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VNiVERSITAS
STVDII
SALAMANTIINI



THE FUGITIVE
AND OTHER POEMS.

BY
W. E. HEYGATE, M.A.

RECTOR OF BRIGHSTONE.

London:

W. SKEFFINGTON & SON, 163 PICCADILLY, W.

[NP]

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CORRIGENDA.

Page 66, line 6 from bottom *for* "Phoenician" *read* "Phæacian."

Page 75, last line but three, *for* "lovely mother" *read* "lovelier mother."

[1]

THE FUGITIVE,
And other Poems.

CLASS I— GENERAL.

POETASTER

WHAT is the use of writing, when the land
 Buzzes with voices, as the summer sky-
Rings with the bees, who quit their burning sand,
 And o'er our heads in tuneful motion fly?

What is the use of writing? Age on age
 Piles up its store of volumes little read.
Why should my words a passing thought engage.
 Before the mighty and neglected dead?

[2]

The pebbles on the shore like jewels shine
 As each wave leaves them sparkling in the spray:
Then show they dull and poor: and so with mine,
 The freshness gone, their interest fades away.

All are not fair whom they that love adore.
 Else were all lovers beauteous, and the face
Of every child angelic: hence no more

Thyself amid the poets vainly place.

Few are the gems upon the stony beach:

Few are the fair: the gifted fewer still.

Then wherefore pluck at flowers beyond thy reach?

And wherefore take thy proper failure ill?

Yet will some speak, though no man pause to hear;

E'en as they breathe and walk. It must be so:

It is their nature: and though none be near,

They sing; as sailless streams persist to flow.

There is a secret current in their breast;

A force which moves, a fire which burns within.

Silent they pine; but singing find a rest,

Though fame and love they may not hope to win.

[3]

And though there be so many bards whose lyres

Surpass their own, yet in the seashore grove,

When Philomel herself the air inspires,

Not less the simple linnet sings her love:

And though the vast Pacific teems with isles,

Not less the coral insects work unseen,

Until another reef at sunset smiles.

And, palm by palm, arrays itself in green.

THE FUGITIVE.

“When will doubt and sorrow cease?

Is my only refuge death?

Must I draw my latest breath,

Ere I sigh my latest sigh?

Is my only hope to die?

Death my only road to peace?”

[4]

“Peace,” the Echo straight replied

From the vale’s alternate side,

“Peace — Peace — Peace” — Her head she raised.

And softly answered, “God be praised.”

But doubting soon, she wildly cried,

“Oh tell me by His love who died,

Tell me, tell me, When and Where?”

Flowed her tears, and streamed her hair,

Echo answering, “When and Where?”

And dying away in the moan of the air.

II.

It was a vale of mountainous rock,

The yawning rent of an earthquake shock,

Crag upon crag, and block upon block;

As black and as drear

As a night of fear.

Nor shrub was there, nor stunted tree.

All was desolate as could be.

A slender streamlet ran below,

But nought appeared its course to show;

Nor fern, nor rush, nor tufted grass.

[5]

By the sound, and sound alone,
Rippling, gurgling, stone by stone,
Are its scanty waters known,
Leaving no blessing, as they pass.
Mass upon mass, and height over height,
Chilled the warm noon into cold twilight.
You could scarcely see the straight-winged kite.,
Glancing across that awful ravine,
Nor count the stars on a frosty night,
Its walls between.

III.

Raising her head, the Lady looked round,
Vainly hoping for sigh or for sound:
But for the streamlet, and but for her breath,
All the dark valley was silent as death.
She covered her bosom which sought the cool air:
She girded her tunic, and bound up her hair;
Turned her aside from the frowning mass
Which blocked the path where she wished to pass,
And with the streamlet sought the sea,
Since no escape by land might be.

[6]

But the tide had arisen since she left,
And of her sole hope the Lady bereft.
The little bark which had brought her there,
As a pearly shell so slight and fair,
Caught here by a breath, lurched there by a wave,

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No sailor to watch, nor anchor to save,
Danced awhile o'er the reef on the lee;
Then cleared the breakers, and drove out to sea.
The Lady saw, but no more she said,
On cold hands she leaned a burning head,
And silent sat till the sea-birds came,
Lighting around as doves which are tame:
And when she moved, so noiseless and slow
The bend of her neck, they did not go;
But perched, or soared, or wheeled around,
Mingling their scream with Ocean's sound,
Who dashed his rising waves at her feet,
Black in their breasts, but their heads like sleet,
Say, was that scene more sad, or more sweet?

[7]

IV.

The Lady observed what she marked not before.
When driving her bark on that desolate shore.
A precipitous rock rose up from the deep:
Its sole slanting side was broken and steep;
But on the sea-board there was but one face,
Sheer up, sheer down; not a ledge, nor a place
For the smallest of sea-fowl to use as a nest.
It frowned on the East, and scowled on the West.
You would shudder before it, but never could weep;
No, not though your shipwrecked beneath it should sleep.
Stem and still though the breakers roared;
Stern and still though the torrents poured;
Stern and still in the morn's sweet ray;
Stem at the birth and death of day;
It seemed to arise from abysses of night,

The image of pitiless physical Might.

On her spell-bound eyes the giant mass loomed,

And gazing the Lady felt utterly doomed.

She could not shake off, what she could not explain,

The dim horror with which she struggled in vain.

[8]

Over-weighted and over-wrought,

Losing power o'er limb and o'er thought,

"If reason," she cried, "these temples have left,

Then am I in all of all bereft."

And she sought a lone cave wherein to lie,

And sleep that sleep, to sleep which is to die,

When spell-bound again she looked at the sky.

v.

The Sun was lingering in the West,

Like a king in his crimson vest;

On the brink of sea, and the brink of night,

Pausing, as loth to say Farewell,

With deeper love than words can tell;

Dispensing his parting largess of light,

For grateful mists to embrace and enfold

In their bosoms of purple and bosoms of gold,

Clear spaces between

Of blue or of green;

With golden words let him paint it who may,

And burnish his tale with the Sun's own ray.

[9]

VI.

The Lady gazed, and smiled again,
The smile which cometh after pain,
And said, "I have not suffered in vain.
Behold a place where sorrows cease,
A refuge sure, a land of peace.
My 'When!' my 'Where!'
Is now, is there.
Beyond this world, and beyond my sight,
If not full day, it cannot be night.
To be with Christ is to dwell in light.
To that sweet home
There cannot come
Scorching anger or freezing pride;
A broken heart may safely hide.
I prayed for Peace, asked When and Where?
Behold my answer, 'Now and There.' "

[10]

VII.

She sought a cave wherein to lie,
A place to sleep, a place to die;
And first she prayed for her cruel foes,
Then blessed God's name for her toils and woes:
Crossed her hands upon her breast;
Softly laid her down to rest;
Nor rose again when the Sun arose,
Nor heard the sea as it shoreward flows,
Nor in the rock, so bleak and bare,
Felt the chill of the morning air.

VIII.

The boat was found, and the word was brought
To her brothers three, who roamed and sought,
By sea and by land,
On rock and on sand.

They searched the vale, but they could not find:
For pride and anger had made them blind.
Years passed away, and then they knew
Their ancient servant's words were true;

[11]

An Angel had lived in a demon's cave,
Had sought to melt them, and toiled to save;
But a fearful flight and a lonely grave
Were the sole reward of prayers and of tears,
And the patient love of heart-breaking years.
She could live with those devils, their rage endure;
Because they were brothers she loved them still:
But to yield up herself so tender and pure
To their blood-stained friend at their tyrant will,
She would not. She could not. She fled and she died,
And a resting-place found in the rock's hollow side.

IX.

By the memories of the dead;
By a father's life-blood shed
On Tiberias' fatal field,
Sooner than the true Cross yield;
By their saintly mother's love,
Fears beneath, and hopes above;
By the Rood, and the Holy Maid,

She ceaseless begged, and wildly prayed.

[12]

O Heaven! It was a most piteous sight,
In the Castle Chapel both day and night,
She wept alone,
On icy stone,
And made her moan.
None to advise. The Priest was dead.
No psalm was sung, nor office said.
On the stone floor she made her bed,
Sleepy with sorrow, and laid her head
On the altar step; and thus she slept,
Where she had prayed, and as she had wept.
But at last the dreaded day drew nigh;
No choice but this, to yield or to fly.
She looked her last look at her mother's room,
She hung her last garland above her tomb,
Crossed her bosom, and prayed Farewell,
E'en for those slumbering hounds of Hell.

X.

Alone her venturous sail she set,
Dankly flagging, with night dews wet.
Alone upon the boundless sea,
She breathed deep breaths, as free as free;

[13]

And steered for St. Agnes' holy shrine,
To live and die in a peace divine.

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But hidden currents with merciless force
Drove the poor fugitive out of her course.
Cold was the night, and scorching the day,
The maiden's strength wore slowly away.
Night closed again, her languid ear
Caught the moan of the breakers near.
But rocks on the left, and rocks on the right,
As a mountainous wall, frowned grim on the night.
One cleft appeared with its shining sand,
And she steered the boat right in for land;
Though it well-nigh wrenched the helm from her hand.
It was the mouth of that dread ravine,
Height upon height, with a gorge between.
That patch of sand, so pearly white,
Gleaming like lightning on the night,
Was like a false smile
Which charms to beguile;
For it shone like Spring between walls of ice,
Or an opening gate into Paradise.
You would have looked for a valley of green,
With flowers, and bowers, and silvery sheen;

[14]

Not bleak barren crags with a portal of stone,
A dungeon to starve in, and moulder unknown.

XI.

Many a ripple has ruffled the sand,
Many a billow has broke on the rock;
Dashing in wildly with shock upon shock:
Many a fragment thus hurled on the strand,
Tossed and rolled with a grating and suffering sound,

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Shines like Jove's marble bolts, so polished and round.

Year after year, and ages on ages,

Slumbers the calm, the wild tempest rages.

But changeless the scene,

Is, shall be, as hath been,

Till the flashes of Doom

Shall break in on the gloom.

XII.

Here standing this day amid the rough stones

We distinguish and gaze on the Fugitive's bones.

The circlet of gold

Once wont to enfold

[15]

Her deep falling hair.

The brooch, too, is there,

Which fastened her vest

On that agonized breast,

Which long hath found rest.

Often and often the evening sun

Has looked on those rocks ere his full course was run;

But never has seen, and never shall see,

For never has been, nor ever shall be,

A vision so sad, and a vision so sweet,

In which trouble and peace did so blessedly meet.

In vain hath he looked; he never may see

What has not been since, nor ever shall be,

A lady so sad, and a lady so sweet,

The white-shining sea-birds asleep at her feet;

Like a pearl upon jet, or a star 'mid the night,

Who followed the Sun to the home of his light.

[16]

THE SOCIALIST.

THE world is rotten. Moneyed men oppress
The helpless poor, and prate of their distress
As a necessity; and say 'tis fit
They to their lot should patiently submit.

They pew the churches, and the commons seize,
And flout the rights of manhood as they please.

Go and compare the castle with the cot,

The merchant's luxury with the hireling's lot;

The West-end mansion with the crowded lane,

Where stifled hundreds pant for air in vain.

Did He who made the world elect a few,

And give His earth, and man himself, to you,

Ye pampered sons of pleasure and of gold,

Who in your grasping hands the country hold?

If this be law; if order lead to this,

Then bloody Revolution would be bliss:

Then let the tempest burst, and break, and bum,

And this deceitful calm to chaos turn.

[17]

Pluck from their oily pulpits those who preach,

And bid them try the patience which they teach.

Divide the land, disperse the banker's gold,

Let fresh men try the law "They own who hold."

My soul is hot within me. — By these hands,

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I burn to rend and break the tyrant's bands.
Fain would I gnaw, as hungry dogs a bone,
And grind each fort and castle stone by stone;
Would make once more the many rule the few,
And build society itself anew.

Thus did I chafe and foam, but all in vain;
And ill at heart with self-consuming pain,
And hopeless of reform, I chose a band
Of kindred souls to seek a distant land;
And full of hope our the crew sails unfurled,
To find or form elsewhere a better world.

Bright shone the sun, and softly blew the breeze,
As first we missed the shore, and then the trees:
Elate with hope the boundless future scanned,
And states of peace and freedom fondly planned.
Where'er we lived, however hard the soil,
Ours, ours alone would be the fruits of toil:

[18]

What perils and what pain soe'er should be,
This joy would still be ours, that we were Free.

Deep was the night, our thoughtless slumbers sound;
The long waves lulled us, as they played around;
When came the deafening crash and stunning shock,
As leaped our ship upon a sunken rock.
Hurled from our beds, we blindly groped about,
And from the cabin rushed like madmen out.
Once upon deck, we saw black mountain waves

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Sweep clinging comrades forth to watery graves.
Each for himself — and every man was free —
We nerved our arms against the threatening sea;
And some disused to prayer in that fell night
Asked for one gleam of long-expected light.
It came at last. — As far as eye could see.
One line of breakers roared beneath our lee.
They flashed and dashed and hurled the surf on high
In rainbow-light beneath the morning sky:
They hissed, and seethed, and roared, and tost amain
Each broken spar, and caught, and tost again.
But as the light which drew its silver thread
Through that dark prison-cave, where lay for dead

[19]

The hero of Messenia, cheered our eyes,
One narrow inlet to the lake which lies,
Strangely becalmed, — like virtue's tranquil soul
When the world raves and passion's thunders roll.
By this on raft and plank — for boat was none —
Through breakers and through sharks our way we won,
And landing 'neath the stunning heat of noon
Upon the sands of that serene lagoon,
Drank water from the pools, and careless laid,
Reposed from sheer exhaustion, in the shade.

It is a world-wide tale, how shipwrecked men
Rear tent and hut, or seek some rocky den
Of bats and birds; then from the cargo wrecked
Its drifted relics piece by piece collect;
Roam anxious round and through, from shore to shore

Their desert isle and ocean to explore.
Nor need I say what living things were found,
What fruits were furnished, or from tree or ground,
Nor what the chase supplied, nor what the spoil
Which Ocean yielded to the fisher's toil;
Suffice it to declare what Justice asks,
That stringent laws controlled our several tasks;

[20]

That each received his proper work assigned,
And strength and skill were duly classed in kind;
And I was King! —I, foe of every throne,
Necessity's stern law was forced to own:
Against my principles, despite my will,
Bound to decree, coerce, chastise the ill:
For some were idle; those who worked complained
If one man's sloth by others' labour gained:
And by degrees our little realm began
To show the marked divergences of man;
And wanted nought but greater means and time
To breed disorder and to gender crime;
For rich and poor in contrast side by side
Appeared; nor could our simple habits hide
The damning truth, that all my boasted schemes
Were theories alone, and baseless dreams;
That as the sucker from the bramble cleft
Grows like the parent stock which first it left,
So we who sought another world to find
Were but a part of that we left behind.

A sail! A sail! The signal soon was made;

Nor longer in our paradise we stayed,

[21]

Than to collect our scanty stores, and rear
A cross above the bones of comrades dear,
Who fell asleep, and sooner reached their home
Than we, although to native England come.

Not as I left my country I returned.
My bosom still with eager longings burned;
But reason was enlightened. Here I dwell
In smoke and noise and filth, yet count it well;
Though oft I miss the glossy palm-tree's shade,
And ocean sparkling through each opening glade,
And moaning in the corals. Here my strife
Is just to mitigate the ills of life;
To meet things as I find them; soothe the poor
And win the rich to ope the garret door,
By soft persuasion. So I feed and teach,
And try to give his righteous due to each;
Not to pull down, but build; and thus I wait,
Delivered from impatience, and from hate
Far, far removed; and lift my longing eyes
To that sole happy world beyond the skies.

[22]

THE PANSAND.

1868.

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[The Pansand, which lies in the Queen's Channel about ten miles out to sea from Reculver, received its name from the quantity of Roman pottery found on it. This has been dredged up for years by the Whitstable fishermen, and found in abundance. The *patera*, &c. are perfect, and have never been used. They evidently came there by shipwreck during the Roman occupation of Britain. This superior red ware, commonly called Samian, was imported from Italy. The maker's name upon the Pansand wares is that of Saturninus, or Histinus, or Crasisca, or Albucinus. The author has one piece in his possession now, and has given away several more beautiful specimens. The late E. B. Price, Esq., F.S.A., possessed a valuable collection.]

THESE were not found where buried villas lie,
Beneath a stratum of destruction kept,
Where years on years of verdure live and die,
Since Britain's queen her shame and torture wept,
Then in her car o'er smouldering cities swept.
Nor blow, nor use has marred their early grace;
But as in some weird dell, where men have slept

[23]

Age after age in their enchanted place,
Corroding lapse of time has left on them no trace.

Sharp and distinct I read Attilius' brand.
There Albucinus proudly stamps his name.
This boasts to come from Saturninus' hand.¹
Of old they sought and greatly prized such fame:
Now to be known or unknown is the same.
Ah, perishable freight! Ah, wares most frail!
Yet showing still both whence and how ye came.
When costly bronze and sculptured marble fail,
Ye still unbroken stand, and tell your simple tale.

The joyful Master steers by Richborough's towers:
His promised gains the anxious merchant tells:
But have their offerings soothed the Ocean powers?
For see the sail with gusts tempestuous swells,
And, like the echo of the Abbey bells,
Moans the approaching storm. Quick make your vow,
To him who from his votaries repels
All hurt; and to the Twin Gods suppliant bow.
And see if those in whom ye trust can hear you now.

¹Saturnini M. *i.e.* manu.

[24]

The cliffs of Thanet, erst serenely white,
Are now enshrouded by the drooping sky;
And death prepares a pall as black as night.
The waves alone are white, as coursing by
To where the breakers roar they madly fly.
Not wares your vaunted treasures now, but lives.
Vain is the master's shout, the sailor's cry:
Vainly to stem the strengthening tide she strives,
And on and on the ship unmanageable drives.

All down the line of endless dreary sand
The milky waters seethe, and hiss, and roar.
Oh thus to reach and not to reach the land!
This port, good merchant, will receive thy store;
And thou shalt never need to wander more.
She strikes! Again! again! Huge billows break
High o'er their heads, and hurl them on before.
Them and their gear the mocking sea-gods take,

And toss, and catch, and merry game of death they
make.

