around which my life revolves,
How strong the attraction of thy far intent;
How living, and how joyous, the resolves
Whose object, thou, thy will, their utmost bent:
Though thou art far, fancy relieves her fear,
Imagining thoughts whose love may bring thee near.

O immense chaos whence each forms his world!
Where difference lovely suits distinctive minds:
How hideous others' landskips were, unfurled;
Fancy guides all, enlightens, or else blinds:
Yet, at my idol's shrine, I'd fain believe
The pride of each were quick constrain'd to pray,
Could I but e'er impart, that I receive
From the mind imaged in thy beauty's ray:
But, founder'd in my bliss, I helpless lie,
Like Phrygia's king, incompetent in wealth;
When I behold thee, laden thought would die;
And seeing not, I picture thee, by stealth:
It wants thy equal, to report thy praise,
Let such fill up the inkling in these lays.

Dear child of joy, who read thy soul shall find,
That all things shifting, man must vary too;
Sometimes in thunder, earthquake, and in wind,
Nature will mourn, so grief her sons should woo;
But when the winning breeze coys with the sail,
That bears thy bark along the flowing wave;
Then, know, perfection lives not in the pale
Of that small space, where thy mad fancies rave:
If there's no happiness, then conquer time,
And grandly dare to build, scorning blind Fate;
Fate lives enshrined within the spirit sublime,
Which o'er a faltering world asserts its weight.
Let fools of circumstance wither and yield,
Some in themselves foster the fate they wield.

Men err, and blindly happiness propose,
Whither their steps and fortunes should aspire;
Alas! they seek, what Earth no longer knows;
Once haply clasp'd, the wanton's waxing shier;
For, now, it hath ascended to the heavens,
And sits commingling Nature's shapes and dyes:
Who's rash to seek it, him, ill fortune leavens
With sick acquirement of unworthy sighs:
Youth courts the sunshine to his vigorous wings;
Sees Hope, that beckons, thinks himself a God;
Rivals the lark, acting the joy it sings;
Till age desponds at Life's too real rod:
Let youth abandon hope, and court content,
Now bliss mocks hope, then joys were blessings lent.

O ye, the eastern glory of whose hope,
Laughs at the shadow, which your phantom shames,
Abase the aery tenour of your scope,
E'er woe involve its promise, earth your frames:
Who ponder, reckon vain all reason's forts;
Who think not, live, but know not joy's true tones:
They wander, vacant, through high Nature's courts;
Their spirit seems unworthy, even of groans:
Intrusion of vain tears but mocks the woe,
Whose dregs are tasteless of the former draught;
Time was, when the harp wrung the tears that flow,
Grateful, since needful, then the people quafft.
But time rolls on, and in its changes brings
The age that scoffs at its ancestors' wings.

A new Narcissus gazed himself to death,
Picturing his lonely beauty in the flood,
The river, onward flowing, flouts the breath
That charm'd the fire, Promethean, from its mud:
Who topple on a pinnacle, scorn the steps
That usher to the pride, whereon they stand;
Yet Nature's structure swerves not, men, adepts
At self-deception, judge from whence they've scann'd;
View the whole plot, and just should all appear,
What's beauteous, the relief that Nature wears,
The base, by difficult straits and shoals, should steer
To quicken praise, shunning monotonous cares:
What fail'd of high fulfilment, where it lack'd,
Should live in others' worth when all were pack'd.

Thy voice still cautioned, 'tis no time for woe,
Nor only warned, but marked out safety's road;
Who crams his yearning heart with earthly show,
Straight to be voided, fondles with the goad;
Who nods to Passion, as he gulps the chaff
That whitens the base highway of the world,
Totters to age, on an unstable staff,
Shook by the winds, which his own hopes unfurl'd;
Who tamely would let Age assert his claims,
And stiffen self to a distincter mould,
Who would not rather curse all shapes, thoughts, names,
That frame men's hearts to forms, as meagre-cold:
He ne'er shall triumph o'er the powers of woe;
Mad Passion bursts his bounds, and thunders, "No."

The poison well'd from Circe's treacherous cups
 Beyond the shape, with fell designment, work'd;
 Had thought not pander'd to nectareous sups,
 And, brute-like, veiled what beastly semblance lurk'd,
 Sure change had mock'd his aim, by death and spleen.
 'Tis bounteous Nature smoothes the wrinkled brow,
 Belying with pride the front that looks too lean:
 She plants conceit in gaping brains enow;
 She salves with flattery some unequal wounds,
 Impartial measures grief for men and years;
 One age inglorious slumbers on and swounds;
 One moistens deathless leaves with blood and tears:
 All drink, and die, but oh! how deep a draught,
 E'er separate life's a blessing, must be quafft.

LXI

The rivulets, the earth, the skies, the motion
 Whose substance varies to a higher change,
 The clouds, the woods, the mountains, and the ocean
 Whose endless blue defies the fancy's range,
 The sun, and the calm host that guide the night
 Throughout the seasons of the changeful year,
 The warmth, the snow, the music, and the bright
 Foliage that quivers to the songsters' cheer;
 And the swift thought that wings its measureless way
 (Though clogg'd with self, it feels but how it fails,)

Just to the confines of eternal day,
 In outer orbit whirl'd it pines, and sails;
 And more than these, Love, Beauty, Reason, Joy.
 All these are life, but self's a half-formed toy.

O ye faint touches, that but tire the gaze,
Casting reflection on incompetence;
O all ye thoughts, that weave truth's tangled maze,
Would we might grasp your spirit's hidden sense:
Man is shut out from what himself assists;
Too dear-bought self, rich privilege to conceal,
Strange substance, individualized, that twists
A web, it knows not how, more stiff than steel:
Man knows not how, or wherefore, whence, or why;
He thinks that he must go; whither? he doubts,
Creeds he must form and hopes; he cannot fly,
And haply would not, fostering fears he scouts;
Thrown on the world, he'd lose, in the world's din,
Too fine perception of sad worlds within.

And Death is the glad clasp of knotted braids;
Death seals the circlet, that Life gradual twines;
In all that's fair, Death, inartistic, trades;
Beauty he saps, beleaguering Youth with mines;
O, art thou usher to a fuller world,
Grim Death, whose smile is cased in a frown?
Or speak'st thou only to an infant curl'd,
Dreaming a moment in a bed of down?
Stalk not too proudly, ravisher of life,
Thy boast shall reach no pearl in Nature's casket;
What sinks, benumb'd, though lovely, in the strife
Shall cast the slough, that could a moment mask it.
I cannot wholly hate nor love thee, Death,
Thou tak'st my life, but robb'st my friend of breath.