But when the sport is o'er and sleepy waves,
Ashamed and weary of their work, subside,

[25]

Along the British wayside he the graves, ¹
Deep dug in sand below the gurgling tide.
The masts and spars lie severed far and wide
By Cantium Cliff, or on Regubium beach.²
Some homeless still upon the waters ride,
Whilst the rich wares, where circling sea-birds screech,
Lie in the sand's embrace beyond the tempest's reach.

You burnished cups and vessels, long concealed,
The ever-shifting currents have upthrown,
And a forgotten tragedy revealed,
The ship, the freight, the wreck, each else unknown.
The ocean nations held you as their own,
And played around your lips, and drank the wine ³
Which Neptune loves to quaff: in them alone
The Polyp dwelt, whilst, infinitely fine,
Bright atoms grew and learned their shelly arms to twine.

Huge navies sailed above you: Saxon, Dane,
French, Spaniard, Dutch, and England's victor fleet;

¹ The Romans buried by their roadsides; and the Queen's
Channel is the course for large ships bound down.

² The North Foreland and Reculver.

³ Gall was offered to Neptune.

[26]

Of which no wake nor vestige doth remain.
Now, peaceful strangers in those waters meet,
Whom friendly lights amid the darkness greet: ¹
And o'er the slumbering calm or restless swell
Flash their great eyes with glances keen but sweet,
And welcome news to weary pilots tell,
As though upon the night re-echoed "All is well."

At last the patient fishers by their net

Restored your hidden beauties to the air,
And as ye stand, thus reverently set
Amid the treasures of the past, ye bear
Your witness of the days and men which were.
Ye ne'er subserved the Roman luxury,
But spiritual feasts most sweet and rare
Of solemn thought and knowledge still supply.
And wassail from the" dead to those who soon must die.

¹ The Prince's and the Tongue Lightships.

[27]

AUTUMN. 1845.

THE holy-oak bows down her failing head,
And all her battered and dishonoured flowers
Are stained with dreary and decaying hues.
The rose's fairy circle is unzoned,

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And tinged with sick consumption's fading pink;
The lingering leaves which hung upon the spray,
Rising and falling in the passing breeze,
Like doubtful swallows in October days,
Have fled; or fallen to the cold damp earth,
Whence they shall never rise, but mouldering cleave.
There is a weight upon the heart of things;
The very spirit of despondency
Breathes stupifying airs, and sadly moans
Above the sepulchre of life and joy.

Yet think thou of the seeds of summer bliss
Safe stored and kept in earth's maternal breast,

[28]

And bless these dense and ceaseless rains which fill,
The thirsting caves of rich and mossy fount.
And though the lily has awhile withdrawn
Within her wintry teguments and home,
Soon will she answer to the voice of Spring,
And issue forth as beauteous as of old.
Yon steadfast oak enjoys a stern delight
In stripping for the fight his brawny limbs;
And eager for a conflict with the storms,
His naked arms stretch upwards to the sky,
When off his form the robe of Summer falls.
Spring shall be grateful umpire of the fight,
And crown his victor head with oaken leaves.

Then live not in the past, nor linger round
Autumnal ruins and departed joys;

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But gird thee for a struggle with the storm,
And brave its wrath, and through it look in hope
To brighter seasons and securer joys;
To winterless delights, and endless peace.

[29]

WINTER. 1845.

I.

THE fountains of the earth are sealed;
Torrent and trickling streamlet sleep,
The hidden stores lie unrevealed,
Mailed Winter every way doth keep;
And whither shall the helpless children fly,
When in the mother's breast the fount of life is dry?

The snow lies deeper than the foot
Of vainly toiling bird or hare
Can turn aside from blade or root,
Or lay the frozen ridges bare;
Nor tries she more, but flies the withering storm,
And hides her whilst she may within her snowy form.

[30]

The many-noted woods are still,
And on the beaten road crouch down
Those who in summer-hours would fill
Each grove with music of its own.
The traveller's muffled steps are vain
To scare the wonted fears of bosoms dulled by pain.

II.

From morn to eve the southern breeze
Has kissed to tears a world of snow;
The marble crumbles from the trees,
And falls in watery flakes below.
And now the tender wheat and meadows green
Shine like bright emerald isles, their snowy reefs
between.

Not keener who at busy mart
Regard their minutes as their gold;
Not swifter who to earliest breath
Of fav'ring gale their sails unfold.
From far and near the hungry fowls repair
To taste the tardy feast, and new-spread dainties share.

[31]

To every sunwards sloping hill,
To every slow-emerging height,
To every softly-flowing rill,
They wing their quick and clamorous flight.
Now here, now there, they hasten o'er the ground,
And eager notes with search and glad discovery sound.

III.

But there is one who ne'er again
In spring-tide's leafy bowers shall dwell.
Hark to her sad and only strain,
A plaintive wail, a dying knell.
For her too late the change has come, and now
The Summer's evening breeze would shake her from

the bough.

And lo! the cedar's royal state.

And terraced lawns of green,

Have yielded to that icy weight,

And show sad rifts between

The severed boughs, which mournful lie,

For to their shades again the ringdove ne'er shall fly.

[32]

In many a maid whose eye was bright,

That Winter struck his barbed dart.

In many a sire whose head was white,

The blood froze sudden at the heart;

And softer airs must breathe above their head,

A thaw more quickening come to melt the frozen

dead.

A FIELD DRESSED WITH LONDON REFUSE.

WHAT wrecks and relics strew the wintry ground!

The cast-offs of the cast-off round me lie;

As broken spars and sea-weed on the sand

Meet, when the storm is o'er, the wanderer's eye.

This marble fragment fair, but sore defaced,

Dwelt 'neath the ferns on Devon's woodland height;

Thence cleft and borne, the merchant's mansion graced,

And brightly glowed beneath his festal light.

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

[33] He, or his rich successors, scorned to dwell
So near the Mart; hence, lower and more low
His goodly house descended, till it fell
To be the haunt of crime and home of woe.

Careless of sin and sorrow, but in fear
Of all the ills which follow in their train,
Wealth bade the den before her disappear.
And left the beasts to form their lair again.

Fall, drenching rains, and withering tempests blow
And bleach this broken stone from every stain;
But who shall purge its tale of sin and woe.

Make crimes unwrought, and sorrows wept in vain?

And what is this poor shred of human pride,
And witness of its shame, which clothed, perchance,
Some high-born damsel by her suitor's side,
Whirling through worthless life in thoughtless dance?

Then to the servant falling, as of right,
And sold, it flaunted in the midnight flare
Of scenes which shrink from noontide's honest light,
Until it trailed on ankles thin and bare.

[34]

Where is the wretch who wore this garment last?
Where is the wretch who wrought her loss and shame?
Where are the heartless crowds who looked and past?
An unseen book records each guilty name.

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

And this poor toy which childhood cast aside,

Too early sated with a pure delight,

What of its owner? Doth the green sod hide

What loving hands too soon re-clad in white?

Or lives it still to wither in the blast

Of the world's poisonous breath, and soon to lose

Youth's charms before its fleeting hours be past,

And, as it grows, each heaven-born gift abuse?

Ye wrecks and relics, mingled with the clay

Of things and men which were and now are not;

Memorials clear, and eloquent to-day,

Ploughed in the earth to-morrow, there to rot;

Forth from your dust the downy ears shall bloom,

And, golden turned, our hungry race supply;

Which by the scythe of Death shall find a tomb,

Whilst all things die to live, and live to die.

[35]

But when from sorrow, death, and drear decay,

Shall spring that life which none of these await?

When, when shall come one everlasting day,

One sinless, griefless, deathless, changeless state?

No, not by such negations shall be known

And felt our bliss; but life, and love, and light,

And He who is these joys, shall be our own,

If haply we be fit for that entrancing sight.

THE TWO CRADLES.

WATCH the helpless infant lie,
Brothers, sisters, standing by;
Now at last, and now again,
In the intervals from pain.
See the little lips, fast sealed.
To the gentle pressure yield.
Drop by drop the saving balm
Glides from sight to work its charm;
Till resisted sleep at length,
From a mere defect of strength,

[36]

Silences the feebler cries,
Closes up the languid eyes;
And when every sense of ill
Rests from pain, and all is still,
Gentle hands their burden move,
With the noiselessness of love.
Lay him in his snow-white cot.
Calm as though this life were not.

Fifty years have come and gone,
Good and evil have been done;
Joys and woes, like night and day,
Smiled and frowned, and passed away.
Strength he had of limb and mind,
More than falls to human kind,
Till the fever felled the tree,

As it lies thus helplessly.
Children round the bedside stand,
Lift their eyes and clasp the hand;
In the intervals from pain
Pour the nourishments again;
And a faint, half-conscious smile
Cheers their loving toil the while.

[37]

Hours of watching faint away,
Morn to eve, and night to day.
Not the sufferer's mother now
Chafes his hand and wipes his brow.
But his childrens'; and they read,
Marking every word and deed,
What their mother hopes and fears
In her smiles and in her tears.
Fainter, longer, every breath.
Is it sleep? Or is it death?

Have ye wept until your grief
By its utterance found relief?
Cease, then, from your wailings wild;
Lift him softly as a child;
Lay him in his cot again,
Free from fever, free from pain.
Sweetly will death's cradle keep
Weary limbs composed to sleep.
Born to live and born to die,
Mark the whole with steadfast eye.
Born to die and live, beware;

Both for death and life prepare.

[38]

THE BEAUTY OF EXPRESSION.

HARSHLY we judge those whom the magic glance

Of Beauty, or her form, or lucid hue,

Stop on the way of life, attract, entrance,

Helpless to turn their eyes from her fond view:

For pity surely might our scorn allay,

For him who, wandering on the pearly strand,

Contented with one gem, pursues his way,

And clasping what he finds with eager hand,

Returns to dwell in joy amid his native land.

Or else sweet Charity, with Faith entwined.

Might tell of those bright hours of human prime,

When all perfections were in one combined,

Not severed then by Adam's hapless crime:

When charms of form and spirit did unite,

Nor was there need to fear lest Beauty's face

Should hide defects which cannot meet the light;

[39]

And promising to sight each lovely grace,

Cold secret self or passions wild the soul deface.

And then — sound judgment, added to the love

Of Beauty, was a safeguard to the eye.

Woe to man's mad contempt of bliss above,

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

Which well deserves his idol loves should die.

But this may wisdom add, and not unkind

That fair expression doth fair form excel,

Being the true exponent of the mind,

Which doth its inward features duly tell,

And bids the lover love in faith that all is well.

For that it is the portrait of the soul,

Scarce will its radiant play to art submit,

Flashing beyond the limner's vexed control,

Like smiles which o'er the face of Ocean flit.

When bright tints fade, and winter ploughs the skin;

When stoops the form, and lustre leaves the eye.

More lovely grows the secret life within.

Expression lives, when other beauties die,

Of good which sojourns here, but dwells at home
on high.

[40]

THE ROOK SHOT IN SPORT IN THE
BREEDING SEASON.

BEHOLD thy work. The grey lids close those eyes

Which shone as jet. Her strong wings helpless droop

On either side. Her claws entreat the skies,

Since at thy feet she fell with dying swoop;

No more at earliest dawn to cleave her way

Through liquid air, nor sport upon the breeze;

Nor homewards as a dart at close of day

Return to prate upon the ancient trees.

Mourns all the grove, mourns most her widowed mate.

The unfledged offspring in their nest complain,
And curse the tyrant, as they fasting wait
For her their eyes shall ne'er behold again.

[41]

Is life, mere life, then nothing, which you spill

As water waste? Methought you valued this.

Death surely is to you the one great ill,

And transient pleasure seems your only bliss.

When you beheld your blameless victim fall.

No second life for her in store remained.

In taking life you robbed her of her all.

Nor can her purer pleasures be regained.

Perchance 'twere happier that no future state,

With its dread reckoning and unchanging doom,

Measured by love, should heartless men await,

When shrouded in their sins they reach the tomb.

What, hast thou never thought of Him whose breath,

The effluent life of all created things,

Withdrawn from mortal bodies leaveth death, —

Returning, back to life and feeling brings?

Is it not treason to this Life to slay

Without just cause? Go, hide thy guilty face.

Weep, weep, whilst life remains, thy sin away;

And learn that Mercy is the path to grace.

[42]

THE WORLD IS JUST.

How just the unjust world appears,
When time has rolled a few brief years,
When fades the false and shines the true,
And each receives his righteous due!
Whilst yet the temporizer smiles,
Glosses each sin, each care beguiles;
And, as he lets the fabric rot,
Sees that each fissure is forgot;
With his own coin the world repays,
And gives the thing he seeks for — praise.
Both wish for present good and ease,
And he and it unite to please.
But when the present turns to past,
Nor his nor its false calm may last.
It gave the sole reward he sought,
And first and last pays all it ought.
Contempt he earned, and future fame
Wreathes with contempt his titled name.

[43]

Regardless of the people's wrath,
The hero stands across their path;
Encounters Folly's rose-clad band,
Breaks lute and harp, and bids it stand;
Proclaims the dangers which surround,
And makes the startling war-cry sound.

He fights their wars, rebuilds their walls,
Removes each ruin ere it falls:
Danger and toil alike he braves,
Despite itself his country saves:
Nor seems it grievous in his eyes
To lack what all great men despise.
Why should men give what he would spurn,
And proudly from their flatteries turn?
He for the future works and lives,
And meet reward that future gives;
For when he rests his weary head,
Of all his rivals, 'mid the dead,
He only lives. His work remains,
Clear of its labours and its pains;
A grateful country sings his name,
And heroes emulate his fame.

[44]

THE STARVING AUTHOR.

SAD as the captive bullfinch rudely torn
From glancing sunlight and from dewy spray,
By darkness, mist, and hunger hardly worn,
To learn a joyless and unnatural lay;

Heartsick as he who, when the scene is o'er,
Gives up his crown, his purple, and his jest,
Up creaking stairs mounts to his garret floor,
And in the shivering twilight seeks for rest: —

Such is the writer whose mechanic pen

Day after day moves listlessly along;
Bond-slave and menial to contemptuous men,
And free no more for science or for song.

What the world reads, or what the world will buy,
So much at such a price, by such a day.,
He writes to order; ready to supply
Wares which too oft are made to cast away.

[45][

To trade with lovely sight and noble thought,
With sunrise splendours and the moon's still light!
To deck the paper, lest it lie unbought,
With autumn tints and springtide's flowerets bright!

To tax invention, lest the plot be dull,
And change the form of tales too often told!

To seem of fertile thoughts and vigour full,
Fresh wit to flash, fresh tragedies unfold!

Shall he not rather cease his strife to live?
Lay down his weary pen and wearier head?

Take of the world the pay it means to give,
A patronising notice of the dead?

THE AUTHOR STARVED.

ALL is still. I look around:
Not a movement, not a sound.
Once, a clock the moments told,

Till the friend for bread was sold.

Long ago the dog was found,

[46]

By his loving master drowned.

Not a volume, great or small,

Not a picture on the wall:

Paper ashes in the grate

Tell his destitute estate;

Long, too long, his hope and pride,

Then as useless thrown aside;

Only fuel of his fire,

And his hope's funeral pyre.

Yet he wrote until the last,

After all design was past.

See the blotted paper lies,

As it swam before his eyes.

What a tale that pen could tell,

Lying helpless as it fell.

Dizzy, faint, he sought the door,

Sank unheard upon the floor,

Ghastly white, and cold as stone,

Lying hour by hour alone:

One red streak from lip to chin

Shows the fearful breach within.

Just a flutter and a sigh

Were enough for him to die.

[47]

On that shelf a bottle stands.

Once it trembled in his hands.
Should he drink, and end his grief?
Doubtful issue, quick relief.
But an angel stood behind,
Laid a thought before his mind;
On his knees the doubter brought,
Praying prayers his mother taught.
Thus he lived — or rather died,
Like a slowly ebbing tide.

Up and down they heard him walk,
To himself unconscious talk: —

“Am I, as they said at school,
Useless idler, dreamy fool?
Often my poor father sighed,
Bade me at his trade abide.
But a fire within me burned.
More and more from traffic turned.
I would climb the heights of fame,
Win, and leave a glorious name.
On my mother’s cheek the while,

[48]

Now a tear and now a smile.
They are gone, nor lived to see
All my want and misery.
Did I err, or was I right?
Was it but a fatuus light?
Whether men are right, or I,
Death alone can now reply.

Fatal gifts, if gifts be mine!
Thoughts Satanic, or divine!
To think myself—and not to be —
O shame! To be, and never see
Wealth or fame. Be this my lot,
Hereafter honoured, now forgot.”

This was his last repentant strain,
’Mid howling winds and plashing rain: —

“Lucy! Lucy! Oh that day
In the loving month of May,
When beneath the oak we swore
Love and faith for evermore.
And for ever it had been,
But my madness came between.

[49]

‘Work, man, work,’ your father cried.
I was wroth, and yet I tried:
‘Work and live.’ I heard no more;
And your father closed his door.
Who was right? and who was wrong?
I was weak, and he was strong.
He was right; he loved his child,
Fearing me so rash and wild.

“Lucy, after long, long years,
Shines upon me through her tears.
Eloquent with words suppressed,
Still I see her heaving breast,

Sadly saying now, as then,
Such the vaunted love of men!
Yet she pitied me at heart;
Often gently took my part;
Held with me it were a shame
Genius should not seek for fame;
But the struggle in her mind
Was from mine of other kind.
Adverse currents, love with love,
Flashed their crystal spray above;

[50]

Nought of self their waves defiled.
Ardent lover, duteous child.
Did I love my Lucy most?
No — it was an empty boast.
Not her wishes, not her fears;
Not her sighs, and not her tears,
Turned me from that stern intent
Which our paths asunder rent.
Could I not have blessed been
Lucy to have heard and seen,
Like a playful, roving light,
Making all around her bright;
With my head upon her breast,
To have found affection's rest?
Surely this were poesy:
Need was none to soar more high,
Into regions cold and bare.
Sweeter far love's native air.

“Came the time when we must part.
Though I said ‘twould break my heart,
I live on — but she, more true,
Wasted like the morning dew,

[51]

And peaceful rests
Choice I had, and choice I made —
That to which my pride betrayed.
Lucy was the sacrifice,
What I have and am — the prize.

“Was I right? or was I wrong?
They to whom great gifts belong
Are the children of the Muse,
Nor may her behests refuse.
Yet we oft our hearts deceive,
Suffer self its web to weave;
In opposing lawless ill,
Choose rebellion, please our will.
Could I not have worked by day,
Let my fancy have its way
After Lucy’s eyes were closed,
And her love in peace reposed?
Others thus have kept the road
Which the path of duty showed,
And have triumphed, and have won
Laurels such as I have — none.
If I had been what I thought,

[52]

Genius would its work have wrought.

Lucy, Lucy, dost thou hear?

I would pay thee tear for tear.

O my justly-punished sin!

Outside, want, and grief within!

O the life which I have spilt!

O the well-avenged guilt!”

Lift him from the naked floor

To the moss he loved of yore.

Lay the sufferers side by side:

Both were one, when both had died.

Lucy’s heart is not estranged;

Lucy’s love remains unchanged.

He from lofty hope lies low.

Hide his faults, but tell his woe.

He shall blame who ne’er abused

Gifts, nor duty’s path refused.

Lay the sufferers side by side,

Who alike heart-broken died.

Broken hearts are not estranged:

Life is gone, but love unchanged.

[53]

A BY-STREET IN LONDON.

(TRUE.)

WITH tattered clothes and naked feet,

With slouching head and trailing leg,

He dragged his way along the street,

Nor sought by word or look to beg.

I stood and watched him as he went,
A minute paused, then moved again.
As by some secret burden bent.
Too dull and passionless for pain.

I touched him: scarce he raised his head,
And silent took the alms I gave.
It seemed an offering to the dead,
Which dropped unheeded in the grave.

[54]

Impassive was his haggard face,
Expressionless his hollow eye.
He seemed to seek some lonely place,
Where he could hide himself, and die.

The Indian chief, who strove in vain
To stem the cataract's career,
Folded his arms, nor moved again,
When to the falls his bark drew near.

All motionless his swarthy cheek,
All passionless his steadfast eye,
Seemed of a hidden might to speak,
Unbroken spirit, free, and high.

But thou, poor wretch, hast nothing left,
Nor courage to renew the strife,
Nor nobly die. Of all bereft,

Except one throb of dying life.

Roll, roll, ye thundering chariots, roll:

Tramp, tramp, ye thousand feet, tramp on —

This stricken form, with broken soul,

Crosses before you — and is gone.

[55]

THE INDIAN CEMETERY AFTER THE
EARTHQUAKE.

[The volcanic wave which accompanied the earthquake on the east coast of Sami, August 13, 1868, is calculated to have been ninety feet in height. It came in without a ripple, and burst on the land, sweeping all before it. At Arica an Indian burial-ground was laid bare. The posture and accompaniments of the mummies are described below, and an attempt was made to dig out a chief. — Letter from a Naval Officer: "Mission Life," January 1, 1869.]

THE wave of time and long oblivion

Have swept away the memory of the men,

And almost of the race, who by the shore

Were buried as the dead by hands long dead:

And now another wave, the earthquake's throe,

A wall of water, fifteen fathom deep,

Precipitous, resistless, pitiless.

Unruffled, passionless, and sternly calm,

With steadfast purpose of destruction filled,

[56]

Has swept a living city from the light,

And bared to day the regions of the dead.

Here sits the matron, with her household wares
Around her laid, in token of her toils.
Here lie the hooks prepared for simple fish.
Whose bones are now a stratum 'neath the deep.
And here the hunter's arrows, and the bow
Fashioned with craft for chase of living things,
Whom Death, outrunning on the grassy plains,
Captured long since with his unerring dart.
Behold the tawny warrior with his spear,
How calm he sits, as at the council fire
A raid designing; with one withered hand
Pressed to his face, as if in solemn thought;
The other on his breast, as though he felt
The sudden gripe of death upon his heart.
Child of the Sun! Those hollow eyes no more
Avail to look upon his father's face,
But mock the Inca's proud ancestral claim.
And prove the boaster but a child of earth.
He had not thought to face the mid-day sun,
Yet not to see him; nor without a blow,

[57]

To fall inglorious into stranger hands,
And from his last long home be torn away,
How will his calm barbaric dignity,
And high reserve which isolates, comport
With the low stare of vulgar ignorance,
When in the big Museum he is set
Amid things curious, and for curious eyes
To be an object of contempt and mirth?

Oh spare the grave, ye heritors of graves.
And let men rest if ye would hope to rest;
Nor think that knowledge gained by such a sin
Is wisdom, or can raise, or e'er refine
Hearts without love, who thus themselves degrade.

'Tis not for this the buried Indian waits
Age after age beside the wailing waves,
But for that shock which shall the earth upheave,
And sea, and lay the million million tombs
Broad open to the sun and staring skies
Their tombs and yours. They wait a rising sun
Which shall be noon at once, and never set:
When those that knew but little, yet observed

[58]

That which they knew, far more shall sudden know
Than they who loved not that which they believed;
When some that saw shall never see the light,
And others prove true children of the Sun.

THE FLOWER GIRL.

She never saw the lilies grow:
Garden and grove she did not know:
But still the nosegays which she sold
Each blessed season plainly told.
The primrose pale, the violet blue,
Proclaimed that nature lived anew.

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

The purple stock and stiff wallflower,
Declared the sun's increasing power.
Carnation, pink, and mossy rose,
The full-blown summer would disclose.
And thus she stood, with naked feet,
At crowded corners of the street;
And anxious watched each passer-by,
And sought to catch each vacant eye.

[59]

The lawyer, buried in his case,
The banker's fixed and solemn face,
The merchant reckoning all his gain —
With them she knew her suit were vain.
But if some youth came sauntering night,
Him would she archly tempt to buy.
"A nosegay for thy love," she cried:
He paused, and bought; and sought to hide,
Or in his coat the bud would place,
And onward lounge with fancied grace.
But chiefly to the poor she sold,
Who, like herself, might not behold
The natal home of those sweet flowers,
'Mid sunshine gleams and pearly showers,
Memorials dear of what had been,
Or types of beauty yet unseen.
So did she stand from morn to night,
Her flowerets fading like the light,
Save when the rain came plashing down,
And men rushed reckless through the town:
'Twas useless then. Fair was her face,

But care and want had left their trace
On features prematurely old;

[60]

For health and life were what she sold.
She was that flower which, left to grow,
Had been as bright as those which blow
In hall or court; but, rudely torn,
Her eve of life veiled out the morn;
And as she drooped, her cheek and eye
Said softly, "Flowers bloom but to die."

THE STREET-FINDER.

[The facts were narrated to Mr. Mayhew, "London Labour and
London Poor," vol. ii. p. 145.]

HIS eye was dull, and slow his pace:
There was a history in his face.
Seldom he spoke, but often sighed,
Yet not in sullenness nor pride.
A broken, fallen man he seemed,
Stumbling through life as one who dreamed.
Morn after morn, year after year,
He searched the pavement far and near.

[61]

Eve after eve, year after year,
Unaltered you had met him here.
From filth he earned his scanty bread;

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

In filth laid down his weary head.
He ceased to live one Tuesday morn;
On Friday to his grave was borne.
Scarce was the pauper funeral o'er
When strangers shook the tottering door.
"What! dead? The very man we track?
And did his hand a finger lack?
What was his name? It matters not.
It was assumed, his own forgot.
He was the heir of this estate.
And — but the news has come too late."
'Twas thus they talked around the door,
And, slowly leaving, came no more.
And whether he had done a wrong,
Or weak had suffered from the strong,
Or what his name, or where his lands,
Or into whose more lucky hands
They passed; nor whether, did he live.
The change would real contentment give,
We do not know; we cannot tell

[62]

If all be ill, or all be well.
But if soft hands grow hard with toil;
If kennel filth their fineness soil;
If after feasting hunger come,
A garret stand in place of home;
If valleys dark, and loathsome lanes,
Succeed fair groves and smiling plains;
If gentle blood and high estate
Must with each squalid beggar mate;

If to conceal the crushing shame,
The outcast hide an honoured name —
Then surely it were happier far
To be by birth the things we are.

Now we can read, as in a book,
The meaning of his sapless look,
His slouching gait, his dreary glance,
The absent musing of his trance.
The pannier which his shoulder wore
Was not the burden which he bore.

God grant him rest. We shall not meet
The wanderer more on wharf, in street;

[63]

But in the grave, where rags and crown
Are laid by weary wearers down:
Nor counts it much amongst the dead
Whereon the living laid their head;
Or whether poor, or whether not,
Whether unchanged, or changed, their lot,
But only this — that, when Christ speaks,
We be the heirs for whom He seeks.

WITHERED BUDS.

O FROSTED bud, and withered leaf,
At eve so green and bright,
Low droop your necks, as bowed in grief,

Ye cannot greet the light.

O withered buds! O hopes too high,
 Too beautiful to last,
Which grew and opened but to die,
 A future, then a past

[64]

O resolutions fervent, pure!
 O vows of life and death!
Too good, too tender to endure
 The rough world's freezing breath.

O virgin love! O manly truth!
 O withered leaves and flowers!
O noble impulses of youth!
 O manhood's blighted powers!

Soft airs of quickening spring depart,
 Or longer with us stay:
Nor warm too soon the simple heart,
 And then that heart betray.

It may not be; for frost and sun
 Each flower alternate try;
And till their proving work be done.
 Need is that some must die.

Then come, oh come, thou promised time,
 When every air is sweet;
That frostless, nightless, deathless clime

Where Spring and Summer meet.

[65]

THE IRISH LADY.

[The Irish Lady is a solitary rock near the shore north of Land's End. At Pendean, in the neighbouring parish of St. Just, is reported to be seen "an Irish Lady, who, dressed in white, and bearing a red rose in her mouth, is to be met with on Christmas morning at the cave's mouth, where she confides to you tidings brought from her native land through the submarine running of that mysterious cavern." — *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, 2nd Series, vol. iv. No. 4, p. 163.]

I.

DARTS the Longship's flashing light
Through the darkness of the night;
 And the Shark-fin ledge,
 With its jagged edge,
Divides the bay; the long roll cleaving
Of Ocean's breast,
So ill at rest,
With deep-drawn sighs for ever heaving;
While Pedn Mên Dhu,
Of sombre hue,

[66]

Uplifts his head and extends his length,
In his pride of height and pride of strength.
Needs no reverend sage to say
What their several titles mean;
In rest, or veiled with clouds of spray,
Are their peculiar features seen.

The play of the calm and the rage of the storm

Cannot wash out the name which is graved in the form.

II.

But what is this I see below?

An islet of rock

In a single block?

Oh who shall its wondrous history show?

Was it dropped by Cyclops' erring hand

Midway between the ocean and land?

Or, like Phoenician ships of old,
In the offing lost;

For that the sailors, rashly bold,

A god's will crossed?

Ah me! ah me! so near to the shore,

But their keels shall crunch its shells no more

[67]

The Irish Lady ! Whence the name?

When and wherefore the Lady came?

Was she virgin, or was she wife?

And why was death so near to life?

A few more strokes of the swimmer's arm,

And the shipwrecked strangers were safe from harm.

III.

Behold I see the Lady now,

The winter's sunset gilds her brow.

Mark how she stands, with steadfast eye,

Gazing into futurity

And a gentle voice floats over the wave.

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

Like an airy harp in a mountain cave.

No. I have noticed that form before,

Clad and re-clad in the snow-white spray,

'Mid howling winds and the breakers' roar;

And when the turmoil was passed away,

A pillar of stone

Stood bare and alone,

And the voice is the moan

Of the tide on the flow,

[68]

Which the trailing sea-weed uplifts,

Rushing in and out of the cliffs;

Now surging up and now pouring below;

And its measured cadence is soft and slow.

IV.

On the eve when Christ is born

Fast and pray till very morn.

Where the winding caverns yawn,

Watch and pray until the dawn.

Then shalt thou meet

A vision so sweet,

If ancient people the truth do say,

As fits the joy of that joyous day;

A maiden clad in a dazzling white,

Tinged at the folds by the orient light;

With a rose her more roseate lips between,

Its petals like rubies 'mid emeralds green;

And breathing a rapturous odour so sweet,

Well-nigh shalt thou faint with bliss at her feet.

She waits to listen, and waits to speak;

Leave sin behind, and with it fear,

[69]

She brings good tidings for them that seek,

News from home to those that will hear.

O peerless lady! O blessed maid!

Where dwellest thou now? and whence hast strayed?

Art thou come with thy light our darkness to aid?

On a wrinkled scroll the tale is told,

Cunningly writ in crimson and gold,

How that the lady's heathen sire

Swept the land with sword and with fire,

Homewards all his plunder bearing,

And the only captive sparing,

A Christian damsel pure and bright,

A lily opening first to light,

Rooted up from her native glade

To please awhile, and then to fade.

She, the captive to his sword,

Mated to a savage lord,

One infant bare,

And in bearing slept.

[70]

Her so meek and fair

He tearless erst, and ruthless wept;

Then seized his spear, and rushed out to the strife,

And in red blood kept the wake for his wife,
A revel of Hell to end only with life.

VI.

A mossy rill, like a silken thread,
The snows will melt,
Less seen than felt;
And a single spark unnoticed shed
From the flashing train
Will fire wide fields of yellow grain.

The infant grew, like a clinging vine,
And round the rude chief her charms did twine,
And bound his passions with tendrils of love.
Marvelled demons below, and the angels above.

Like her mother, passing fair,
Her eyes pure blue, pure gold her hair,
Her look was law
To all who saw,

[71]

Law the first word
To all who heard.
The ruthless, reckless, fearless king
Left war and chase to hear her sing.
He gave her life and his own strong will,
And he must obey for good or ill;
Must bear to receive a Christian priest,
Bear to give up his wild pagan feast;
Endure to submit his hoary head
To the cleansing waters on it shed;
Bear to become a Christian man,

And spread the true faith through his barbarous clan.

VII.

A father's love and a father's pride
Thrust many a doubting thought aside.
No heir to him of crown or of land,
Yet when chieftains sought the maiden's hand,
In vain they knelt and fondly pleaded;
His wish and theirs were lightly heeded.
No joys of home nor crown she sought;
The world and all its gauds were nought.

[72]

A virgin she would live and die,
And he, the last of his race, must lie
In a bleak cairn 'mid the clouds on high,
Though it cost him many a heart-deep sigh.

VIII.

At last the purpose long concealed,
Feared, but uncertain, was revealed.
With misgiving and fears,
Amid kisses and tears,
But fixed and decreed:
Nor felt she the need
Of a parent's consent
To her settled intent:
She would cross the sea to Cornwall's shore,
And teach the rude Celt her Christian lore,
And lay her life, if need be, down,
And gain with blood a martyr's crown.

For she knew how Nina had borne the light
To regions which lay in heathenish night: ¹

¹ Nina, or Nonna, converted Georgia at the beginning of the fourth century.

[73]

But she read not the lesson, nor sought to read,
That the servants of Jesus must follow, not lead.

IX.

The old man sternly smothered his woe.
Alone 'mid the rocks his tears would flow;
But by that face no longer bright,
By the eyes which had lost their light,
By footstep slow,
Gaze fixed below,
By sighs suppressed,
And strange unrest,
By many — to watchful eyes — a token,
Dumb words which tell a grief unspoken,
It was known that the King's mighty spirit was broken.
Yet the maiden held fast to that changeless intent
Of self-will and self-sacrifice, wondrously blent.

X.

He led her down to the golden-prowed ship,
Nor trembled his hand, nor quivered his lip.
The ancient warrior lived again.
Stamping down both sorrow and pain.

[74]

He kissed and blessed on the stony shore
The child he should kiss and bless no more.
But when the ship was melting from sight,
A single spot in the eastern light,
 And, his sole joy gone,
 He gazed into age's cold winter alone,
The barrier burst, and the tears broke forth,
As a long frozen stream in the ice-bound North;
And he rent with his hands his snow-white hair,
And scattered the flakes in the warm summer air.

XI.

The lady wept long, but it did not lift
 The strange dull weight which lay on her breast,
As a load of sin which is kept from shrift,
 Turn hither, thither, and still no rest.
Yet were the skies divinely fair,
And soft as love the moist sea air;
Whilst the undulating motion
Of the slowly heaving ocean.
When day dawned, sang, "Sleep, sleep, sleep,
Ye that are weary, and ye that weep."

[75]

The maiden's prayers were duly said,
And down she laid her drooping head
On the deck, whilst still the motion
Of the undulating ocean
Murmured ever, "Sleep, oh sleep;
Why wilt thou thy vigils keep?"

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

Heaven's thousand eyes all watch for thee,
And Christ still walks upon the sea."
But still the weight is on her breast,
She prays and sings, and finds no rest.
Until she reasons less and less,
And sleeps for very weariness.

XII.

Who is this who stands above,
Mingling looks of blame and love?
An Angel robed in a radiant cloud?
Or the dead still vested in her shroud?
So like the maid, and yet another!
O lovely child! O lovely mother!
For how shall mortal flowers compare
With those which Eden's meadows bear?

[76]

Standing, watching, gently kneeling,
Half a vision, half a feeling,
Parting now the maiden's hair,
As a mother strokes her child,
With a word on her lips which she cannot bear
To speak — and would hide in the depths if she dare;
Well-nigh from her mission by love beguiled.

XIII.

"My child, my child, thy sin is great:
Rise and pray ere it be too late;
Then calmly for thy penance wait;
For living shalt thou never see

The land thou seek'st so eagerly.
Yet He who left thee to contend
With trials sore is still thy Friend;
And all thy zeal, and all thy love.
With all their works, were seen above.
Half holy, sinful half, thy will,
So must thou find mixed good and ill;
Attain and miss
Both woe and bliss.
And this last kiss

[77]

Is sign and proof. Up, up, and pray.
For thou shalt not see the dawn of day."

XIV.

She felt the soft kiss, and straightway awoke.
"My Mother," "My Father," the words she spoke.
Black was the sky, and black as the night
The waves, save when in ridges of white
They reared their proud necks, and curled them, and brake,
Like white bulls chasing the ship in her wake.

In awful silence the captain steered,
And silence showed what the sailors feared;
For madly they drove with close-reefed sail,
They knew not whither, before the gale.
Onward, onward, they knew no more;
On and on to the blackness before;
On and on to the iron-bound shore.
Uprose the maiden but could not stand,
She held the rigging with either hand.

Her cheek was white,
But not with fright.