Doubt struggles into Faith, and calls it life,
Hopes turn to gods, and fears take demon forms;
Man must be somewhere stayed in this strange strife;
He feels himself so weak against its storms.
Dim eyes he strains into futurity;
Weak arms, extending, gropes to find his road;
His fingers clutch at what seems Purity;
Thank Heaven! he sees not all their ghastly load.
And, whether all footpaths lead to the same place,
Or the weed hope blossoms into a flower;
Or whether all struggle in a phantom race,
And blow the bubbles of fame, love and power;
All this he knows not, somewhere he would rest,
By pleasure, or content, aye so 'twere best.

Life's but a straw, that's piped upon by winds,
Fluttering to different tunes at every blast;
But he is strong who conquers what he finds,
Dragging it onward, as the unyielding mast
Toils up the wave, and draws, from victory won,
Fresh presage, and fresh purpose, for the fight:
So let man struggle upward; like the sun
Ne'er slacken, till he sinks beneath the night;
Swell action's tide, that rolls along the world,
Or force from Nature secrets undisclosed;
Or, if less apt to be thus rudely whirl'd,
Rest in this din on sure content reposed.
These words sound fair, but Passion scorns such strains,
And mocks Endeavour with her empty pains.

How should the cloud cry to the summer sea,
Take not the leaden impress from my sails?
How should the amorous eve not taste the glee
That mantles golden o'er its hills and vales?
Were ocean to contemn the rain's increase,
Or woods to spurn the dew, and chide the wind;
Reft of their source, sudden they all would cease,
Lacking that element they once thought unkind:
So, were man shorn of passions and of hates,
And nicely pared of what uneven seems,
He'd seem some plaything, jostled by rough fates
Into existence, from poor Fancy's dreams.
Nature has naught superfluous,—clip her pride,
You mar her beauties, and the man beside.

Should one proclaim, what perfect man might be,
What finest tonings of trained passion's host,
What calm should murmur on a breathless sea,
What childhood's joy linger around the coast,
How the rare form should tremble to each string
Of the ever-pulsing, passionate, tranquil frame:
His virtues should steal lustre while they bring,
For Beauty sanctifies even Virtue's name:
'Twere vain, words cannot paint, nor the mind's maze,
Compose perfections in such various mould:
Create the hero, and the world shall gaze,
Not unobservant, nor profanely cold.
Vain is the juggle of consenting phrase,
Nature is just, and claims the larger praise.

To shape from infinite words and big-wombed thought,
The form that mimics Nature, yet transcends;
To shower beauty, from the sunbeam caught,
On one who, lofty, walks toward lofty ends;
To live within that which themselves create,
By sufferance swelling more exalted ranks,
With such communion still to recreate
The pauses of the world, whose iron harsh clanks,
In that most sweet society, how soon
To lose all sense, all memory of the earth;
Aye, this were godlike, and the priceless boon
Which Nature grudges prompters of true birth:
Holier, she bids them worship what inspires
And guides the blast that feeds Pygmalion fires.

O Beauty is too holy to be handled
By the indiscriminate, rude, critic-touch!
Gently be its timorous, blushing blossoms dandled
On the fringed boughs, coy to the breezes' clutch;
Yea the ransack'd Past's aroma should dwell on it,
While the coronetted Future, breathing, fann'd it:
The flowers of love garden its paths and throng it,
And Fancy's cloud-like sails on lone stars land it:
It should be the idea's gradual unfolding,
Whose rosebud leaves astonish niggard Hope:
It should be the delicate and fleece-like moulding
That snowy clouds build on the heaven's blue scope:
It should be,—who can say except the heart?
It should be all, nor lovelier than thou art.

O thou glad phantom of my waking hours,
I will not clasp thee, lest the vision fail;
I only, sometimes, wander o'er the flowers
Whose perfume lingers in my summer's vale:
Whether joy's victorious, when I oft recount
The former kisses of indulgent Time;
Or the sad Present fathoms sorrow's fount,
And bids my eyes assist my bosom's chime;
I yet will fashion pleasure from each mood,
Shaming the Present with the Past's record,
And gather strength, from memory's darling brood,
To temper, and to wield the eventful sword:
Thy aid delightful seems, for thy dear sake,
And I shall seem to give, even what I take.

What is more lovely than to celebrate
That Beauty's virtue we can never reach?
What's heavenlier, than our pride to lowly rate
In that great Love where nought is left to teach?
To admire, to adore, to fall at Beauty's feet,
To lose all sense of this corporeal frame,
Who'd not choose Life's intense, perpetual heat,
Whose walk of love were blessed by Beauty's name?
O better shows our worship falsely placed,
Than the fixed heart of an unfruitful doubt!
Happier were he, with love of Hell disgraced,
Than he whose hope of Heaven gazed coldly out.
Love's measured by the heart, from whence it flows,
Though all be void, yet it must rest on shows.

Who hath not wakened, dizzy, from the dream,
The fairyland, that boyhood claim'd his own?
Who hath not gulped down memories that teem,
E'er such sweet seed of madness were full grown?
Who hath not, when his wound less rawly looked,
Lightly tripped over the yet sunny fields?
What ominous garnitures have we not brook'd,
For the kind promise, that the spectre shields?
Else how much life must, vacant, pass man by,
Or seem the babblings of an uncrude mind:
How poor the pageant of the world must die
In uncongenial souls, of purpose blind:
Sooner than such I'd the light insect be,
Whose little summer world is revelry.

Two children wandered o'er one plain together,
Like beauteous planets, shot from some new lair;
Proud flowers grew up, exulting in fair weather,
Tendered their sweets, and twined their glowing hair:
Some lovelier, but more lonely, lay enshrined,
Whispering the affable breath of modesty:
I marked the children; these, they oft entwined
About their locks, and thought them fair as shy:
Heedless, they trampled o'er the gaudy flowers,
Whose larger plenty paved the ensuing way:
But, soon, alas! you might well count the hours
By the few lilies, hidden far away.
At length the wanderers passed a river's ford,
One kept his primrose wealth, one cull'd new hoard.

Along the desert pathway of my years
The untarnished green of an oasis lies,
Full many a bliss, watered by love's since tears,
Full many a note, that in the distance dies;
And I will pause, and gather fresh those sweets,
And bind their buds in chaplets on my brows;
I'll hail what youth soe'er my wandering meets,
"See here the guerdon of my childhood's vows."
So, joy's unripened blossoms shall forth peep
From dewy sluices of long-buried grief;
And love, though dead, shall through my pulses leap,
And pinnacle the Past on rapture's reef.
Memory shall gild with fancy what is gone,
And dim indulgence dreamingly live on.