[78]

Somewhat there was in voice and eye,
Strangely depressed, and strangely high.
Her hair, soon to lie as heavy as lead,
Tangled and damp on the face of the dead,
Bright in the quivering blast was streaming,
Like a meteor's track in midnight gleaming.
"Take me, cast me into the sea.
Rages the tempest all for me,
Righteously smiteth a Father above
The daughter found wanting in filial love.
Pardon, pardon, sweet Jesu, I pray."
A blast of the storm swept her last words away;
A mighty rush and a deafening roar,
And a wall of blackness rose before;
One surging lift, one downward shock,
Crashed through the ribs the points of the rock,
A mountainous sea broke over the wreck
And swept the spars and men from the deck:
All the crests of the waves were covered with drift,
Like the sward 'neath the oak which the lightnings have rift.

[79]

XV.

Mangled and bleeding the maiden lay
On the rock's relentless face,
"Whilst the breathless billow ebb'd away,

Leaving but a moment's grace.

The column of stone on the summit she grasped,

As Mary the Rood of her dying Lord clasped.

One prayer she breathed

Whilst the waters seethed,

And gathered their might,

As a charge in the fight;

Then arching and falling, they wrenched her off,

And sucked the dying into the trough,

Played with their victim, and, weary at last,

The broken image of beauty they cast

In scorn away,

On the sands of the bay.

XVI.

On the blessed, blessed morn,

When the saving Christ was born,

From the land in which no trace

[80]

Of sin or sorrow can appear,

Radiant with a heavenly grace,

Comes the maiden year by year.

She breathes upon the wintry air

The atmosphere which Angels share;

And to a sterile world of ice

She brings a rose from Paradise.

Her eyes are like the morning star:

Her cheeks as sunrise glow:

Like waving mists her vestments are,

Which fold the hills in snow.

She bears the Gospel she longed to tell,
And with "Christ is born" she greets you well.
Ask her tidings, and she will say,
"The Lord of love is born to-day:
For sinful man He has left the skies,
And teaches the world self-sacrifice."

[81]

HAPPINESS MISSED.

"He wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God
giveth him not power to eat thereof." — ECCLES. vi. 2.

PART I.

UP and down, up and down, with his eyes upon the ground;
Light above, and flowers below, and beauty all around;
Spreading oaks, and spangled deer the spacious park throughout;
Miles and miles of property the grand hall round about;
Birds singing in the groves, children on the village green;
Nothing but joy to be heard, and happiness to be seen:
All his but the happiness. — Is he deaf, and is he blind?
Gained he all blessings but one, and left that one behind?

[82]

All his but the happiness. — Is he deaf, and is he blind?
Who would not change goods with him? Who would change heart and mind?
This is the fruit of a life, and long laborious years,
Of many a calculation, and thrilling hopes and fears.
Behold them in his grey hairs, in his lack-lustre eye.
Hear them in his trailing step and his habitual sigh.
One sole object he sought; that object was glittering gold.
He loved it much when young, and loves it still more when old:

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Loves it for its own sake, loves it for what it will buy.
Lands, trees, cottages, men, are so much gold in his eye.
How should he become happy in making poor men glad?
To make gold out of silver, not good men out of bad,
Was his business. — Go tell him, wealth is a power for good.
Power to gain, and power to buy, — *this* might be understood.

[83]

The busy town he left he brought it down with him here.
Valleys and streets, trees, men, all alike to him appear.
Counting-house sold, and hall bought; this is the single change:
Only rents for dividends at first seemed rather strange.
O care! care! Once it was to pile up wealth for his son;
Now, lest that son should waste the riches so hardly won.
O heart! heart! where art thou, warm heart of earlier years,
Beating, burning, loving, sweet fountain of joys and tears?
O head! head! so hard and clear ! but thou, lost heart, return;
For age from simple youth has many a lesson to learn.
His are all these but happiness. — Oh, is he deaf and blind?
That he should ever seek it, and yet should never find?
That the poorest of his poor enjoy a heart more light,
And drink the joy he misses in every sound and sight?

[84]

Up and down, up and down; with dull eye, and footstep slow;
Dreary towards a dreary grave he drearily doth go.

PART II.

“He heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)
them.” — Ps. xxxix. 7.

Up and down, up and down, until he could walk no more,
Forced to leave his treasure, though loving it as before.
Tying up his land, he sank from upper earth away,
Down — down — the end of life the close of a business day.
For one long life, and one short, the bonds of law held fast,
But the cords decayed and snapped ere fifty years were past.
Then entered in the Scatterer; gatherers clustered round:
Before he came of age kind lenders were to be found.

[85]

Plenty of cash in hand for one short pape to sign;
Receipts for goods not had, furniture, jewels, and wine.
Up and down, and up and down, riding in Rotten Row,
Well known in one set and trying the other to know.
Always riding and driving, but still left far behind,
He falls back loth at last on those who were always kind.
Always at hand, to eat, drink, flatter, and more to play,
Always at his service, whether by night or by day.
Rattled the balls at billiards, rattled the loaded dice;
Brandy for cold or tremor, for parched lips wine from ice.
In the Grand Stand, surrounded by a peculiar set,
Either his inseparables or “fortunately met!”
Money races away without a pang of remorse,
Not with, indeed, but fast as gallops the winning horse.
Is that the old man’s ghost returned to this earthly scene,
The bettor and the blackleg trying to get between?
Can his impalpable sadness make the spendthrift pause?
Can his bodiless avarice snatch him from the jaws

[86]

Of gamblers, Jews, and sharpers? Behold him watching there,
Clutching at those bank-notes, and grasping nothing but air.
Mark his look at the gatherers, his concentrated hate:
If he could but have foreseen — but now it is too late!
Up and down, up and down, so the country people talk,
Along the ancient terrace the ghost was seen to walk,
Wringing his hands, and groaning before the bailiffs came:
The old gardener swears to it, he knows it was the same.
What matter? The Hall and Park and all the spreading trees
Gave no more joy to the youth than to the old man ease.
They are the old man's savings, the gold which he had earned;
They are the young man's spendings, back into guineas turned.
One gathered, and one scattered, that other men might gain:
If the saver blame the spender, others may complain

[87]

Of one who griped and squeezed, caring for nothing but gold;
Bought up ruined spendthrifts, and all that was to be sold.
There are glad things still in the woods — children on the green,
Happy old men talking o'er the changes they have seen.
But up and down, up and down the gloomy prison court,
The spendthrift ponders over the ruin he has wrought.
Next week he will be free wheresoe'er he wills to go.
But since he knows not whither, his step is dull and slow.
Cold looks, and closed doors; he prophesies how it will be.
Men feasting on his losings will not be sweet to see.
Up and down, to beg or starve, — no self-respect to save —
But it will not take many turns to bring him to his grave.

[88]

THE SQUALL.

WHAT is there in the wind? The skipper raised
His eyes from off the chart on which he gazed,
And met my eyes with his, their meaning read,
And leaped on deck when scarce the words were said.
At first there loomed a haze that thicker grew,
Arising slow, which yet the light pierced through;
Denser and denser by degrees, and then
As if the exhalations of each fen
And dyke and pool their several parts did bear
To poison with their breath the living air.
Higher it rose, and right and left outspread;
But still the Sun shone scorching overhead.
Two leagues beyond a sailless schooner bent
Her naked poles; her snowy topsail rent
From off the yards, and streaming in the gale.
Which like a spot of foam bare off the sail.
Sharp was the word, and done as soon as said:

[89]

Right for the squall we luffed the cutter's head;
And of all sails but thrice-reefed mainsail bared,
To meet the nearer tempest we prepared.
Scraping the hissing waves it onward drew,
And black as night the shivering waters grew;
Then fell the Squall, as falls a hill of snow
With its dead weight on Alpine cots below;
Roared in the shrouds, and made the topmast shake,
Like reeds along the pool; and all did quake

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

And shudder at the shock and groan and creak.
Our very breath was choked, and none did speak.
It pressed and pressed, and down the vessel forced:
Along our lee the seething water coursed;
And more and more upon our beam we lay.
Perchance the time had gone for men to pray
For life, sweet life. The struggle now was past,
And as a corpse the ship lay lifeless 'neath the blast.

[90]

Class II. — HISTORICAL.

THE WOUNDED ATHENIAN CAPTURED AT
PLATÆA.

To this then have we come, in vain to lie,
Or bravely speak the truth, and bravely die.
Choose, O ye Sophists! but a fool can see
Small choice of ills the Gods have left for me.

Curse on this foot which hindered me from flight,
And, unlike Philoctetes, forced to fight
With ruin sure. In vain I measured o'er
Each tier of bricks, recounted oft before:
In vain the ladders and assault designed,
Urged others on, compelled to lag behind.
O happy night of black and wind and rain!
O night of joy! O night of bitter pain!

[91]

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I saw the happy band with one foot bare,
And arms in hand, their breathless march prepare;
Caught the first clang of weapons, when our band
Seized the dark towers which loomed on either hand.
And thus secured the passage; — heard the cries
Of shrill alarm along the wall arise.

Ah! how my heart misgave me when I thought
Of that deep slimy trench the foe had wrought
Between his lines; yet stood so helpless there
Alike the danger or escape to share.
But shouts arose behind me, and the foe,
Scared by our feint, refrained to strike the blow
In time to crush; and all amid our fear
We laughed to see the dread Three Hundred here,
And there, and all abroad, with dancing lamp
Search wildly for our force around the camp.
Again we laughed our beacon fires to light,
And flash false signals in the Thebans' sight.
Ye Gods, but it was sport to see them haste
Towards Athens in pursuit with labour waste.
Fools that they were, and welcome to their pains,
Who gauged Athenian wits by Dorian brains.

[92]

It was a joyous morning, when we knew
By welcome proof that all our hopes were true.
We sang and quaffed our scanty cups of wine,
And for the Gods did thankful wreaths entwine.
Then came the sad revulsion, and the shame,
When cowards laid on other heads the blame

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

Of their own fears. They saw their lost estate,
And tore their hair and wept, "Too late, too late."

Long held we out, and when at length constrained
To yield, a hope of clemency remained.
To Sparta we surrendered, and relied,
If not upon her mercy, on her pride;
The laws of Grecian warfare not to break,
Nor honour's path for selfish ends forsake.
But soon we saw which way the scale inclined,
When Theban whisperers watched the case behind,
And caught the Judge's eye — no daughter there
To bid Cleomenes his bribe forbear.

Well spake Astymachus, and Lacon well.
And fairly did Plataea's deeds forth tell:
How she alone, in all Boeotia's plain.
The cause of Greece 'gainst Persia did sustain;

[93]

How Artemisium saw the triremes filled
With men before in rural labours skilled;
How Sparta's self inscribed Plataea's name
In Delphi's shrine, and handed down to Fame
Eternal her high deeds; and how the bones
Of Spartans lie beneath sepulchral stones
Within her walls, whom duly year by year
They garland and adorn as brethren dear;
How Sparta to our care did them commend,
And bade them choose great Athens as their friend.
Yes, well they spoke; and well the mother prayed

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For her dear child when adverse winds delayed
The fleet at Aulis! O dread Three, attend,
And to like guilt like retribution send.
Pile scorn on scorn for those who use the name
Of Justice to oppress, and shame on shame:
Whose policy is dressed in robes of Right,
And boldly timid cloaks her black in white.

I — never more shall see the morning light
Gild the chaste marble on Athene's height;
Nor more with pride the long walls fondly trace,
Until their arms the purple sea embrace.

[94]

Nor see round ships with wealthy cargo fraught,
Nor long triremes attain the busy port:
Nor watch the coursing billows rise and flash,
Then on the Sunian headland furious dash.
No glorious Pnyx, no crowded Courts for me;
Nor theatre, nor grove again shall be.
I helped to rule great Athens, Athens Greece.
For war, 'twas war; for peace, and it was peace:
But ne'er shall I before the Bema stand,
Nor wield the power of Freedom's favoured land;
And oh, dear friends whom I must ne'er behold,
Nor wife nor child in these fond arms enfold;
Nor dying love, nor parting wishes tell,
Nor kiss one kiss, nor breathe one last farewell!

But this is past— past — past, and I must go
From the warm light to shivering shades below:

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But yet, if there be Gods, I well believe
Each shall his due in measure just receive.
Then how shall Sparta fare? who claims to wield
The Sword of Justice, and extend her shield
Above the guiltless? O thou stern and cold,
Not less in falsehood than in warfare bold;

[95]

Come, come that day to thee when Theban spite
Its haughty benefactress shall requite.
May this their bloody union turn to hate,
And Colchian poisons Colchian vengeance sate;
Let dragons' teeth with warriors sow the plain,
And all the Theban horrors live again;
Let Sparta's self defeat and slaughter taste.
And sword and fire Laconia's hamlets waste;
Crumble the strength which pride and hate abuse.
Be far from them the mercy they refuse.

Farewell, Two Hundred who escaped our fate,
And come. Two Hundred who the sword await;
Come too, ye butchers: we attend your will.
Dip deep your hands in all the blood ye spill,
Then lift them to the Gods, and grateful say,
"We celebrate Plataea's glorious day."
Forwards we march — light step — and carriage high,
And teach the vaunting Dorians how to die.

[96]

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HAD SOLD.

[Having sold his paternal property, he lived three years on it with a little band of friends, “free from worldly cares, and at leisure for fasts, prayers, and good works, meditating day and night in the law of the Lord.” — *Vita Bened.* iii. 2.]

How could I sell the old paternal lands,
My Father’s house, and trees, and gardens fair
Where childhood played; and now in stranger’s hands
Back to my home, no longer home, repair?

A father’s lands, dear friends, I did restore
Into my Father’s power. Now am I free.
These fields are mine more truly than before.
I am not theirs; they minister to me.

The Son of consolation found it sweet
To sell his Cyprian vineyards, and to lay
His burden down before the Apostles’ feet,
His home more home in regions far away.

[97]

The merchant gladly sells that he may buy.
My Lord paid dear to ransom me from sin.
O Lord, take lands and fame and all, that I,
So hardly won, may Thee so lightly win.

My Mother’s tears are dew-drops on the flowers;
Her work goes on, howe’er so deep her rest;
Her hymns still sound amidst the orange bowers;
And all the scene and atmosphere are blest.

Hence flies my soul to that sweet eve at last:

In Ostia's port we lingered side by side.

As in the sea the sun was sinking fast,

And hastening, like her life, the falling tide.¹

Above the light, beyond the roseate sky,

Above the sun and moon and stars we clomb;

Where He who wrought their beauty dwells on high,

And is of joys the one and changeless home.

And panting after Him we gently sighed:

"Be silent, flesh, and earth, and sea, and air.

Thou soul, no longer in thyself abide;

Let every thought this solemn silence share.

¹ Conf. b. ix. c. 10.

[98]

"Let all creation yield a ravished ear,

And not by tongues, nor yet by angel voice,

Nor thunder, nor by likeness, let us hear;

But in our God, our very God, rejoice."

Lost and absorbed in this profound of bliss,

Our souls recalled the heart-transcending word.

Sure what we sought and what we heard was this:

"Enter the joy, the joy of Me, your Lord."¹

"What do I here?" she said; for she had done²

Her work of love. Her home I seek, her lands.

The goal I run for, she hath surely won,

Winterless fields, a home not made with hands.

¹ “Si cui sileat tumultus carnis, sileant phantasiæ terræ et aquarum et aeris, sileant et poli, et ipsa sibi anima sileat, et transeat se non cogitando; sileant somnia et imaginariæ revelationes, omnis lingua, et omne signum, et quicquid transeundo fit, si cui sileat omnino; quoniam, si quis audiat, dicent hæc omnia: Non ipsa nos fecimus, sed facit nos qui manet in æternum.”

² “Quid hic faciam adhuc, et cur hie sim nescio, jam consumta spe hujus sæculi. Unum erat, propter quod in hac vita aliquantum immorari cupiebam, ut te Christianum Catholicem viderem prius-quam morerer. Cumulatus hoc mihi Deus meus præstitit, ut te etiam, contemta felicitate terrena, servum ejus videam. Quid hic facio?”

[99]

Thus thought we, waiting for the ship to sail: ¹

But she unmoored did first her port attain:

Whilst I still pray for some propitious gale,

If such a bark as mine that shore may gain.

And hither I returned, and here I live,

So that my home is not a home to me.

For what I hold I lose, keep that I give;

The seen see not; the unseen clearer see.

THE DEATH OF S. AUGUSTINE.

[During the siege of Hippo by the Arian Vandals, S. Augustine fell into his last sickness. Ten days before his death he had the penitential Psalms written out and hung upon the wall; and desiring to be left alone, he spent his remaining time in reading, weeping, and praying. — POSSIDIUS.]

TIME is no more for him, nor he for time.

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

Those speculations high and manifold,
The knowledge which religion doth sublime,
Have lost upon his soul their present hold.

¹ “Instaurabamus nos navigationi.”

[100]

What he has felt or written, said or done,
Is nothing to him now, as judged below.
The love, the power, the glory he has won,
Whilst the world stands, he does not care to know.

The cohort's measured step, the trumpet's bray,
The barbarous cries of Arian hordes around,
The whizzing rocks which rend the crackling air,
Before they strike, by him unheeded sound.

Then tell him not how close the Vandals press,
Nor let him hear affection's selfish moan.
No more with prayers importunate distress:
His life was yours; his death should be his own.

Write, as he bids, in letters large and plain.
For failing memory and for dying eyes.
Those Psalms by which repentant souls complain,
And wing their upward way with heavenward sighs.

His Retractations he renews unseen:
His deep Confessions doth afresh unfold:
Let nothing come his soul and God between,
Nor least neglect nor fault be left untold.

[101]

'Tis not his will as Teacher or as Saint
To pass away in transports bold and high;
But weeping, praying, thus without restraint,
He seeks in all simplicity to die.

He dictates not to others; if they know
More, let them teach it, ¹ — only let him keep
That which he hath secure nor cares to show.
For that he hopes and hath not, — let him weep.

Thus grew the heavenly plant in earlier years,
Watered at first by fond maternal eyes, ²
Then by his own. ³ A very child of tears,
By them he lived, and grew, and with them dies.

So in that place in which his chosen friend
Nebridius peaceful lies on Abraham's breast, ⁴
Where prayers, and tears, and sighs securely end.
May he, so long a wanderer, find his rest.

¹ De Trin. lib. i. cap. 3.

² Conf. iii. 11, 12.

³ Conf. viii. 12.

⁴ Conf. ix. 3; Ep. xxi. 2.

[102]

Him with Te Deum shall Ambrosius meet,
And outstretched arms, as when he fell asleep, ¹

“Welcome, my son, to this refreshment sweet,
For this, dear soul, is not the place to weep.”

Then shall a Greater than Ambrosius cheer
With the dear accents of a long-loved voice:

“Behold the City of thy God is here,²
And in His torrent of delight rejoice.”

¹ “Eodem tempore quo migravit ad Dnum ab hora circiter undecima diei usque ad illam horam qua emisit spiritum expansis manibus in modum crucis oravit: nos vero labia illius moveri videbamus, vocem autem non audiebamus.” — *Vita S. Amb, a Paulino.*

² De Civitate.

[103]

THE BROKEN SWORD.

[The Count de Rougemont was a noted duellist. “It would be hard to say how many persons he had maltreated, wounded, and slain. He made himself the terror of all the country, and whoever was not on good terms with him was sure to be quickly put out of the way” He was converted by the ministry of S. Vincent de Paul, A.D. 1617. As he was riding and thinking, his eye fell on his sword. A mighty struggle took place in his heart. He cried out: “Que ferai-je done, ô mon Dieu? Un tel instrument de ma honte et de mon péché, est-il encore capable de me tenir au cœur ? Je ne trouve que cette épée qui m’embrasse.” At length he leaped from his horse, and broke his sword in pieces on the roadside; remounted, and rode home in the greatest peace and freedom of spirit. — *Life of S. Vincent de Paul.*]

SLOWLY up the winding road,
As a woodman with his load,
Rides the Count, he knows not
There is something in his air,

Passing strange,
A wondrous change;
Stop him, ask him, if you dare.

[104]

Ask him whom he slew last night;
Whom he now designs to fight;
Why he throws the reins away,
Lets his charger idly stray,
 Looking round
 At every sound,
Asking why, as best he may.

Now in meditation lost,
Now by passion wildly tost,
He beholds his trusty brand,
Grasps it in his mighty hand,
 Draws it out,
 And seems to doubt,
Stops his horse with stem command.

Hark! he speaks: "I cannot spare
Thee, my guardian, nor could bear
Fools to march before my face,
Braggarts fill my honoured place.
 Must it be
 That men should see
Dreaded Rougemont's foul disgrace?"

[105]

“Must I buy at such a loss?
Hast thou, Lord, no lighter cross?
Glory of my martial name,
Sword of cruelty and shame,
 Thus I take,
 And thus I break,
Thus my haughty spirit tame.”

Hark! the steel upon the stone
Rings and cracks — the deed is done.
Startled at the sudden sound,
Leaps the horse, and paws the ground.
 Well he may.
 For sure to-day
Will a day of days be found.

With no weapon at his side,
Homewards see De Rougemont ride.
Never struck he such a blow,
Never conquered such a foe.
 Passions cease,
 And all is peace;
He has made a heaven below.

[106]

S. FRANCIS DE SALES, 1

WHY should I wish to have my will,
And, seeking good, secure an ill?
Mid-life and age have only brought

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

Fresh proof of what youth's trials taught.

'Twas thee I sought, with early zeal,
Great Rome, to see and hear and feel,
And weary with my wandering, chose
A peaceful lodging for repose,
Whence I could watch with thoughtful eye
Historic Tiber rolling by.

From many a shrine my weary feet

I dragged at eve to my retreat,

And found it full of richer guests,

Who urged and gained their harsh behests:

The haughty menials cast me out,

Homeless and faint, to roam about.

That night a sudden tempest brake,

¹ Life by Marsollier, b. i.

[107]

The broad Campagna was a lake,
And Tiber's flood by break of day
Had swept the guilty house away.

Then, when my pilgrimage was o'er,

I stood upon Ancona's shore,

And there to suit my purpose found

A vessel for fair Venice bound.

I gained the deck, and hoped to sail

On tranquil seas, with foaming gale;

When lo! a dame elate with pride,

The humbler passenger espied. ¹

“She for herself and hers alone

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

Had hired the ship. 'Twas all her own.

I must depart." I prayed for grace,

For scanty room, and meanest place;

But no. The Captain asked in vain.

Forth was I vilely cast again.

I saw the white sails slowly fill:

The heavens were bright, the waters still:

But soon I marked an inky cloud

Rise from the deep, the sky o'ershroud.

Francis de Sales was a Count of very noble family, but travelled with only three attendants.

[108]

The tempest burst with deafening roar,

And wrathful Adria lashed the shore.

Vainly the gay felucca sought,

With shortened sail, her former port.

Was that her sail? No — but a wave,

A snow-capped mound above their grave.

Thus did I learn to look above,

Read all things by the light of love,

And leave to God's sole perfect will

To cross my purpose, or fulfil.

MISERRIMUS.

[Inscribed on a flat stone in the Cloisters at Worcester, believed, but not known, to be over the remains of the Rev. T. Morris, non-juror.]

YES, thou wert sad, and sad was many a heart,

When Ken and his brave friends their seats resigned;
From altar, flock, and home resolved to part,
And all but truth and duty leave behind.

[109]

Sharp was the struggle, for they did not stand
Before the Prætor. "Sacrifice or die."
Then had they cast the incense from their hand,
And met their tortures with unflinching eye.

But good men differed — bosom friend from friend;
Foolish the Prince whom they would not forsake;
Nor could they read the future, scan the end
Of that sad rent which they would sadly make.

And who so high of soul as quite exempt
From touch of pain, to pass beneath the smile
Of the great world's aversion and contempt,
Sleek cringing courtiers fattening all the while?

Miserrimus. Miserrimus that day
When the bells rang, but did not ring for thee;
When thy beloved ones thronged the churchward way,
And thou thro' tears the spire couldst dimly see.

Miserrimus. Miserrimus the bells
Adown the brook and meadows seemed to toll.
For ever thus their peal our sorrow tells,
And suits its measure to the listener's soul.

[110]

But wretched rather he for sordid gain
Who barter's faith, and truth postpones to gold.
Miserrimus of him the bells complain
Who careless lets his sheep forsake the fold.

Miserrimus, whose fulsome praises shame
His neighbour's grave, unconscious of his sin.
The world's wide gates once opened at his name,
And now he knocks, but cannot enter in.

Miserrimus. Miserrimus is he
Who sets at war the principles of right;
Who makes the path of duty hard to see,
And dares the bonds of law to disunite.

But thou! No more Miserrimus for thee,
Beate. Neither dew nor summer rain
Fall on thy grave, lest they should seem to be
Tears which by thee can ne'er be shed again.

Thy woes are joys: and thy self-chosen blame
Is truest praise. Miserrimus no more:
Beatus, Benedictus, is thy name;
Age after age more blessed than before.

[111]

And if thou still one thought of earth retain,
It is to join when chants are soaring high:
Or when these bells repeat a happier strain,
"Blessed are they who with sweet Jesus die."

THE WELL OF CLISSON.

[The Castle of Clisson, near Nantes, on the south of the Loire, belonged to the family of that name. The most famous of them was the Constable Olivier de Clisson, surnamed the Butcher, from his cruelty in the war with England, *temp.* Edward III. In 1793 the Republican army under Kleber filled the Castle well with their prisoners, consisting of all ages and both sexes, who had taken refuge in the Castle. Only one escaped, hacked and maimed as described below. He was living when I visited the place in 1846. A tree is planted over the spot.]

THROW them in; the well is deep,
Safely will its prisoners keep.
Nearer, nearer to the brink;
Over now to swim or sink.
Father, mother, daughter, son,
Age or childhood, all is one.

[112]

Hark, no more the waters splash,
When the victims downwards dash;
But amid the groans which rise,
And from out the shrieks and cries,
Comes a dull and heavy sound,
As a rock falls on the ground.
And the wails which meet the ear
Now seem nearer and more near.
See that boy who grasps the stone,
Hack him; hew him: he is gone,
Who alone will live to tell
This your deed, ye dogs of hell.

You will live to think of this,
Wish your hands as maimed as his;
Vainly wish that sword or flame
Could cut off their guilt and shame.
There, — slink off, and leave the place;
For the Sun doth hide his face;
And the spirits glide about,
And the ghosts are stealing out
From each darksome cell below,
Where men pined, and none could know; ¹

¹ The Castle is full of *oubliettes*.

[113]

And the Butcher Lord is nigh,
Watching with his hollow eye. ¹
All the crimes that he has done,
All their woes, here meet in one.
Those dark ages ye contemn
Rise against you to condemn:
Come and see, ye sons of night:
Come and see the sons of light.
Hail to Reason: haste and try
Liberty, Fraternity.
Hark, a muffled echo falls
On the ground from broken walls.
As the wind in some deep cave,
Issues from that living grave
One united dying groan.
Fainter, — feebler, — fainter moan.
Awed by the memories of what has been,

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

I stand and gaze upon the tranquil scene.
This guardian pine above the fatal well
Hath told, and still her silent tale doth tell.
Not like the tree o'er Polydorus' bones,
Nor with black blood it shows its grief, nor moans;

¹ Lost in the battle of Auray.

[114]

But spreads its blessing o'er the former grave, ¹
Like Him who dying stretched His arms to save.
The guiltless dead are in that land of peace,
Where shouts of victors, wails of vanquished cease.
War upon war has followed; change on change;
Till nought in France is old, and nought is strange.
This only certain shows, that selfish power
Digs her own grave, and rules one little hour;
Whilst Faith and Mercy, though they seem to die,
Do but remove to purer airs on high.
Here, then, let schemers stand, and think betime
Before they loose the dogs of lust and crime.
Here list awhile to yonder pleading dove,
And learn from her that happiness is love;
That, with ambition and red carnage fraught,
Sweet Liberty herself is dearly bought;
Whilst Faith and Love, with hands from bloodshed pure,
Obtain the only blessings which endure. ²

¹ The bodies have been removed.

² See Lord Lytton's Essay on Robespierre; in which he shows that the French had obtained all the securities of liberty before the violence of the Revolution began, which

first disgraced it, and then destroyed its object, by forcing into existence the military despotism of Napoleon.

[NP]

Class III. — RELIGIOUS.

MARY AT THE FEET OF JESUS.

1845.

RIGHT well doth Martha serve with zealous care;
As well would Mary's love each want supply;
With Him her all, her last, would gladly share.
Then peaceful die.

But she hath found her soul hath greater need
Of Him, than He of human efforts vain;
So to her ark the dove, unwilling freed,
Returns again.

[116]

Nor brother's love nor sister's can rejoice,
Nor entrance find in that enraptured heart.
Its passions and its will have made their choice,
The better part.

To gaze on Him, and watch that blessed Face,
To see, and feel, and know Him for her own;
Love sought for this, her own exclusive grace,
And this alone.

Therefore she hath the joy which she did choose;

The wreck of worlds can never break her rest.

Her soul hath found a peace it cannot lose

In Jesus' breast.

Lowly she rests, for lowly are her ways,

And calm as eve at close of stormy day;

And love unconscious upon Love doth gaze

Her soul away.

[117]

UNANSWERED PRAYER.

1850.

UNANSWERED prayer! O long-unanswered prayer!

Sin unsubdued! and sorrow unconsoled!

I laid this burden on the weary air,

And to the rocks and woods my grief I told.

And on I wandered many and many a mile,

With drooping hands, bent knee, and eyes depressed;

And when the skies above me deigned to smile,

It seemed like mocking to my joyless breast.

Worn out at last, I sought a mossy bank,

And laid my head upon it whilst I wept;

And dews and sleep fell on me, where I sank;

Yet still I saw and thought, the while I slept.

[118]

Long lines of archers in their green array
 With bow and quiver stood the butt before,
Which shone as shines the noon of summer's day,
 Nor could my dazzled eyes behold it more.

Then one advanced, and strung his twanging bow.
 But unseen clay his arrow clung around;
And vain were all his efforts, — dull and slow
 The weapon quickly sank and cut the ground.

Next, light of step, with arrows sharp and bright.
 Another shot, but, shooting, — turned away
His thoughtless eye; so, like his roving sight,
 Far from the mark the arrow went astray.

Another, hasty, flurried, red with ire,
 And trembling with excitement, forwards came;
But dark to him appeared the globe of fire,
 And wild and erring was his wrathful aim.

But in his steps a youth of gentler mood
 Scarce missed the outer line; yet to his bow
Fitted no second shaft, but mournful stood,
 And sighed, and turned away with footstep slow.

[119]

And now the last approached, and calmly took
 A milk-white shaft, then tried his oft-proved bow; —
Intently fixed, one soul-absorbing look,

And calmly let the balanced arrow go.

It struck, but glanced; — then gathering all his might.

He bent his bow and soul for one essay;
The arrow pierced the central source of light,
And all the scene in radiance passed away.

ABSOLUTION.

1850.

Once I absolved myself, placed my desire
Upon the lips of God,
And thought to rest:
But this endured not; soon I did require
That God himself should comfort His distressed.

[120]

Therefore I traced the current to its rise
In childhood's thoughtless years.
The haunts of youth
Against me witnessed; fields, and streams, and skies,
And day and night proclaimed the fearful truth.

I thought I should have sunk upon the ground,
But He did hold me up,
Who downward cast;
And thus I poured my sins until I found
That memory's bitter pools were dried at last.

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

I lived with Legion in the loathsome grave;

But now at Jesus' feet

I calmly rest;

Whilst deep in Ocean's all-engulphing wave

Lies bound the demon tyrant of my breast.

I lay as paralysed upon his bed

Whose faith once pierced the roof;

And I, with less,

Lift up the feeble limbs and languid head,

And fearless walk, God's holy name to bless.

[121]

I was with Lazarus, loathsome, four days dead

But Christ hath called me forth.

I speak. I live.

He bade them loose the grave-clothes from my head

And fettered limbs, and risen freedom give.

ABSOLUTION.

God has forgotten — but rememberest thou?

Rememberest thou the spring

Whence those dark bitter streams of sin did flow?

Is it so small a thing

To be forgiven ?

Gold, pleasure, praise, lusts of the world and eye,

The tongue, and curious ear,

Hath God the sins which spring from them put by,

That thou shouldst have no fear
Of deeper falls?

[122]

He who renounced his high ancestral race,
And learning fondly prized,
Counting them dung, that he might come by grace,
And all the world despised, —
He loved not thus.

They, too, who heaped upon the crackling flame
Their hoarded magic lore,
Counting their ancient glory as their shame.
And offering all their store, —
They loved not thus.

Return, and think; nor come with empty hand.
Some sweet oblation bring, —
Even thyself. This doth thy past demand.
Is it so small a thing
To be forgiven?

[123]

ABSOLUTION.

1850.

“I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou hast set my heart at liberty.”

THE larks were soaring in the azure skies,
One only cowering mourned her captive state:

The Salamanca Corpus: *The Fugitive and Other Poems* (1870)

I saw and freed; then watched her upwards rise
And sing her grateful song at Heaven's high gate.

A ship at anchor with her sails outspread
Lay shaking in the wind, as yet not free.
But then "Away:" she bowed her crested head
Before the breeze, and cut the foaming sea.

My bright-eyed boy, how changed and dull his eye;
Nor came he up to meet me as of yore.
"All is forgiven, my child." Then with a cry
Of joy he ran, more loving than before.

[124]

And now, O God, since Thou hast set me free.
Shall I not hymn Thy praise, and run Thy way?
Thine only now, and Thine for ever be,
Starting afresh from this most joyful day?

THE THREE BIRTHS.

"Revelation speaks to us of a triple birth: that of the body, that of Baptism, and that of the Resurrection." — GREG. NAZ. *Orat. in Sanct. Bapt.* 40.

A MOTHER watched her new-born child,
Which sleeping breathed its silent breath;
Nor saw the soul with sin defiled,
Nor knew the latent seeds of death.

The mother stood the font beside,
And clasped her new-born to her breast:

But when her child of days had died,
An Angel bare its soul to rest.

[125]

A little mound of brightest green,
On Easter-morn bestrown with flowers,
Close to the church-path still is seen,
Spangled with dew and tearful showers.

And though the bell has ceased to sound,
Two parents, with a child in hand,
Still linger by that little mound.
And lost in meditation stand.

When through the porch they pass, you trace,
Though tears are shining in her eye,
A smile upon that mother's face,
For those that live although they die.

Two births are past. Two deaths are o'er.
Another birth, and last, remains;
And that third life for evermore,
For which creation now complains.

Three lives ascending height on height,
As hue on hue night fades away;
Three dawns of bright and brighter light,
Of which the last is endless day.

[126]

THE walls with rosy garlands glowed
In former years. I pass again:
But of the flowers which cheered the road
Nought but the walls and name remain.

A humble inn beside the way
From three fair ash-trees took its name.
Their very trunks have passed away,
And yet the title reads the same.

And still of Michael Mass we speak,
The while our Altars empty stand:
Vainly on Martin Mass I seek
Our Sun's last blessing on the land.

Yet let the ancient names remain.
But plant the tree and rose once more;
Nor let fond memory search in vain.
Nor better times with sighs deplore.

[127]

PREACHING PRAYERS.

DOST thou remember in what place thou art?
And what thy task? Or is Heaven's gracious ear
So deaf that thou must shout, and act a part,
To interest its attention ? Dost thou fear
It will not feel, or fully comprehend,
Unless thou speak with noisy emphasis.

Such sounds as these are strange to realms of bliss,
Nor mingle with the songs which never end.

And hast thou any news which no man yet
E'er heard, that thou with such portentous bounce,
Lest simple souls their very creed forget,
As startling novelties must here announce?

If thou wilt have an art, thy art be this:

“To man as man, to God thy wishes say
As God; and preaching preach, and praying pray:”

To mingle two such acts is both to miss.

[128]

To breed devotion is to be devout;
And to impress, be thou thyself impressed.
If o'er the church thy glances roam about,
The people know enough to know the rest.
When thou art preaching, freely use thine eyes;
But when thou prayest, thyself and them forget
Let every thought and wish on God be set:
So shall your pure devotions pierce the skies.

POST COMMUNION.

1845.

LORD, let Thy sleep upon me fall
In this unbroken peace.
Thou who hast freed me from the thrall
Of death, by death release.