There is one name on which remembrance lingers,
Not soon shall Time tear it from my quick breast;
There comes a music, touched by fairy fingers,
To draw thy features, floats thy spirit's unrest;
Thy voice shall be a passport through life's harms;
I will believe thy fondness mends my slips;
When Death shall clasp me in his haggard arms,
I think that name shall arm my quivering lips:
Young years, that made thee wild, had made thee loving;
Nature had crown'd with Beauty what Wit gave;
Perchance this verse shall prove not quite unmoving,
Calling unto thee, as from out the grave:
Yes, well I know, thou'lt sometimes give one sigh,
To years that come no more, when once gone by.

There was one more, but, 'tis no matter now,
One who's forgot, I too will learn that lore;
Nor others rest, but wistfully, I plough
Memory's hard furrows, pregnant now no more;
For now Love's turned from my too sullen soul,
He will no longer fling the rainbow veil,
Nor glance his mirror o'er defects, to enroll
Me, midst the captives of his courted jail:
I'll draw fresh sustenance from the past for joy,
And scorn love's gyves, his fears, his jealous frowns;
Take up the sweets, and mock the archer boy,
Who fools each votary with delusive crowns:
Yet could I buy his pleasures with his woes,
I'd choose them both, the archer God well knows.

What pride the season takes in his gay flowers!
How the dead year mourns for his withered leaves!
The lover sadly looks on desolate bowers,
No song re-echoes to the verse he weaves:
These all are sad, but promise gilds their death;
Their notes of woe but swell the spring's new joy;
But, 'tis more pitiful, when the very breath,
Which was our life, seems but the summer's toy:
With lifted hands, vain man implores the skies;
Curses the sometime joy, the nurse of woe,
The bliss whose unfelt want erst caused no sighs;
His pilgrimage had, once, less grief, less show:
But no; lost love exalts, in saddening, man,
While heartless plodding but degrades his span.

'Tis bitter for the spirit that's lived in Heaven,
Quickly to be reft of what composed its bliss;
'Tis bitter, that our bliss should wing the levin,
And add a torture to the incisor knife;
And, after earth was shaped to Paradise,
Catching the colour of most loveable eyes,
'Tis sad, that all should darken in a trice,
And but remind us of the joy that flies;
Wants but a motion, and all sights that woo
The bewitched eyesight of the doting world,
Shall catch some stain, and shade to black their hue,
Their pride exposed to gaze, their void unfurled:
Yet who'd exist, and bind nought to his heart?
Strong be that soul that dares to live apart.

But what have I to do with prating griefs,
That mar the sanctity on Beauty's brow?
I have in thee a thousand full reliefs;
Why wound the seeds of joy with torture's plough?
Even now, thy youthful years, in wisdom fledg'd,
Wave thousand-coloured plumes o'er elder minds;
Whiles thou, to only Love and Beauty pledged,
Unsought, uncared for, feel'st the applausive winds:
Envy thou dost take captive, and transform
To the good angel of magnanimous praise;
And men are only jealous, and grow warm,
Matching those wordy altars which they raise:
That men adore the wonder of thy worth,
But shames my love, whose utmost praise is dearth.

In seeking pleasure, I have tasted woe;
And drunk of every cup, to test its worth:
Ill sediments must, in such seeking, flow
And mingle with the thoughts that gave them birth:
Who drinks experience, drinks, at once, disdain;
From weariness, Excitement gathers force,
Then swerves not for slight barriers, nor draws rein,
Till all his passion's wreak'd upon the course:
The course is finished; hollow is the cup;
Nor may regret point at the looked for dregs:
Who sits the banquet out, at last, must sup
From off satiety's unfurnished pegs.
'Tis something known, that there is nought to gain;
Each different science prints his proper strain.

How void of meaning seems the barren earth!
How dwindles all its pride, to infants' toys!
For me, all life is quickened into birth,
Only by the love, that turns my grief to joys:
Sullen, I look out upon the bleak dim morn,
And curse the cold, the climate, and the cloud:
I match those frowns with thy imagined scorn;
Sudden, the sun illumines the misty shroud;
The thought, that's full of thee, discerns no grief,
But builds a summer palace in the air;
It sifts compounded woes, torturing their sheaf,
That bitter thoughts may hide, 'mid thoughts more fair;
The mind returns from thee, winged with delight;
Unsated, it soon meditates new flight.

There are, who count the day by Phoëbus' course,
And ask the dial, where the sun should be;
Who teach the clock, to give the hours force,
To speak the change of their monotony;
Who span the earth with measures, and with rules,
And prate of chart, of compass, and of mile;
Others, more learned, beckon to the schools,
Whence time and space flee with mysterious smile:
But we, who count by love, care not to point
Our sweet decisions by such knotty laws;
Whether one be right, or, all be partners joint
In folly's mandates, or in wisdom's saws,
Love cares not, knows not, reckons not; its ways
Seem shorter to its joy, than winter days.

'Twas here, we met, we spoke; 'twas but a moment,
So short the hours seemed; we loved, we parted;
Ah! that harsh word of parting, with such woe shent,
Dulls all the joy that e'er our meeting darted;
Those leagues we linger'd o'er, what steps they seem'd!
How could we give to distance his full dues?
How short those days, when tricksome fancy's dream'd,
And dress'd the present in rich memory's hues!
This is Eternity, shorn of the dress
That sedate Time winds round his glowing limbs:
Soon shall the Eternal rise, and find redress
From slanderous Time, who sickens what he dims.
Time rules but mortals, wavers even for men;
Should Truth inhabit such a meteor's den?

Unsatisfied desires have sway'd my breast;
Hope's Syren voice has lured me to despair;
Only Excitement's charm'd me, with its zest,
And strangled thought, e'er it could change to care;
But, now, such deep repose hath breathed content,
Filling the measure of all hopes with thee;
That, all my longings and my fears are spent,
Or only live, that thou may'st bid them flee:
If, now, Ambition points to ceaseless toil;
Gleam through the years, altars of sacrifice;
When all is done, I but remain the foil,
Marking what measure thou may'st well despise.
All that I have, or gain, or love, is thine,
And all is little, since thy heart is mine.

O think not I would purchase, measuring out,
The priceless merit of the love I've sued!
Thy love's the larger, that it will not doubt
To rest its hope on buds whose beauty's crude:
Yet suffer, that my shafts attempt the mark
Which thy heart shows to be true virtue's goal;
Suffer, that, by thy conduct, my poor bark
May proudly sail, and scorn the obtrusive shoal:
My service slights all guerdons, and all gains,
Than but one smile, one word, one thought of thine;
Happy, who'er approves not, if my pains
Be crown'd by thee, and through thy merit shine.
What others' emulous worth labours to gain,
O glorious prize! 'tis mine, perchance, to attain.

Love is the larger when it seeks return,
Only in the fulness of its treasur'd self;
When it can linger by the shattered urn,
Its idol gone, it knows not where, nor whence;
When what we worship, may not mark the woes
Which wear the frame, but fortify the mind;
When all is dark, nor earth, nor Heaven shows
Acceptance gleaming, through the midnight, kind:
This love's of purer strain than men can know,
Most jar the chords, but toying with the harp,
They'd lower to life, and filter through fresh woe
The essence that should illustrate their dark.
Grief's scale shows heights, to which whoe'er attain,
Shall haply find the joy outweigh the pain.

But, life compounds the dregs to luscious draughts;
And various pleasure mocks monotonous woe;
And all the wheels and hinges show their crafts,
Leaving no room for the full spirit's flow;
Even love forbids the soul, for human loss,
To wear less brightly, its heaven-tinctur'd fire,
And shows it lovelier, to exalt the cross
Into the pledge of love, still struggling higher:
Only the eternal breath of Nature's beauty
Demands the unchanged devotion of our years.
Immortal constancy of shifting duty
Crowns the rich harvest of our sometime tears:
What's spent in loving, richly is defrayed,
Though nought's returned, by lending we are paid.

But, man, the fitful birth of Time and Change,
Demands the substance of a living love:
Nor, ever satisfied, must onward range,
And builds for earth the idea, or above:
His heart must find a home, where'er it goes;
He nestles in the warmth, then dreams 'tis cold;
Each imperfection lives, and livelier shows;
Love learns despair, and, at the last, is cold:
And, but one path, secure, leads ever round,
Nor dares attempt the warmth, for which it glows;
And who would trifle in this shallow sound
Escapes the test, fenced round by summer snows.
Whose quiet peace can amble o'er this road,
Lives, like what sage? nor fears love's ardent goad.

I lately dreamt of an ideal form;
I thought to shape the mould after my mind;
I bore it through the crowd, and thought it warm;
I saw the shape, that struck my fancy blind:
Fool! whose presumption struggles to create
A beauty other than high nature uses;
Reckon thy function at a lowlier rate,
Raise thy poor pride to what herself infuses:
Then, if the glow of Nature's life-blood thrill thee,
Then, draw the vision to a finer strain;
Then, purify, exalt, let beauty fill thee;
Imagination works not, then, in vain.
If here is aught, 'tis fashioned all from thee,
Lord of my love and of my minstrelsy.

How large a margin yawns 'twixt thought and fact!
Rich Expectation robs the beggar Deed,
An unwise spendthrift, all his fortune's sackt
To build the storehouse whence he ne'er can feed:
For, Hope devours her progeny in the womb;
Glutted with meat, she thinks she shall not starve;
She lies, she chews the cud, sleeps by the tomb,
Accustomed to past gorging, wakes to carve;
Poor idiot, all her rapture's drunk away,
The sediment's tasteless, save of craving thirst;
Her hydra debts seem lost in what they pay,
She cannot feed, till they're discharged first.
I only know one hope, that ne'er deceives,
What's stay'd on thee buoys less than it relieves.

The proud long hours amble at tedious rate,
For that they know they bear the weight of thee,
Even the tripping minutes borrow state,
And, oft return, playing bo-peep with me;
Their cunning thinks to lengthen out my pain,
Or, woo weak prescience, with some fearful mine;
They ne'er suspect how joy shall, in this strain,
Usurp a minute's woe, in every line:
To draw thy lineaments, the painter's pride,
The marble's glory, thy limbs' mobile grace,
'Tis mine, to celebrate thy virtuous side,
How firm consistent, in such temple's space.
To express its all would tire, though charm the time,
Some part befits the occasion, and my rhyme.

I care not to mark out where Beauty lies,
What nice distinction claims it for her own;
Some intuition says it never dies,
Born of young joy, by feeling larger grown:
'Twere easy, to cull out fine tints, deep shades,
To trick comparisons into the vain verse;
Digging the ground, with intellect's keen spades,
To touch more nearly something which is worse:
O too close strainers of the priceless wine,
The essence flies with what ye deem the dregs!
The jewel's blaze, less lustrous in the mine,
Commands, there, praise, which, capp'd on age, it begs:
One stroke of Nature, and of Truth outweighs
All similes and suits, bedizening lays.

But who knows Nature, Truth, Beauty divine,
(Three varying names of one unswerving Love),
Speechless will worship, and attend the trine:
The critic hawk shall own the stronger dove;
For, admiration glows with brighter flame,
Than but to light the judgment to his prey;
And it was ever Love's most glorious shame,
He could not analyze, nor mutter nay:
Enough, that beauty lives in clouds of colour,
In forest, ocean, mountain, forms and faces;
Why wrest these proofs, to hints and motes of dolour,
To impose some sense that shrouds what it defaces?
How vain is man, who deems his weak conceits
Of better worth than Nature's utmost heats.

There are, whose life, perch'd on a ledge of grief,
Scarcely can draw some comfort from its tears;
That thought probes not sensation, their relief,
Else how could Nature pant through such long years?
These may drink in the smile which Nature weaves
O'er all her sons alike, the proud, the poor;
They, oft, shall catch a solace from the sheaves
Of golden light, that pave heaven's evening floor;
Nature has own'd her children, as they have smil'd,
Rapt in the glancing fields, where ocean ripples,
And hush'd them, as some mother, to her child
Gently discloses her just budded nipples!
I think, long years, long woes, hard times, forgot,
They stand inspired, nor dream of their sad lot.

O ye, who furnish'd with hearts form'd of fire,
Can clasp no longer love within your arms;
Who, lost in a poor world of brick and mire,
Can find no breast to give the love which charms;
Who live to dream, what waking quite confounds;
Who, forced on self, loathe your own lives the while;
Who cannot hear your names, 'mid many sounds,
Or teach one heart to feel, one face to smile;
Mechanical action, which use steers, not thought,
And lifeless purpose, robb'd of seeming gains,
This is your lot: with how much rapture fraught,
Too well, I know, were Nature's slightest strains;
With what sweet voice Nature can soothe such woe,
And smile away such tears with evening's glow.