Whilst yet Thine Angels stand around

In Eucharistic choir;

Whilst yet upon my tongue be found

Thine altar's sacred fire:

[129]

So let me die, ere sin has stained

My sacerdotal vest;

Ere worldly passions have profaned

My heart's, Thy temple's, rest.

And soft as childhood's guileless sleep,

And like the dewy eve,

So let me all my stillness keep,

When I my joys receive.

But as I catch the echoing lay

Of him whose Heaven is won,

At Thy dear feet I weep away

My wish: Thy will be done,

Both when Thou wilt, and as, and where,

Who knowest, doest best:

Nor let the servant seek to share

Too soon the Master's rest.

¹Phil. i. 21.

[130]

13 Nic.

ALAS! our Mother Church has laid a load
Upon her children's souls, for can it be
That Home, the Way, Provision for the road
Should be the same? This — reason cannot see.
Eat Christ, and drink, if thou to Christ wouldst come!
Christ is thy Way, if thou wouldst Christ attain!
What! Must we have to have? Is it not home
To find? Why, having found Him, seek again?

Yet Paul was found before the wanderer sought;¹
And when the Twelve were toiling long in vain,
Christ's coming brought their ship at once to port.
That blessed pair soon found their lord again,

¹ Phil. iii. 12.

[131]

Who had walked with Him blindly on the way,
Then seen him at Emmaus with their eyes:
And "Thou shalt be with me," He said, "to-day,"
Which Presence of itself was Paradise.

And is not God above, and round us, here?
Our souls in Him? and He our souls within;
Go where we will, unalterably near,
Yet far removed as often as we sin?
And is not Heaven afar? Yet, oh how nigh,
In prayer, and when before His shrine we bend!

Through faith and love to live to Christ, or die.

Is one; in Whom all blessings meet and blend.

TEARS, NOT IDLE.

THERE is a fount of sorrow in the soul
Barred by a door, which opens at the touch
With some sweet souls, with others slowly moves.
The character of each as porter sits,
And to his hand a stream of tears bursts out;

[132]

Tears, idle tears for nothing and mere self,
Or with grave cause and genuine charity.

It was the fount of feeling and pure joys
Of love, but sin's sad crack laid bare a way
To briny depths, and now poor fallen man
Expresses his deep feelings by salt tears;
And whether joy or woe disturb, he weeps.
Blest were his tears when David felt his sin,
And that he had not felt it, wept the more,
When he resumed the harp which idle lay,
Or tuneless sounded all that dreary year,
In which impenitence froze up his soul
And sealed the source of harmony divine.

Blest were the tears which seemed to wash the feet
Of the Absolver, but more truly cleansed
The stains of that sad heart from which they gushed;

And blest again when at the sacred tomb

They flowed because they could not reach those Feet.

Holy the tears a good man shed for one
Who tried to please the world; then for himself,

[133]

That less he sought to God than She to man.¹
Good also his who watched the fluttering bird
Struggling in vain, and at each effort checked
By its hard bonds, type of the captive soul:
Or when again the dogs pursued the hare,
Like devils on the flying sinner's track.²

These tears were blest, and consecrate by His
Who for man's sin and for its bitter fruits
Wept thrice — o'er death, and over Zion's doom.
And in the grove with griefs beyond our ken.
It is our shame, if we for follies weep;
Our shame, if neither penitence nor love
Open the gate of feelings just and due.
Weep your vain tears, and weep your tearless eyes,
Poor sinners, weep; that He who wept for you
May fill again its ancient cell with store
Of feeling pure, and fit for that sweet place
Where tears can flow no more, and eyes are bright
Solely with love and overflowing bliss.

¹ Pambus, Soc. Eccl. Hist. iv. 23.

² S. Anselm.

[134]

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON IN THE WOOD.

TAKE thou the reins, poor beast, and lead the way,
For they are useless in thy master's hand.
I did but further in my journey stray,
The more to guide myself I thought and planned.

Behold it is as ever it has been

When thro' life's maze I sought to push my road:
I seldom caught the cheerful light between
The shadowy forms, nor neared that blest abode.

And woe is me, if I have sought to guide

My fellow-men, like thee, true friend, more wise,
Because more simple; woe, if far and wide
I led them, trusting to these erring eyes.

Far hence from me such pride for evermore,

Far, far from me my future course to choose.
Fain would I walk more humbly than before;
That I may find the way, content to lose.

[135]

Not to discover, but be taught, I pray,

Lest I should roam in error round and round;
And never reach the open realms of day,
But when night falls a wanderer still be found.

Lo! now at last I see the cheerful light

Shine thro' the borders of the darksome wood.

My God, I hail the sweet prophetic sight,

And haste to Thee, my Joy, my only Good.

PUBLIC CENSURES.

WHOE'ER thou art — Archdeacon, Bishop, Peer,

Or speaker whom assemblies crowd to hear,

Constructing ponderous charge, or telling speech

On those who do distasteful acts, or preach

Unwelcome doctrines — pause, I pray you — pause

Or ere you stand as champions in the cause

Of Truth and Right; and on your knees alone,

As in His sight to whom all hearts are known,

Inquire the motives of your fond design,

And whither your temptations will incline;

[136]

Whether through fear, or latent vanity,

You try to suit the world's unthinking cry;

Whether in life you most impatient feel

Of cold neglect or misdirected zeal;

Whether a strict adherence to the laws

Entitles you to vindicate their cause;

If patient thought and study blest by prayer

Have formed the sentence which you now prepare

To issue with authority, and claim

The weight of a position or a name;

And lastly, if the mercy which you mete,

Your wants suffice before the Judgment Seat:

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Lest unawares against your God you fight,
Or with ill weapons strive for truth and right; —
Then rise with steadfast will and fearless heart,
And boldly speak and take and hold your part;
Sure that whate'er the world may say or do,
It matters not a thought, — at least to you;
Since you have learned in God's unclouded light
That Truth and Love are strength, and Right is might.

[137]

IMMORTAL.

COULD we be satisfied, like leaves or flowers,
To bow beneath dark Autumn's withering powers;
To lay us down and draw a final breath,
And welcome our extinction in our death;
To be dissolved and melt in earth or air
To elements which future men may share;
Both they to us and we to them unknown,
Whate'er we had or were no more our own;
Nor earth, nor sea, nor man, nor God above
For us — nor thought, nor wish, nor hope, nor love?
Not such were we created. He who gave
A soul to man gave hopes beyond the grave,
Which ne'er had known us if His righteous will,
Duly observed, had been our shield from ill.
Better in woe to live, and die in pain,
Than bask in sunshine not to live again.
Dread as we do, and tremble as we may,
To meet the Judge, and see His awful Day;

[138]

Not even thus would we our perils flee,
Not to be judged, accepting not to be.
At such a cost the soul, her life in hand,
Prefers before the dread Assize to stand.
For life, dear life, her famished cravings yearn;
For life, sweet life, her lips athirsting burn:
For life as self; yet not for self alone;
She seeks another whilst she seeks her own.
She seeks for Him, when thus she seeketh His,
Who only giveth that He only is.

Blest be His name who, rising on our night,
Made Immortality to shine as light; ¹
Who with our sin took all our fear away,
And bids us boldly face His Judgment Day.
Conjoined to Him we cannot really die,
But life below ascends to life on high.
What here she craved and panted to believe,
Eternal Life, the soul shall there receive.
Drink life from Life in one continuous stream,
And light from Light in one perpetual beam.

¹ 2 Tim. i. 10: φωτίσαιτος δε ζωήν.

[139]

GOD IMMUTABLE.

“Quamdiu vixeris, mutabilitate subjectus es, etiam nolens; ut modo lætus, modo tristis, modo pacatus, modo turbatus, nunc devotus, nunc indevotus, nunc studiosus, nunc acediosus, nunc gravis, nunc lenis inveniaris.”— *Imit. Christi*, lib. iii. c. xxxiii.

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“Quid est hoc? Quid intelligam? Domine, quid dicis ?” — S. AUG. *Tr. in Joh. Ev.*
xxi.

“Cum Deus mutare dicitur voluntatem, ut quibus lenis erat, verbi gratia, reddatur iratus, illi potius quam ipse mutantur, et eum quodam modo mutatum in his quæ patiuntur inveniunt: sicut mutatur sol oculis sauciatis, et asper quodam modo ex miti, et ex miti et ex delectabili molestus efficitur, cum ipse apud se ipsum maneat idem qui fuit.”— S. AUG. *De Civ. lib. xxii. c. ii.*

O LORD, we vary as the varying wind,

Now north, now south, now soft as childhood's breath,

Then raging like the fiends; or warm and kind,

Infusing spring-tide life, or freezing unto death.

[140]

Sure we are not the same, but other now

From what we were, and soon to change again

From what we are. Our virtues ebb and flow,

And they who trust and love, too often trust in vain.

And is it so with Thee? Books fondly tell

That Thou art One Immutable, and high

Above the passions, as the clouds, dost dwell,

In realms of deepest peace for which we vainly sigh.

But I behold Thy Son from Eden driven;

His life and glory changed to death and shame;

And those calm skies with lurid lightnings riven,

Which left to smiling towns but an accursed name.

And doth not Abraham for thine elect

Justly of broken covenants complain.

When he regards them thus so wholly wrecked,
And ne'er, oh ne'er, to be Thy sole beloved again?

[141]

Art Thou Immutable? The thought forgive,
The awful question; yet Thy withering frown
To those who 'neath Thy smile rejoiced to live
Is terribly diverse, and casteth Angels down.

Art Thou Immutable, when thus I see
Bent forms and trailing steps of broken men,
Upright at first, and light, and glad, and free?
Thee changeless — whence their wretched now, their happy then?

Oh yes, Thou art Immutable, and strange
To Thine own blessed Self wouldst Thou appear
If Thou, my God, mine Holy One, couldst change;
Then would no joy be found in heaven, and hell were here.

Oh yes, Thou art Immutable, and we
Fall from Thy love, but Thou canst never fly,
Never from us; and our return to Thee,
When possible, conducts to One for ever nigh.

[142]

Immutable, from Thee the creature came
Changeful and weak, though other far than this.
To dwell in Thee, abiding still the same,
Is his sole strength and life, and ever-present bliss.

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Sin is that change from primal good to ill.

Which all the covenants of mercy rent;
And wrought in man that fickleness of will
Which crossed and barred the good Creator's kind intent.

Thy justice tells Thy sureness; and the brine
Which salts the buried cities of the plain,
And Babel's wreck, and hers who once was Thine,
Proclaim the changeless doom of sinners blessed in vain.

Oh yes. Thou art Unchangeable, and I
Have in my woes and wayward wanderings found
Thine ear still open to my helpless cry,
Thine everlasting arms my weakness wrapped around.

[143]

And as thy Sun's unfailing light above
Waits for our earthly mists to melt, or part,
So rests expectant Thine unvarying love
Till it may fill each cell of this inconstant heart.

Immutable, Eternal, as of old,
So now, Thou art, and wilt be. On this deep
Of awe and love, to Angels yet untold.
Cradled in faith I float, and as an infant sleep.

SURSUM CORDA.

IT was a tale the ancients loved to tell.
That brutes are formed to gaze upon the ground,

But lordly men the lower race excel,
Erect and free, nor thus to matter bound.

But is it so? Along the crowded street,
How many a man with drooping head and eye
Drags his slow steps, or with quick-sounding feet
Straight forward gazing passes heedless by.

[144]

Down, down on earth, or level with its line,
Sink heart and eye; and for the worlds above,
Their beauties seen, their hidden more divine,
Where is the glance, or thought, or hope, or love?

Yea, and the higher sort, who so far rise
Superior to the crowd that they discern
An upper world, and search the jewelled skies,
And peep, and think, and somewhat of them learn;

How many never lift themselves thereby.
But on the husks of knowledge try to live;
So that dread mysteries throned with God on high
Topics of talk to boastful savans give.

And what am I to criticise the rest
Who vainly seek — and ah, so seldom seek —
To raise my soul to regions of the blest,
And be, or feel, the good of which I speak?

I sing of heaven as of some mountain land
To which I should, but will not yet ascend.

And, little as I know, I understand

More than I love; nor thither gladly tend.

[145]

With rules and principles, a goodly store,

Along the level road of life I plod:

The same dull pilgrim that I was of yore,

Nor weary of the path so often trod.

I drag down heaven to earth, but heaven on me

No strong attraction yet doth exercise.

Spell-bound to that which I can feel or see,

To things unseen I scarcely wish to rise.

O listless, helpless soul, look up and long.

“I cannot.” No, thou canst not; therefore pray

That He who makes the eagles’ pinions strong

May teach e’en thee to wing thy heavenward way.

Thou who for us wast lifted on the Tree,

Then from the grave and from the mountain height

To heaven didst rise, so draw us after Thee,

Never to rest till faith is lost in sight.

O Thou who drawest hearts — if, as I fear,

I am not meet that any gleam of bliss

Should make me pant and faint to draw more near,

And tremble lest Thy full delights I miss —

[146]

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Then make this world more bitter, till my woe

Aweary me of life, that so I may

Long to forsake my withered joys below,

And death itself become my festal day.

And yet my timid flesh so shrinks from pain,

My soul from grief, I wish those words unsaid.

Only of this poor self will I complain,

Nor with unlifted heart lift up my head.

ON A CERTAIN CORPSE.

UNCLENCHED the ponderous fists, and meekly laid

Crosswise upon the broad herculean breast.

Levelled and gone the rifts which passion made

Upon the brow, which seems a very home of rest.

His pallid lip has lost its withering pride:

His fiery eye beneath its lid is veiled.

Uplift it. See, the flashing light has died

Within the lamp, its brightness wholly failed.

[147]

The fleshly lusts can now no longer taint

The body froze by more than winter's breath.

So calm, so pure, he might have been a saint

Beatified and canonized by death.

But where then are the passions? where the soul

Which tenanted the silent house before?

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Beneath the ice do raging torrents roll,
Or in some depth unseen insatiate roar?

Has the wild storm its fury rolled away,
And left an awful stillness in its rear,
Whilst thunders crash, and lurid lightnings play
More frightful still than when they echoed here?

Oh, if the future be one greater past,
What sage shall teach, what prophet dare to tell
The first of that which follows this life's last,
That pause upon the brink of Heaven or Hell?

[148]

THE SEA-ANEMONE.

[Published in *Monthly Packet*, 1868.]

The tide is down, and thou art left alone
To thine own patient powers. Fast closed and still,
Like some round pebble bedded in the stone,
Thou restest, till the rising waters fill
Their wonted courses; then thou openest out,
And spread'st thy fibrous mossy limbs about,
Feeling for life and joy the limpid depths throughout.

I touch thee with this staff: one little arm
Feels the intrusion, and resentful all
Shrink back from possibility of harm,
And into apathetic stillness fall.
Thy tinted beauty, varying with the play
Of varying waters, coldly dies away;

Nor wilt thou show again, whilst strangers near thee stay.

Thou baskest in the light, when Ocean's kiss
On the soft lips of earth is gently heard:

[149]

When all enjoy sweet reconciliation's bliss,
From sportive fish to floating slumbering bird.
But when the fickle sea is wroth again,
Thy steadfast grasp thou dost unmoved retain,
And over thee mad waves surge up and dash in vain.

My soul, my soul, when wilt thou learn to wait,
And thankful take God's blessings as He smiles?
When wilt thou try the world's approach to hate,
And shrink from every contact which defiles?
When will thy poor affections firmly lock
In Faith's embrace the never-failing Rock,
And thus unmoved of griefs and fears, endure the shock?

THE UNBROKEN.

“A bone of him shall not be broken.” — JOHN xix. 36.

STRIKE hard, ye ruthless soldiers; let the bones
Crack with your iron strokes. A livid line
Responds to every blow,
And purple jets of blood.¹

¹So represented by Rubens in the picture at Antwerp.

[150]

Strike hard; for one repentance scorns, and Hell
May well begin. The other meekly bears,
 And hastens to rejoin
 His Lord in Paradise.

But touch not the Anointed; for the Lamb
Pierced, bruised, and slain, is under Angels' care;
 And not the slightest bone
 Of Him shall ever break.

Hold off! for sure your worst is done, your all.
Are you not satisfied? Behold the marks
 Of scourge, and nails, and blows,
 And your mock crown of thorns.

Thus far; no farther; dash your angry waves:
The Rock of Ages bounds you; and henceforth
 All honour to the Dead,
 Safety and sweetest peace.

No hostile hand shall touch Him now,¹ but love
Of broken hearts shall take Him from the Cross,
 And softly wind the shroud,
 And lay Him in the tomb.

¹ The piercing by the spear — which had a mystical object — is the seeming exception to the new era dating from “It is finished.”

[151]

The bones are strength;¹ and man could never break

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Divine enduring courage. He was calm

Before the Judge, and calm

Hung on the Cross, and died.

Peter was broken, with his timid friends

Who faithless fled, and left in time of need;

But all unbroken still

“I Am” abode, — abides.

The Church, His Body, often hard bested,

Wounded and scarred, shall never be subdued;

Because a part of Him

Who never can be broke.

The Martyr, and the widow, and the child

Orphaned and lone, and souls oppressed with guilt,

Unbroken, by the grace

Of this Unbroken, stand.

Off, then, ye slaves who blindly execute

The will of human lords; confess a Power

Stronger than Jewish hate

Or Rome’s imperious rule!

¹ S. Aug. Enar. in Ps. cxxxviii.: “Quid ergo os dicit ? Firmitas quædam interior;” and elsewhere.

[152]

But come, thou teacher, taught thyself at last;

Yea, come by daylight, for night hastens on;

And in this death discern

The font of that New Birth.

And come from Ramah, weeping by the way;
Sowing in bitter tears, to reap in joy,
Thou truly rich in this,
That Christ will bless thy grave.

Gently draw out the nails, and gently place
The precious burden on a mother's knees;

And let a spotless vest

Enfold the spotless Lamb,

Unbroken, Undeiled, our only Strength,
And our sole Innocence, — so let Him lie.

The grave a chancel make.

The dreaded tomb a home.

Roll up the stone, ye soldiers. Seal it sure,
And watch it well. 'Tis all that ye can do.

For through unbroken rock

Th' Unbroken will arise.

[153]

QUIS EST DEUS?