Where solitude makes music unto silence,
By forests arching over deep slow streams;
Or, where huge rocks guard oceans, giving high sense
Of gods in-dwelling through immortal dreams;
There stands a shadow, beckoning to the insight,
Of a world, far vaster, fuller, more intense,
It sweeps away the cobwebs of our dim sight;
The pigmy world dwindles near shapes immense:
'Tis then, that voice, passion, shape, action, thought,
Lose all the colours caught from phantom life;
And all is given, that even presumption sought;
And there is peace, without the bubble strife:
'Tis but a moment we may blissful be;
Soon grate the irons that mind us we're not free.

Who that has felt such joy would dare intrude
His heart's best love into such quiet scene?
Who would not rather stifle thought's sick brood,
And gag the monitor of existence lean?
For this is the well-spring, whence love must draw
The food to stuff those shapes, on which it doats;
And henceforth, kindlier, pity Nature's flaw,
Dazzling with lustre all her gloom of motes:
'Tis here the bosom of Existence heaves;
Man feels its swell, which lifts him to more bliss;
He feels the heaven of its warm breath, which leaves
The rapture of young Love's ideal kiss:
And he is calm, in depth of sweet repose,
In Nature lives, to Nature's bosom grows.

And this is life, and here existence beats
With too swift cadence for the mind, poor sloth;
And here, the inquisitive soul all dumbly seeks
The quick transplantings of an earlier growth;
And the vision of the world fades from before him,
And hopes, and fears grow blind, looking on light;
Man reaps the only harvest that can store him
For each emergence of the monstrous night:
O heaven! that this too dies, leaves us o'erweighed
By the gathered volume of defeated woe;
That grief should still be furthered, not delayed,
By joy that makes it heavier, though more slow:
Dark swells the wave, big with his comrade's might,
Barks stemm'd the first, all own the latter's right.

O paltry jingle to a coined note!
Words that ape thought, and thought that soils the soul;
With what a tide of emptiness ye float,
On the heart's music, ye can ne'er control!
The sieve of words holds not the element's sense;
The thought is the poor highway to the heart;
How should man's tongue hold heaven in its pretence?
How should one road contain the city's mart?
The pipings of a mind, vex'd, half distraught,
Are but as signs, of what their speech should be;
They can but show what happier moments sought;
What gilds the Future's blank satiety;
'Tis the one only tone that echo gives;
The music dying, death in music lives.

But, these are flowers of spring, grafted on winter;
Sounds, gently opening, that grow sudden harsh;
In darkness, light's most momentary splinter;
The sometime flicker, dancing o'er the marsh.
Such visions deaden life, or else exalt:
They will not rest, they lead to Heaven or Hell,
Now charm to happiness' more stern assault,
Now bid man sink, and more despairing dwell:
Pure vistas open, in long lanes of light,
Building reflections, mirror-like, from their forms,
And lovely angels beckon the entranc'd sight;
Too oft, alas! they're lost in life's strange storms:
Let those buds nestle amid memory's weeds,
They'll dart their purpose, quickening life's faint seeds.

The world was young, when some Prometheus came
And snatch'd the kernel action from repose;
His flaming ministrations crown'd his name,
Earth throb'd his glory in her godlike throes;
And immortal words have rounded, since, the soul
With love, whose sufferance is keen to act;
But some seek suffering, scorning action's goal,
Disjoining love, from what lifts love to fact.
Far other, taught love's founder, and love's lord;
Far other, mighty shades have since decreed;
They would not linger by the deep'ning ford,
They plunged, they fought, and victors now proceed:
Two notes of music blended in one tone;
Rich various colours form'd their pure white zone.

For Love, without her son, is a weak fool,
The faltering treble of a school-girl's thought;
She whimpers, daunted, for 'tis hot or cool,
Or that's there less, or more, than what she sought;
Commatural bliss lives only when they join,
And, hand in hand, pace o'er the conquered lands;
One bides the occasion, stamps the current coin;
The other's power sows blessings o'er the strands:
She is more weak, more lovely, and more mild;
And he more beautiful, more strong, more calm;
Earth almost blossomed, when just now she smiled;
But earth cried out for joy, feeling his balm:
Divorced, one's weakness lends the other fuel;
The more love yields, the more is action cruel.

CIII.

But, borrowing aid of Nature, to upsoar,
And steer thy purpose, resolution-winged;
This, is to leave these suburbs for the shore,
Where Nature's movements slide, noiselessly hinged;
The passive puppet, cooped in his poor self,
Foregoes the scope of his divinity;
Thinking he wields a little power or pelf,
And knows not, sees not, power's sublimity:
Even, while living, such shall tamely die,
And, uncomplaining, reap their perished seeds:
But, holier, thou, stifle another's sigh,
And steal whose sorrow disappoints his deeds:
Then shall the dark confirm the intenser light;
And the world's woe but make the world more bright.

Who hath not bless'd the woods, that gave the breeze,
Freshening the city from his summer cheek?
Who hath not trembled to the quivering leaves,
Wondering such music thus was left to seek?
And thus, the hubbub left of wandering words,
My steed returns along the well-known road;
He knows his home by music of no birds,
Though by instinct of as harmonious load;
For, there, thy voice laughs fantasies away,
Showing the earnest of my fancy's dream;
And, there, thy love has traced the lively way,
Whose signs, but thought on, indistinctly gleam:
I turn to thee, and soon forget all fears;
Swerves not my skiff, when such strong pilot steers.

Ye pleasant days, companions to young joy,
E'er self and sorrow had born agony;
When grief, wreathed in romance, looked slyly coy,
And wedded bliss, nor thought it felony;
My only sorrow, we for hours might part;
My often solace, we for years must meet;
Sweet expectation filled up yearning's smart;
While memory thought not stale the oft-tasted treat:
I've learned those brooks were sparkling all with sunshine,
Though they seem'd stern, dividing life from life;
Could I these mazes thread so swift, and untwine,
How keen an edge were given to Time's dull knife.
Joy steals from abhorred evil his enhancement,
His proud foot spurns the neck, that aids advancement.

There are, who build great domes sparkling with wealth,
Whose wretched pride mounts with palatial walls;
Some, yet more mean, hold riches for their health,
And tire their laded ships and creaking stalls;
Some bend their foolish steps to lofty place,
Cringe, fawn, and hope—to be despised, forgot;
These wisely think, by flattery of the base,
To help their high-placed frames, e'er low they rot:
And, others scorn the world, and serve for hire
A self-erected Heaven, whither they'd soar;
They feed on such vile thoughts, nor know the mire,—
Heaven their sole aim, and Hell sin's only flaw:
More noble, some live by ambition's shrine;
To ponder on thy worth, is only mine.

'Tis a great aim, this will to wander lonely,
This high ambition, gnawing its heart's core,
To scorn this life, and live thy dying only,
Along the years that hear thy words no more:
'Tis great, to burst the web that stays thy hand,
Stern to rush on, nor pause, nor look, nor hear;
To escape mute love's imploring glance and band;
To feel intensely, yet to shed no tear;
As one who swims, fights with wave-baffling arms,
Wrestling with the roaring, wracking, whistling waters,
So, too, resistless urge thy way through harms,
Nor swerve for earth, her sons, or charming daughters:
All this seems great, yet I would rather rest
My troubled fancies in thy loving breast.

For, even there translucent thought's deep roll,
There the slight foam but beautifies the blue,
O let me write my name along that scroll,
That mirror, varying to a lovelier hue!
Thou, like the cold world, will not e'er forget;
When thou must die, my fame shall wither too;
For what were laurels when with weeping wet?
Though fame be lost, yet love shall fly with you;
Yet nought shall perish; for one thought of thine
Hath breath'd eternity through these slight lays;
And I can dare the world's poor scornful whine
To spoil the smoothness of thy perfect praise:
I know these strains are weak, yet love them still,
Their blind obedience only owns thy will.

Fame, slowly staggering, toils up hard ascents,
The summit reached, she beckons, proudly poised;
Life struggles out through inapparent vents;
Fame's former glory is less loudly noised:
Death calls, and fame revives, then sudden dies,
Or, smouldering, stinks along the restless years;
Life's various hoard, fed by such quick supplies,
Heeds not the fanes of bygone mirth or tears;
The years, that build the shadows, make them dim;
The busy world's scarce conscious of itself;
Already toying on oblivion's brim,
It prays for heirs to waste much useless pelf.
Who have not time to assure their own weak ways,
How should they pause o'er their ancestors' praise?

But, the spirit, enamoured of immortal Beauty,
He will not serve on fame's light grudging meed;
His grateful labour, merg'd in sublime duty,
Seeks, in creation, harvest of its seed;
Beauty is his dear Lord, he loves to owe,
And grows more rich by payment; he will toil,
And watch his offspring, as they grander grow,
Outdoing Nature in their beauteous coil.
And all alone he feels, yet is not sad,
For She, the inspirer of all hearts, is near;
And Nature's fondness makes her son look glad,
And will not, wholly, let his heart grow sear.
The artificer of the Changeless grows not tired,
He is well paid, nor cares to be admired.

Ye spirits, whose soaring vivified your plumes;
Whose godlike names swell man's adoring breath;
Whose glory, time, nor space, nor hate consumes;
Ministers of love, whose virtue conquers death;
Such love of Beauty for its own dear sake,
Resident in the soul, the mind, the form,
Only could inspire what ye dared undertake,
And bear ye, conquerors, through the mist and storm:
Great humanisers of the world, fusing your merit
Through the inattentive cycles of the years;
Most know not the profusion they inherit,
So hath your spirit impregnated men's tears:
Severing what Gordian knots of mysteries,
Love echoes Christ, Spinoza, Socrates!

Now all in Heaven is tranquil; peeps one cleft
Of silver splendour; mark! an angel stands there,
And breathes his bubble, as fresh childhood deft;
Blushing into life, the concave pays his care,
And purple melts to gold; the scarce white cloud
Mantles the mines that make such depth of blue,
And the delicate ripple tingles to that shroud,
Consorting music with its late-found hue,
Such is religion:—immanent in the altars
That the pure heart prostrates at Beauty's shrine,
In ceremonies, poms, and forms it falters;
But rapt at Nature, stands confessed divine:
Offspring of Joy and Love, religion wings
The adoration of the heart's mute strings.

Hail! holy triumph of time-chastened piles;
Your lofty music thrills along the soul;
Welcome! the sunbeams, glistening through your aisles,
Tinging their gold with history's coloured roll:
Young voices move your melodies, young limbs
White-robèd, pluck the buds of innocence.
Mild silver beckons to the light which swims
Evolved through darkness, fashioning forms for sense.
But I love best, when faith moves dreary self,
Toppling its pride and pedestal to the ground;
Most then in Being lose the world, that elf,
Harbouring their errors in a happier sound:
What matters whether Heaven exist or no?
Their prayers find Heaven, or lose the sense of woe.

I knew a man, whose heart could find no home,
Whose very fulness but provoked his dearth;
He was too proud to show how he could moan,
Most thought him cold, few understood his worth;
But closeted feelings bring forth bitter fruit;
And solitude preys on love, making it mad;
Hearts throb more genial, even to a worthless suit,
Than when experience answers, all is sad:
He hath grasp'd sometimes at the empty air,
Parcelling it out to visions of his mind;
Deifying some idea, he's call'd it fair;
Alas! he could not long continue blind:
Who's separate from his fellows may live great;
Yet fate decrees he'll curse his empty state.

And he had doubts, aye, I have heard him cry
To the wild winds, bidding them stay awhile;
He sought the substance of the beauty shy,
That lurk'd in ocean, kiss'd by summer's smile;
And he hath called unto the ghastly dark,
Gasping for breath, and panting for the light:
He long'd for life, but phantoms steer'd his bark,
Lengthening his voyage with a tedious freight;
O he could understand all that seem'd sad,
And claim'd a kindred with deserted hope!
Life, too indulgent, show'd him all she had,
He scorned her earnest, would not trust her scope:
He asked nor sympathy, nor aid, nor pity;
Where should he seek them? not in field or city.

But had his happy hope chanc'd to alight
By the full river of thy thought's sweet flow!
O then, my love, how couch'd had been his sight!
How had his mind been purged from all its woe!
Thy hand should only lead him to the hill,
That beckons daylight o'er its far blue waves;
Thy thought should but subdue his stubborn will;
Soon he were master of poor hope's dim graves!
The presence of the God, that weaves the world,
Transfusing beauty till it higher grows;
The God of love, should still those storms that whirl'd
Such petty streamlets into deadlier flows:
But ah! the hand that only knows to mend,
How oft it fails unconscious whom to tend.

Child of a day, and changeling of an hour!
Man, feeblest tuning of love's scarce-heard pipe;
The abyss, that voids despair, burns to deflower
With death thy hopes, with time thy thoughts unripe.
Yet know, rejoice, 'tis Nature guides the change;
Joy, beauty, truth, wing her transparent feet:
No toy thou art, nor left to lonely range;
Reward grows stronger from its oft defeat:
Whate'er thy utmost joy can comprehend;
What godlike beauty hath once thrill'd thy soul;
What love has ever stamp'd truth as his end:
Such joy, beauty, truth, love, are Nature's goal:
Shall Nature gladden only to deceive?
Should man the atom more than God conceive?