“Interrogavi terram, et dixit, Non sum; et quæcunque in eadem sunt idem confessa sunt. Interrogavi mare et abyssos, et reptilia animarum vivarum et responderunt: Non sumus Deus tuus, quære super nos... Interrogavi cælum, solem, lunam, stellas: Neque nos sumus Deus, quem quæris, inquirant. Et dixi omnibus iis, quæ circumstant fores carnis meæ: Dixistis mihi de illo aliquid. Et exclamaverunt voce magnâ: Ipse fecit nos.” — S. AUG. *Conf.* lib. X. c. vi.

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“Magnus est mundus, sed major est a quo factus est mundus. Pulcher est mundus, sed pulchrior est a quo factus est mundus. Blandus est mundus, sed suavior est a quo factus est mundus.” — S. AUG. *Serm. xcvi. de verb. Ev. Marci*, viii. § 6.

O LIVING, loving eye of day,
O life of Spring, and Summer's bliss,
May we the creatures' homage pay,
And bless thee for a world like this?

[154]

O eye of night, O countless eyes,
Which gleam above in purple space,
Are ye the gods to whom should rise
Our praises for your ceaseless grace?

I read your answer, glancing bright:
“We serve a law; we serve a will.
The uncreated Light of Light
Ordained us first, sustains us still.”

O laws which rule the earth and sea;
O laws of matter, laws of thought;
O cycles in eternity,
With change and sameness ever fraught;

Are ye our gods? — Ye answer “No;
Laws are not life; laws are not will.
The viewless march of Him we show.
Who doth His own creation fill.”

Fair is the world, but fairer He

Whose beauty on creation lies
Reflected, as the slumbering sea
Smiles answering to the smiling: skies.

[155]

Strong is the driving tempest's will;
And fierce is Ocean when he raves;
But mightier He who said "Be still,"
And king-like trod His subject waves.

The sun came forth with giant might
To run his course at break of day;
The Cross at noontide called for night,
And all his glory paled away.

O Will, O Law, O Wisdom, Love,
O Goodness, Greatness, Beauty, Might,
O Life of all below, above,
O causeless, endless Fount of Light,

Supreme above, around, within,
O God of gods, — reign Thou alone.
Remove the only blemish — sin,
And make Thy creatures all Thine own.

[156]

CONTRAST.

How many hearts are breaking,
Yet see my child's delight!

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And eyes sweet sleep forsaking,
When he sleeps through the night!
O joys of life and sorrows
Which stand out side by side!
One face of life a funeral,
The other like a bride.

Parched deserts, green oases;

Dear homes, and world-wide lands;
Fond greetings, radiant faces,
And parting wrench of hands;
Tolling of bells, and ringing;
Bridals and burials white;
Smiles, tears, and wails and singing;
Morning joys, griefs at night.

[157]

And oft the dark sky cleareth,
And tempests roll away;
And brighter light appeareth
At eve, than noon of day.
O joys of man and sorrows
Which stand full side by side;
This life like a funeral,
The next life like a bride!

DIVORCE.

“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put
asunder.” — ST. MATT. xix. 6.

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OH, evil day for England and all her subject lands,
On which she rent asunder the Church's golden bands;
And gave her sons a freedom which Christ Himself denies,
And scorned the holy canons as nothing in her eyes,
She took the keys of Heaven, which are not hers to wield;

[158]

And to the touch unholy the Church was bid to yield;
When those whom Christ united, and made for ever one,
Beheld their safeguard ravished, and holy bands undone:
When serpents could envenom, and by their venom win;
And sinners were rewarded by what they sought through sin.
The injured husband freely might thrust his wife away,
But to poor weakly women their proud lords answered "Nay."
And all in vain he pleaded who now is gone to rest.
Where carnal politicians no longer can molest.
Fain would he save his country, but England shut her ear;
And now no more for ever that gentle voice we hear.
But high amid the praises of Jesus' white-robed throng.

[159]

It makes its sweet responses to that pure Virgin Song.¹
While down on earth in Law Courts, without a thrill of fear,
Men drink in filth and lewdness with still insatiate ear;
And shameful tales defiling re-echo through the land,
Till minds before untainted all evil understand.
And foolish souls, regardless, the sacred rule transgress,
When laws are found to sanction, and godless priests to bless.
And so they live, and living, they perish in their sin,
Too helpless to escape from the guilt they once begin.

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Oh, evil day for England, for cottage and for hall!
The plague is on the people, the dying round us fall.
Oh, evil day for England, for maiden and for wife;
For tainted is the current, the once pure stream of life.

¹ “An Argument for not proceeding immediately to Repeal the Laws which treat the Nuptial Bond as Indissoluble.” By Rev. J. Keble. 1857.

“Sequel of the Argument.” 1857.

See also “A Discourse against Second Marriage.” By Bishop Andrewes. *Minor Works*, p. 106.

[160]

And is there no repentance? no longing to return?
Is there no heart still aching? no holy zeal to burn?
Are there no thoughts of Eden, the pure primeval law?
None of that benediction which Cana's banquet saw?
Christ and His Church united, and never more to part —
Are we so lost to doctrine? and so divorced in heart?
Or must we groan in Egypt before we would be free?
And our once happy firesides all desolated see?
Must we with shame acknowledge that all our boasted light,
When severed from the Gospel, is blacker than the night?
O Thou forsaken Bridegroom, Thy faithless ones recall,
And show, that reconciliation is possible to all.

[161]

THE MIDNIGHT CRY.

A VOICE comes down on gusts of wind,
A cry for help, a piercing cry;

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Like lightning flash it sears the mind,
 Rending the heart and rushing by.

“Hark! hark! I hear the voice again.
 Sleep, let me go; I may not stay.”
But in wild blasts and plashing rain
 The sound already dies away.

“Lie down. It was the night-bird’s call,
 Or louder dash of swelling stream;
Wild squalls upon the cedars fall,
 And stir the terrors of thy dream.”

My heavy eyelids close in sleep,
 And helpless droops my weary head;
But slumbers darker and more deep
 Are pressing closer on the dead.

[162]

The sun arises on the heath,
 And purples all the wintry flood;
Yet that old jagged thorn beneath
 More purple shines a pool of blood.

Glancing behind, like hunted hare.
 The scowling murderer hastes away;
And his poor victim lying there
 Opes not his eye to opening day.

His rifled pack lies by his side,
 And broken, like his broken life,

His faithful staff is scattered wide.

In witness of a deadly strife.

All last and bitter thoughts of home

Are glassed upon that glassy eye;

His calls for help, which would not come,

Left his lips open with the cry:

That piercing cry in dying made.

Which haunts my spirit night and day.

So near to help! so reft of aid!

Echoes which will not melt away.

[163]

Ye cries from many a den of sin,

From dusky court and darksome lane;

Ye sounds of pain without, within,

Which call on sleeping ears in vain;

Shrill summons from far heathen land,

Which dark idolatries enthrall;

Low moans of anguish close at hand,

Of dying souls which round us fall:

Shall we but hear ye, and in sleep

Fleshly and dense the warning slight;

Then, waking, wring our hands and weep,

The last great cry at dead of night?

HE on whose head the Apostolic hands
Were laid with lasting power; whose sacred life
Thence born, by tears bedewed, and by the breath
Of supplication fanned, such fruits brings forth

[164]

As ripen in the Paradise of God:
Whose doctrine and whose life compared agree;
Whose heart is ever with his flock below,
Yet ever with the Shepherd in the meads
Where none can wander. He of that good land
Is Patriot true, and for it true to this.
Or rich or poor, or high or low, he saith:
“I am God’s chosen priest, and all the world
Can neither raise me up nor cast me down.”
He lives for others, and in others lives;
Yet more in Him Who, when they fail, consoles.
Joying with those who worthily rejoice,
He weeps with those who weep, and for them weeps
Who weep not for themselves. The aged know
His gentle step, the young his ready smile.
And when upon the threshold of the school
His footstep sounds, a sudden thrill of joy
Lights up the face of every listless child,
As when a sunbeam falls upon the moor.
The cottage and the bedside are his home,
But more that Temple where he most discerns
The beauty of God’s holiness to dwell.
This is his pride, and this he decks with joy —

[165]

His own but rudely furnished. Here at home
He feels and seems: and when beside the Font
He offers new-born souls; or in the choir
He sings or prays, or speaks the saving word;
And chiefly at the Altar, when by him
The Great High Priest doth offer that He is,
And to the hungry soul Himself dispense,
Doth then his representative appear
Lost to the world itself; and, like his Lord,
Transfigured and beatified the while.

Inured to fasting, and severe delights,
In season due he learns his Master's life;
And his pure hands, uplifted as he kneels,
Show how his soul soars upwards on the wings
Of prayer to Heaven, where, lost to earth, it dwells-
Nor feels the lapse of time, where time is not.
He knoweth better how to give than have;
Less than his wishes only are his alms.
He gives himself, his heart, his ready ear,
Or to the tale of penitence or woe:
He counteth neither long; no childish grief
Unworthy of his patience and his love.
Strict contemplations and the toil of books

[166]

Are his refreshments, but the slightest call
Breaks unrebuked the tenor of his thoughts,
For theory and practice are but one.

Him as his flock behold they learn to love

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The yoke of duty which in him seems light.
They see, they mark, desire, and gladly try
Works which appeared impossible before;
And thus beneath the pastoral cross they move,
On and yet further on till Heaven is near.
He is the faithful Priest, and his the flock.
Who by still waters are securely led;
And when the Shepherd shall Himself appear.
He shall behold an image of Himself,
And to his self-abasing saint assign
A glorious crown which fadeth not away.

[167]

A PLEA FOR FREE CHURCHES.

“Sui cum non receperunt.” — JOH. i. Vulg.

THEY said indeed the house was Mine,
And called it by My Name;
But looks and deeds proclaimed “Not Thine,”
When to that house I came.

True, I was poor, and low of mien;
My garments vile and worn,
But then for their poor souls I ween
That I was humbly born.

I laid My robes of light aside,
And sinless dwelt with Sin;
All naked hung, when crucified,
A cloak for them to win.

[168]

They scorned Me then; they scorn Me now;
 “A carpenter,” they say;
My wondrous love repay with ill,
 And turn Me thus away.

“Blest are the poor,” I preached; but here
 Blest are the rich, it seems;
And My beatitudes appear
 To be but idle dreams.

“He came,” they read, “unto His own;
 His own received Him not.”
I stood and listened, all unknown,
 Whilst they these words forgot.

They chanted high, with music sweet,
 All blinded to their fault,
“He casts the mighty from their seat,
 But doth the poor exalt.”

They bowed whene’er they used My Name,
 And praises to Me sang;
And all the time I stood in shame
 Whilst glories round Me rang.

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Gilded and carved I saw My Cross,
 My Table spread in vain;
But, ah! they counted Me their loss

And worldly show their gain.

Where could I see, in that gay crowd,
The pearl I came to find,
Beneath professions long and loud,
A poor and lowly mind?

When I return, arrayed in light.
And judgment trumpets sound.
How will they bear that awful sight,
And where shall they be found?

Strip ye. Put off your pride, and learn
Of Jesus and His poor,
Lest, cold and naked, ye in turn
Stand outcast at My door.

[170]

VALETE PRÆTERITA, FUTURA PETIMUS.

“I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me.”

LOOK not behind, nor watch the setting ray.
Leave the last smile of day
To die away;
Content in darkness for a time to rest,
Till a new Sun arise from Ocean's throbbing breast.
Mourn not for strength and health, and joys gone by
Of earlier years; nor sigh
For Youth's keen eye.
These never shall return to this worn frame,
But unto that renewed by Him from Whom they came.

Dwell not in tombs. The memories of the dead,
Life's autumn leaves, are shed
Around their head.
And we look forwards to a Heavenly Spring,
Which shall to them and us perpetual Summer bring.

[171]

Sigh not, thou penitent, for garments white,
Now soiled; once dazzling bright,
But quenched their light.
Beneath them lurked each undeveloped sin,
And thou shalt now a tried and sure devotion win.
Ye words once spoken on Gennesareth's shore;
Ye deeds unseen before,
And evermore;
O Sychem's well, and thou Gethsemane;
O griefs which love desires, yet cannot bear to see;
O Judgment Hall, and toilsome way of woe,
To you fond pilgrims go,
And tears must flow.
But haste, the tomb is empty; He is gone:
And they who linger there must Unger sad and lone.
His footstep is on Olivet; but far
Above the highest star
His mansions are.
And when He comes. His presence shall transcend
The past, and all this sweetness with that glory blend.
The past is past, and may not come again;
O forward to complain,
Reflect, refrain.

[172]

The past is past; but lo, a future bright
With o'er-abounding joy, and all-surpassing light.
Onwards, then, onwards; upwards lift the eye.
Where earthly blessings die,
There let them lie;
That out of their dear graveyard may arise
Joys which fade not, but bloom 'neath kindlier skies.

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CLASS IV. — PAROCHIAL.

THE OLD ESSEX CLERK.

How many Vicars have I seed? Best part o' half a score;
But I be old and shak' now, and shan't see many more.
There's more changes 'mong the parsons than on the steeple bells,
And like enough there'll be yet more for anything I tells.
I've know'd parsons as walked to market and drev their own pigs,
And some on 'em rode a horseback, and some on 'em i' gigs.
Now it's pheaton or pony shay, wife, darters and all,

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The bigger the young uns grus to, they makes ther father look small.
I've heerd Farmer Smith say, as he war threshing out a stack,
His missus 'ud use it all up and carry it on her back.
I've know'd rich Vicars, and poor uns; I've seed both short and tall,
And our old burial sarplice is bound to fit 'em all.
My missus as lies by the porch, she tookt it up and down,

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Till 'ta wouldn't ston tucks no longer, no more nor her old gown.
One said as how the poor old Clerk answer'd a'most too slow;
Another, "Nit so fast;" or, "Soft like;" or maybe, "Not so low."
One says, "That Amen was mine;" another, "That war for you."
Bless their hearts, they might say it all, if I know'd what to do.
Some went straight on right through, whatever there was to be said;

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Some skips out bits like, as not good enough for to be read.
It fares strange that ministers doan't do their work by rule:
I've often thought as parsons should go to a parson's school.
Some preached in the sarplice, I'llows, because they hadn't no gownd;
They warn't for scruples o' conscience, but took things as they found.
Our last Vicar — poor man — made a deal o' preaching i' black:
But there warn't no more in his head for what he had on his back.
He was one for the sarmint, and nit so much for the prayer;
He wouldn't a clent the old place, but left it just as it were.
Our church was holly choked up, and every pew was a box,
And every box had jacks in it, as many as fleas in a fox.
For all the gals was peeping over the side at the boys.

[176]

Like bees in a bottle the church kept buzzing with their noise.
The Churchwarden he heerd nothing, for he war sound asleep:
He never minded the boys least they was keeping his sheep.
First came my desk, then the parson's; the pulpit top o' that,
Like yer neck, and then yer face, and then over all yer hat.
We sang then in the gallery with fiddle and clarionet;
If yer'd once heerd our band, Sir, 'tain't likely as you'd forget.
If the Parson should wish they'd change the tune by next Lord's day.

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They pops flute and fiddle in bags and goes right clean away.
Bless yer, I could tell yer o' things, yer would never think true.
How they put their hats in the Font and the Communion too:
And how when the Westry met they took the old table out,

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Put on ink-horn and books, and sat the chancel round about.
Cushions, and cloth, and books too, takin' the old church right round,
Sarplice, shovel, and broom, they would na ha' fetched half a crownd,
Commandments to boot. They was the only good-lookin' things,
Wi' yellow cherubs between 'em, and nout be heads and wings.
Howsomdever I'm glad it's all gone, pews, pulpit and all;
It baint so snug for the big folks, but more snug for the small.
It fares more easy to hear, and yer can kneel if yer will.
And I doant want my old white wan to keep the young folks still.
And my second Missus finds the place more easy to keep,
For benches is better nor pews, when you comes for to sweep.

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There never warn't no Vicar who com'd down here to reside,
Till five and thirty years, I 'llows, come next Whitsuntide.
Bishop Blomfield that was, he told him as how he must go;
And he warn't the man to ston it if you war to say "No."
Parson Myles was a hunter, and could gallop through a prayer.
Right straight ahead over anythin', and stop him who dare.
A weddin 'ud come to "Amazement," most as soon as begun;
And afore they well know'd where they wos they found 'emselves one.
He was a kind gentleman truly, but not much of a priest:
No great hand at a fast day, but a rare un at a feast.
When he com'd to die, he was right sorry, you may depend;

A' the more, says he to me, because it was too late to mend.

[179]

Master Smith, who was cross about ridin' over the land,
He sent for him and humbled hissself and gave 'im his hand.
He says to me, "I've been a sinner, and may God forgive;"
Says I, "Cheer up, Sir; maybe you'll show a change if you live."
He left all he had to the church, the schools, and for bread;
And anyhow he's done a dale o' good since he's ben dead.
Next there com'd a young man who warn't no great things in his looks:
He fared as though he'd read away all hissself in his books.
He hadn't no voice — leastwise he spoke very weakly and low,
And talked o' things in the sarmint that our people doant know.
Then he walked up a stech like, straight on, and never looked round.

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He didn't see folks, bein' as his eyes war fixed on the ground.
He'd speak sharp, I counts, to some. But he was gentle and mild
To old and poor folks like me. He might ha' been my own child.
When one o' they Chaplers said, just like some o' their fine ways,
"I'll look in on you, Sir," meanin' the church, "one o' these days,"
He answers the man pretty sharp, as he turned him about:
"The Lord's much beholden to you. Pray don't put yourself out."
He built the church up substantial when 'most ready to fall;
And clent it right out, pews and hat pegs, commandments and all.
The bells was always a ringin', for to church he would go,
Saints' days and all days, rain or bangie, or kivered o' snow.
He'd sit up all night with a poor man lyin' on his bed.

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They loved him when he war alive, and more sin he's bin dead.
Folks talked loud agin him as how he was goin' to Rome:
I know'd quite well where he was goin' — 'twar to his long home.
When they brought him here the last time, there warn't hardly one eye,
Men, women, and children, all the parish like, what war dry.
They forgot all their old scores o' which they used to complain.
I wonders how they'd do by him, if he wur back here again.
I told him he war too strict for us, and then he would sigh;
But God grant us to be like him afore we comes to die.
He lies hard by the church path there, under that ere stone cross.
I believe it's his gain to go, but I knows it's my loss.
I can't talk no more about him. My tale is well-nigh done.