The echoes, from the ruins of the Past,
Steal o'er our ears, sphering a heavenly isle;
Haply deceptive, yet we'll there make fast,
Wreathing the skeleton world in childhood's smile:
For who can build, when woods and quarries fail?
Or who can fathom the dark monster deep?
How shall the bud be rear'd from storm and hail?
Which drug and stun the Present, till it sleep:
Yet sift the grains, dissevering hope from fear,
For one least seed shall shame whole worlds of drought;
Brightens the prospect, when beheld more near;
Love trims the flights, that scorn knows but to flout:
The search may fail, yet seeking bears its crown,
And joy's least treasure smooths the world's worst frown.

O Eden of our childhood, Innocence!
How did thy ardour paint the ugly world;
Making it amiable, void of all pretence;
With roses garlanded with dew be-pearl'd
The world's not chang'd, 'tis only thou, art gone;
The music's wanting to the quick-breathing shell;
The aroma fails where it hath dwelt so long;
The flash divine is dead, or fades to Hell;
But, thou wast gentle, calm, silent, and strong;
A truth, too real, to be here conceiv'd:
And we are parted,—be it not for long,
That thou art somewhere, may be well believed.
O let me find thee; if frail life forbid,
In the universe of thee, let life be hid.

To see great minds baffling an evil fate,
Delights, and urges on to emulous deeds;
Yet, seems it only Nature's tricksome state,
Defeating self, by livelier-quickening seeds;
The mind conquers base thoughts by its own power,
Then thinks it much, that its true self prevails;
Yet Nature tempers all things, even the flower
That stoops to winter, or that scorns his flails;
But, when young, godlike innocence arises,
He will not flinch, nor shudder, nor conspire;
His perfect purpose shatters faint surmises,
And brightly burns, ascending ever higher:
Conquered, at length, by his too great devotion,
He learns he lives in nought, and kills emotion.

There seem'd to burst upon my flooded sight
A globe of lustre, an enormous sun;
It swallow'd, in the majesty of its might,
The whole vast concave, where the eye can run:
I stood, I know not where, marking it glide
With stealthy swiftness on its axle, round;
And there were forms, frown'd lurid on its side,
Their names were on their brows, there was no sound:
The orb had blazon'd, Change, on each proud flank,
And pass'd its order'd puppets in review;
First, Death rose ghastly, then as sudden sank,
Conquered by Woe, of sullen haggard hue:
Despair and Hope, Love, Youth, Fear, Friendship, Hate,
Tears, Laughter, Beauty, Age grew link'd in fate.

Vision unwelcome, of familiar things,
Why force, I cried, your fantasies on my mind?
Your aspect shadows gloom with fouler wings;
Could I some refuge from your varying find!
I look'd, and, eminent, o'er that ghastly round,
And, quite diffusive, through its sad precincts,
Uncertain shapings based on steadfast ground,
The light of myriad suns made dark those tints:
Transfixed, I stand, inhaling joy and wonder;
Then nearer gaze, that effluence divine
Stream'd ever on, and burst the pores asunder,
Whose ignorance scorn'd such treasure for their mine:
When uncongenial homes rebuked that power,
Its lightning flight bless'd some more grateful bower.

Such visions, poised upon entrancing notes,
May waft some waif toward congenial ports;
Poised on the wind, ineffable music floats,
In the enchantress face holding her courts;
In the harmonious pants of drunken joy;
In the traitorous interchange of random vows;
In the commutual wave of forest boughs;
In thought, whose arbitrary response wakes,
Fashioning the melody to peculiar laws;
In passion, surging, by its own quick shakes,
Wresting aside the unapprehensive cause;
Swift-winged ideas waft her from her throne;
Music scarce knows the offspring for her own.

Thou starting-place to a goal yet undefined;
Thou limit clasp'd in no circumference;
Thou tell-tale, in a castle undermined;
Strange tongue, of an uncertain prescience;
Foundation-stone supporting piles of thought;
Thou, Proteus, differing in a self-same soul;
Discoverer of joy, with sorrow fraught;
Thou lively fire, flung from the sullen coal;
The sacred marble shows but one indent
Of penitential kisses, thousandfold,
Yet towers memorial, of sad pilgrims spent,
Of pomps, of pride, of broken hearts and gold:
Like frescoes, born in marble, from one sound,
Lo! multitudinous living shapes abound.

Tangle some notes beneath the prisoner's bars,
Some simple music he may recognise;
He is not querulous, that it haply jars,
Nor twists its turns to meanings shrewdly-wise;
His heart shall leap aloft, and shout " 'tis mine;"
Sorrow and hope, repentance, love, joy, tears,
Shall hail that melody's unforgotten chime:
What matter that the crowd without the walls
Are jocund to the music of its mirth?
That the voluptuous dance, through lordly halls,
Sweeps by the eyes that sparkle to its birth?
One dreams to it, while one dances, one is sad.
Omnipotent music thou mak'st all men mad.

But thou, whose breath, the music of my life,
Murmurs its sweetness, never uninhaled;
Now, the last time, glance o'er my spirit's strife,
The bliss, whose close must be so soon bewailed.
I must depart, and think those hours were bless'd,
Long since, so pregnant of departing joy,
And wonder at the earth, I lightly press'd,
Nor knew what reverence it should once enjoy:
The crescent of thy spring shall flower as brightly
As though mine eyes stood sentinels o'er its growth;
And thou shall carol on thy pathway lightly,
Transplanting summer into winter wroth.
I'll ponder still, where'er adversely hurled,
Thy words, which marr'd the change which makes the world.

The voice that charm'd my sorrows knows me not,
The smile that made my life wakes not for me,
Haply such musings shall disown the spot,
That once looked lovely but through light of thee;
Shall anguish curse the unremembering stones,
For that they build no ruinous epitaph?
Or weave still living voices to new groans,
And match with sighs the people's hollow laugh?
No; rather consecrate thy once abode,
The birth-place, and the altar of love's prime;
Aye, steal my spirit from beneath its load,
Revisiting the haunts of fairy time:
The shadows of thy steps must leave the impress,
Shall drink the dew, token of bitterness.

I seem'd so rich, with promise of the Future,
I stand so desolate, calling to the Past,
The Present mocks the yet unfashion'd suture;
A gloom there is o'er all the landskip cast:
Why should brief joy shadow such length of woes?
Why should the sweet taste sourly to the sense?
The diamond yet within the casket glows,
Why should its brilliance fright my fancy hence?
I would all pain and pleasure were forgot:
My ineffectual thought giddies with hope;
Relief with blotted joys were dearly got;
Bliss, vacillating, sails in such strait scope:
My mind knows not its thoughts; they storm and veer;
Time, draw some comfort from the Present's fear.

And, shall it be, that who have stol'n ambrosia,
From the aerial palaces of the gods,
Or, like faint flowers, flush'd to the morning rosier,
Touch'd by the mesmerism of the sunbeams' rods—
Shall such commend their spring to dungeon walls,
Catching no comfort from the dull reflex,
Responsive, breathe to no melodious calls?
But feed on hope, insidious to perplex.
How doubly dark frowns the removed cold spot,
Lumber'd with shadows from the journeying sun;
How trebly cursed, that unpropitious lot,
Whose scale descends from whence its joys begun:
And such is mine, whose starting-point was bliss;
Yet all life's rounds but lead me more amiss.

I must depart, and others shall crowd up
The empty room it was my pride to fill;
And other votaries shall attempt the cup,
Whose crystal lends a flavour, sparkling still;
But, sometimes, thus my heart with transport speaks
Sometimes, my name shall flash along thy thought;
Thy heart shall own the spell and pale thy cheeks,
And give one sigh, from joy, or sorrow bought:
I ask not grief; nay, rather joyous weave
A dear recess, luminous with fancy's rays;
There, let my captured heart delight, not grieve
Thy attentive sequence, through dim memory's maze:
Joy leads remembrance wistfully through the years;
Give me but love, I ask no weed of tears.

Let me not grieve, though blasting blight my days;
Let me not, with harsh cadence, crash the sound;
Let me not smear this fond record of praise,
Nor pause on sorrow's inharmonious round;
Nay, let me capture joy, and, rashly-glad,
Bend bliss reluctant to my craving sense;
But, softening, soon, I'll grow more lonely-sad,
Beckoning Content to chase those phantoms hence:
With velvet tread, lynx eye, he steals along,
Dreading the indent of some half-healed mishap;
Then, gathering courage, treads with step more strong,
And probes the withered trunk's neglected sap:
He threads the weeded Past, without annoy;
And boasts, at length, from pain a new-found joy.

A thousand dumb-voiced stars beseech our eyes
And lend a magic to the lonely night;
True world-historians of all hopes and sighs,
Might we but spell their story from your light.
Loves, hopes, philosophies, religions, powers,
Feed on themselves, quickened by their own fall:
And years but mock at years, and hours at hours,
Processions furnish soon their grandeur's pall:
Even now ye gaze on hopes, that live in death,
On many a various god of wealth or pride,
On schemes, fated to fail, on learning's breath,
Soon choked by dust, or blown by truth aside:
Ambition, strong to live, must feel decay;
What shall not fade? can priests or sages say?

Hark! what a voice comes crying through the night,
How does it thrill my too obsequious ears!
"O God, that knowledge should be wisdom hight,
And men should broadcast sow big-bellied years:"
Should a strong spirit descend, and wave his wand,
And gaze, and breathe inventions into life;
And fit all systems, with his dexterous hand,
Into a social perfectness from strife,—
'Twere much; and goodly heaven-descended Peace
Should sprout her blossoms, beautiful, o'er the land:
I question yet, if jars should wholly cease,
Or hatreds yield their once-accomplished stand:
An automaton world may merchandise, weave, spin;
Riches shall swell, not harmonise, its din.

Nay let your flight, Dædalean, touch far shores,
The utmost horizon where discovery tends!
Let Riches lavish their luxuriant stores,
Till Poverty gapes, wanting her wonted friends;
Let Rule, accomplished by adjustment's mean,
Tune his mild precepts to benevolence;
Let knowledge thirst, and universal seem,
Say what, say wherefore, whither, and say whence;
Let ignorance crown with pride presumption's vaunt,
And fruitless pages garner stores of praise;
Let social systems, smoothly-gliding, haunt
The wheels of state, whose barter smooths their ways:
Yet riches are life's condiment, not life;
Peace is not love, but absence from the strife.

The earth is hoar with many a thousand years,
And many a nation's mute observance hung
On brighter ministers than woman's tears,
Immutable still, as when their course begun;
Once large luxuriance fostered giant forms,
Huge sepulchres contain their trampled pride;
Nature, or glutted, or transposed by storms,
Invites man sail o'er Being's former tide:
Without one tear those calm, clear worlds looked down,
And haply smile at mortals' eagerness;
They seem to murmur, grasp your bauble crown,
Scan not too near your treasure's meagreness:
All changes; but one essence guides the change,
Involved, immortal, it must onward range.

Types of the volume where all secrets lie,
Who hath not made ye confidants of woe?
Whom have ye cheer'd not, beckoning from on high,
Watched at their birth, and flash'd on death your glow?
Witnesses to my woes, my thoughts, my sins,
Attest, that sometimes I have conquered grief;
If I have known what loss fulfilment wins,
And yet striven on, then yield me some relief:
Thou, blue escutcheon, on which worlds have painted
The symbol, truth, hard for poor man to read;
If I have lonely storm'd content, nor fainted,
Nourish some flower from this uncertain seed:
Though great my sins, not less my griefs have been,
Bear witness, Truth, high arbitress and queen.

When man sinks awed, watching a myriad globes,
How shrunk his purpose and his works appear!
All his achievement ne'er can weave such robes;
He can but gaze, despair confounds his fear:
Yet there's a link that binds weak man to God,
And earth hath heavens as bright as all those stars;
Beauty, ever-living, need but inspire the sod,
And, lo! the substance of those golden cars.
Spirit of Beauty, quicken, purge my soul;
Raise it more near the substance of thy form;
Then, mounting gradual, I shall reach the goal,
Where individual life's no longer warm;
Where Beauty in itself transpicuous shines,
And, universal, dazzles life's dim mines.

I cease, and bid farewell to who hath swayed,
This tribute's mite of unmelodious verse;
With many a billow my bark's idly play'd,
My thoughts enamoured but of thee, their hearse;
And think not, though life drags a tedious chain,
And all it offers, shows on trial nought,
Believe not, I will sorrow, or complain;
Hast thou not stored all summer in my thought?
And, watching the bright heavens, or the glad ocean,
I'll think thou look'st, and they repeat thy smile;
Nor shall life's utmost favour of commotion
Bid homage spurn my Sovereign from love's isle:
To live in mortal's mouths, be others' aim;
To dwell within thy heart, my only claim.

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