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I 'llows he had faults, but we've got a thousand to his one.
Then comes the last Vicar, and he swept th' ornimints away.
And he never had no sarvices only on the Lord's Day.
He war a man for a sarmint — and 'twar a rare long spell:
'Twarn't for that, I counts! folks 'ud a liked him right well.
He preached agin three P.'s, — Publicks, Pusey, and Pope;
And a dale about faith; and nit so much o' love, nor o' hope.
He war raal kind to poor men, 'ticular to them as 'ud talk
O' faith and experience, though they didn't know cheese from chalk.
He said, "The Chaple preacher war quite as good in his eyes."
Thinks I "much better then, ' bein' as he 'ant half the price.
His name at meetins and preachins was mostways to be seen:

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He war too good for us, may be, for they made him a Dean,

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So our present Vicar got the Church, what arn't been here long:

And he fares as if he counts the t'other all in the wrong.

But I'm sick o' these changes, and don't know what to be at:

For if this baint taken onhandy, why then it is that.

What's the waly o' the rubric, as they calls that small print,

If parsons aither don't know, or else won't bide by what's in't.

But I'm getting old, and it terrifies me does this cough;

And the old Clerk's last days on arth can't be werry far off.

Wi'out a proper good followin' they will not me lave,

Bein' I've seed all their fathers, and 'd gladly see them too, to their grave.

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THE WIFE OF THE OLD ESSEX CLERK.;

I've seed all my old man telled yer, and I'd like to have my say,

For it aint right for men allus to have it all their own way.

I can mind better nor he, and counts I can see quite as clear.

And there baint no woman o' my age what's more list for to hear.

Father had a bit o' land, and what wi' the cows and the hay,

The fowls, the geese, and the pigs, he managed to make it pay.

New milk fetched a penny the quart, and butter sixpence the pound,

Yer wouldn't get none so good now, if you tookt the county all round.¹

¹This custom and these prices existed at Prittlewell during the latter half of the last century.

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We rode a-pillion then, wi' a basket o' eggs o' each side;

The fowls fared like a necklace round the old horse as they war tied.

People know'd Dobbin by his trot, afore he com'd to the town;

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And if they didn't know mother's bonnet, they all know'd her stuff gown;
'Twar her mother's afore her, for it war spun wool and proper stout:
Folks is allus haven new uns now, 'cause they aint good for nought.
I used to keep the cows i' the lane, or the geese i' the chase,
Wi' an apple hogglin for dinner, and "mind yer say yer grace."
Daisy chains i' the spring, blackberries and nuts when we com'd to glean:
Little Dick and I war as happy children as might be seen.
We couldn't understand when the Parson said as this life war sad,

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Nit nor how heaven could be better nor what we already had.
'Tis a mercy children don't know what's coming, the pain and the care:
It'd be like a fall o' snow on the lambs, more nor they could bear.
So Dick and I growed up, and went to the old school by the pump;
I war a rare un to skip and run, and Dick to hop and jump.
Now I fares like a hodmadod, what wi' my poor leg and back:
It'd holly bet me out now if I war to run i' a sack.
I favoured mother, and they says Dick war his father's own son;
I counts we were somut of both, bein' we wornt born o' one.
If Dick and I warnt handsome, then it warnt true what neighbours said:
Dick told a Captain as nudged me, "he war a fool" to his head.
We both had our own sweethearts afore I was quite com'd o' age.

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When father seigh us walkin' together, he war in a rage.
He guv us a bit o' his mind, and sent Dick off to a farm.
Where the master, he said, 'ud watch him, and keep him out o' harm.
'Twar an ill day's work that. He'd better a slep' over that plan:
Many's the night he'd no sleep for the work hisself had began.
Poor Dick! my dear brother Dick ! If yer'd seen the face o' the lad,

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Yer'd never a thought nohow as he could a' gone to the bad.
The farm war down on the mushes where they runned goods o' a night,
And hid them in the ditches or the haulm walls well out o' sight.
Dick war put out wi' father when they asked him to lend a hand.
So he joined the likes o' them, afore he could well understand.

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Well — one night com'd the Perwentatives, and they seed 'em too late;
Dick shoved a bale of baccy in the wholve under the mush gate.
But they seigh him, and took him, and the case agin him war clear;
They judged him to hard labour in gaol for two whole blessed year.
So Dick asked to 'list, and they sent 'im to Sir John Moore i' Spain.
Father and mother seigh 'im 'fore he sailed — but never again.
'Taint well to be hasty — mother telled father so, when he swore
Dick should leave — but arter all this, she never spake they words more.
Hadn't a ben for her I should a-gone too; but she changed his mind.
So Dick went away, and I and my sweetheart stayed behind.
If I live to a hundred years I shall never forget the day,

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When Dick's watch com'd to father and an order for six months' pay.
'Twarnt long arter: I war in the dairy, cleanin' up a bit;
Mother calls out "Come quick; father's had a paralatic fit."
I war all of a lapdab wi' fright, and my knees fared quite weak,
For I seigh he war struck, and could na move his right hand, or speak.
Whether the news war what brought poor father down, that I must lave,
But afore the twelvemonth war well out, he followed Dick to the grave.
So I married my Bill to keep a house over mother's head,
And we muddled on wi' the land and the cows until she war dead.
There warnt no weddins at the Register's office i' those days.

I don't call 'em weddins, and I hates all they new-fangled ways.

[190]

If I went there to marry, I should look to go there to die.
They parts man and wife there, and calls 'em unions, I can't see why.
When mother war gone, we lost the land, for there warnt any lease;
The owner tookt it hissself, and kep docks, thistles, rats and mece.
We sold the cows, horse and fowls too, and then Bill worked on the land,
Till he war layin' of a quick hedge a bush got in his hand.
They did their best, but the cuttin' and doctor's stuff were all wain:
There war but one cure, as the gravestones say, for my husband's pain.
My old man's very well, as men go, but my first love's my last:
I thanks God for what I've got, but I often thinks o' the past.
There I was in the wide world, wi' three little children to keep;

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The thought o' him and o' them of a night com'd i' place o' sleep.
But I'd some money i' the bank, and a good God overhead:
I thought o' Him when I seigh the stars thro' the old tiles abed.
I tookt in washin', went a charin'; I had a lodger or two,
But they drinkt and carried on so I soon seigh it wouldn't do:
A rippin' and swearin' afore the young uns; I thought o' Bill;
Kind o' shamed like, as he'd a said I brought up his children ill.
'Twarnt properly no use for a lone widow woman to try:
I war riddy to make a hand o' myself, and longed to die:
The children often ud say, "Mother, what makes yer eyes so red?"
And sometimes, "Ta fares, mother, as how yer aint a ben to bed."

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They war all proper deer good uns, and when they war bet or chid,
Ta went to my heart more na theirs, poor little dears, that ta did.
They tookt ta measles; then the whooping-cough 'most tore 'em to bits:
And poor Dick, as were named after my brother, he had the fits.
I giv'd 'em roast mece, but 'twarnt no manner o' good as I seigh:
So I strapped a live flounder o' their chest, as tight as may be.
Ta had its mouth a gaping wide open when it com'd to die;
The cough went out wi' its life, like a pig bolts out of a stye.
When I tookt it off, there war nout left o' it but skin and bone:
Yer could smell it all over the house, long arter it war done.
The money war gone from the bank, and the winter had set in:

[193]

I wished we war dead and buried, and didn't see it war a sin.
But the Lord read my heart, and by next Lady they war all gone:
We tookt the smalls, and time I war well, I war left wi'out one.
There war the stools as they used to sit on, and the empty bed:
They war sleepin' in the churchyard, wi' green grass over their head.
No one to work for, or care for, and no one to care for me;
I'd sooner a wanted bread, and things been bad as bad might be.
But there's no call to tell yer. I did na care much what I did:
I went to sarve some old folks and larn to do as I was bid.
'Twar all one to me where I was a living or what com'd next,
Nit nor whether master or missus war pleased with me or wexed.

[194]

They soon seigh that, and I heerd 'em speaking on it, till one day,
As I war takin' out the supper. Missus told me to stay.
I'd a great mind to say I wouldn't; but I stopped short at the door.
And she begun to talk the like as I'd never heerd afore.

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She telled me she know'd it all, and wor 'most as sorry as me;
And she war properly onhappy and feelin', I could see.
She said she wished to be my friend, and the good Lord wished it too;
But I must let 'em, or 'twarnt no good to me as they could do.
Then she begun for to cry, a watchin' o' me as she spoke;
And I couldna say nout, for I was riddy a'most to choke:
And Master kept rubbin' his glasses, and tried to read a prayer;
Till I holly giv it up, for it war more na I could bear.

[195]

Best part o' an hour I cried, and heerd all what he had to say:
And I warnt the same woman when I got up to go away.
Poor dear old souls, I served 'em cheerful all I could till they died.
They were bestowed i' the old churchyard, and lies there side by side.
They left me a hundred pounds down, poor dears, and 'twar that, may be,
As made my old man as now is come a courtin' arter me.
I doant know somehow: I wished for a home, and liked to live nigh
Where all them as I loved, Sir, have com'd at last for to lie.
And I can get him, yer see, to keep up all their graves to right.
So we married, nit like the first time, more na mornin's like night.
I clens the church, and I know'd a' they Wicars as you've heerd tell;

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And what he's a ben sayin' to yer I know'd it just as well.
And I seigh the parsons' wives, and the farmers and their fine cloes,
How they runs one agin another, tryin o' a' they knows.
They war in a way wi' our Wicar t'other day, when he said,
"Men makes a God o' their belly, and women o' their backs and head;"
So they war when he told 'em the wise man not to go anigh,
For it war all charms and magic, and a kind o' 'dolatry.

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But I've heerd o' Master Brown, when he lost three and twenty sack,
Paying o' so much for so much, and so he got 'em all back:
And Poll Hicks, who lost a silver spoon somehow i' the rick-yard.
She wouldna pay when she got it, and he said 'twar proper hard;
For "Here ta bes," says he, 'most as soon as he com'd to the spot;

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But she swore she know'd a' the time, only she had forgot.
I finds things when I clens the church out, as yer wouldna expect:
A short piece writ in the hymn-book to the young man that sits next.
So I gives 'em back to the gals, and yer should see how they look;
Or I slips 'em, unbeknown, in their father's or mother's book.
Well — young folks will be young, — but church doant fare to be the right place
For courtin': leastways if yer do, then yer mustna look for grace.
They's a wonder, some o' they gals, they bes, and where it'll all end
Gets holly over me; for nit for no speakin' ull they mend.
Well — it's a comfort to a woman, if she can't get her way.
To have the last word in an argimint, and say her own say.

[198]

My old man allus has the last word i' church with his Amen,
But when he comes to be buried, why, he must give it up then.
Poor old soul, he's a good heart, and behaves as he should to me;
And though I sayst as shouldn't say, I'm a middlin' good wife to he.
I hopes we're both on us riddy and willin' too for to go,
Bein' as we've seed short joys, and proper long griefs here below.
If he's taken away the first, and I'm left a bit behind,
I'd rather be laid by Bill, when this un can't feel it onkind.
Now yer've heerd all yer'll ever hear o' the old Clerk and his wife,
And som 'll think on us when we're dead as didn't mind us i' our life.

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THE OLD ESSEX FARM LABOURER.

I AIN't a much at best o' times, and when yer called afore,
I war bodily full o' pain, and now I feel quite sore.
What wi' rheumatiz i' my bones, and the gids i' my head,
'Tain't often as I crarls to church, nor yit gits out o' bed.
I'm in my eighty-six now, and I counts that's middlin' old;
I can't do what I used to could, and can't abear the cold.
I'll tell wi' the greatest o' pleasure all as ever I knows,
And that's more, yer may depend, than some folks 'ud suppose.
I warn't brought up in a Union school, as when they gets out

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They doant know wheat from wo-ats, and is just good for nout.
I went wi' the horses and plough 'most as soon as I could ston,
And then I clent the land, or rep, or sowed; it war all one.
What wi' bird-keepin', and bane droppin', my larnin' war small;
Hadn't a ben for a night-school arter, I'd a lost it all.
When I war a boy there war one board for master and men.
But I doant count ever to see them old times back agen.
'Twar raal good home-brewed as we had, but that's a' gone too:
T'ain't one servant in fifty now as knows how to brew.
And they brewers buys up all the publics as is for sale;
Nit for love nor money can yer get a pint o' good ale.
If any lad then, what lived in the house, war to break out,

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Master had his eyes open, and know'd what we war about.
If we war steady, he'd say, "Here's sixpence for you, my lad;"
But now a young chap goes his own way, and that's to the bad.
When I war a youngster, boys used to do what they was told;
But now they only sarce yer, and the girls is quite as bold.
And we used to touch our hats if a gentleman com'd by.
Now they call, "What's the time. Governor?" and winks with their eye.
I doant hold by these great big farms, as they've now com'd to make.
Three or four laid into one, as many as they can take.
There baint no livin' for a small man, what works on the land;
And nit a servant now-a-days, but what they calls "There's nit a hand."

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Jist like a spade or a harrow, when yer's holly wore out,
Chucks yer away for another tool, when yer's good for nout.
It sartin we ought to do as we'd be done by,
And we'll be done by jist as we do, sure an' sartinly,
I never know'd a bad master yet but he had bad men;
And a good un will have good servants, — leastwise now and then.
'Twarnt for parsons residin' I doant know how we should live,
They's th' only ones sometimes to speak kind — let alone to give.
That warnt so when I war a lad. The masters then war kind.
If yer'd runned arter a parson, yer'd a ben well behind.
They war fust at this church, then at that church, five o' one day;
'Twarnt too much time for the sarmint — let alone for to pray.

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Fifteen com'd out this way and that, each Sunday morn,
Yer'd a wondered where the wood war where a' they rooks war born.
Fifteen coms agen of a night to take a week's rest,

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And they lays by the parson all snug along wi' their best.¹
Landlords and Rectors, they was birds o' which you only heard;
They'd send for rent or tithe, but 'twarnt often they appeared.
For that matter the tenants didn't werry much wish they should,
And they kept the old roads 'most as bad as ever they could.
They war fine times for farmers then, and fine goin's on too;
One crop o' mustard 'ud buy the land wi'out much ado.
Our troop gallops, and hilloas, and drinks port, father and son:

¹Billericay was the place which supplied Rochford Hundred.

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'Twar well they could keep a horse, for they'd ben puzzled to ston.
Now there's good roads and good rents, and half as much less a sack;
What master used to take inside missus puts on her back.
Yer want to hear about myself, yer say, Sir. — Well, I know,
But I'm like a horse what turns off where he's bin used to go.
I never worked out o' the Hundreds, nor was i' the Shires,
And never seed their stais fairs, where men and masters hires.
I allis worked for my old master, while so be he'd life;
He didn't want to git riddy on me no more nor his wife.
Father died when I war a kid; mother married agen.
So we war turned out o' hand like, long afore we war men.
I saved a few pounds bit by bit, and then our master's maid

[205]

Took a fancy to me; so there was no more to be said.
Yer doant see such a girl now-a-days, so handsome and strong:
Yer seed her heart in her face; and yer could na go far wrong.
When we com'd to be married, Master guv the bride away,

The Salamanca Corpus: The Fugitive and Other Poems (1870)

And the dinner too, and good ale as long as we 'ud stay.
She war rather shy and bashful, and made our parson smile,
When I tried to kiss her, and she runned off all down the aisle.
My word, but my new boots clattered well down they big flat stones,
But I'd a caught her if I'd waked up all the dead men's bones.
We war a goodly couple, Sir, though I sayst as shouldn't say.
And there baint no un alive as can ston up and say nay.
And we war happy too, werry happy, many a year;

[206]

I shall never see the like agen, Sir, leastwise not here.
Fifty years come next Michaelmas my dear old master died,
And afore that day next year his missus laid by his side.
A new tenant com'd, nit never so little like the old;
He only cared for one thin' on earth, and that war his gold.
He broke up the old pastures, and growed mustard everywhere.
Cheated landlord and labourers all as ever he dare.
The new men soon larned to make up for what they could not yarn.
By helpin' aselves, or they all had a key to his barn.
By that, wife and I'd five young uns as healthy as might be;
And she'd a hundred pounds left by her uncle lost at sea.
So we lookt out for a bit o' land, but we could na find,
Jist when we wanted it, a bit what war quite to my mind.
So I went on the mashes as looker, and nit for long;

[207]

But ta fared as if things had begun at last to go wrong.
The children tookt the fever, and we laid two in their grave,
And 'twar harder than we thought to give back to Him what gave.
My missus tookt it to heart so, she couldn't hold up her head;

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I thought she'd soon be where her heart war, I manes wi' the dead.
I said 'twar time to go, and I heerd of a piece o' land,
A wild bit, sure, and poor stuff, what wi' stone and what wi' sand.
We tookt it for better or worse, as a man takes his wife;
Nit the same neither as marriage, bein' it warn't for life.
I put on a dale o' 'mendment, all the poor hundred pound;
But money and labour was eat up by that hungry ground.

[208]

Jist as I war workin' it round, and ta begun to bear,
Com'd a long drought and then wet arter, such as never were.
The hay war wholly ruined and inter the cow-yard flung;
July might a ben Feberwerry, the land war so clung.
Then com'd peace, and they fired the guns; but prices fell and fell;
Ta made a hand o' me and clent me o' all I'd to sell.
So it came to our turn, when stock, hay and straw war a' gone.
We war sold right up, bedstiddle and all, afore they'd done.
I warn't a master now, but must begin service once more;
But I hadn't young arms and a young heart as I had afore.
I fell bad wi' th' overflow of the boil, the doctor said;
'Twar an overflow o' the heart as kep' me on my bed.
'Twarnt my bed neither. My good neighbours help us and our son.

[209]

My Jem — my Jem — said he war beginnin', if I war done.
So what wi' my club and wi' Jem's wages, we war all fed,
And warnt beholden to the parish nit for a bit o' bread.
We didn't ought to have doubted the good Lord's mercy, I know;
And we'd ought to have found Him, when we'd nowhere else to go.
But He hadn't done wi' us yet, 'long o' our fault ta fares;

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For if we've a contrite heart, we know as how the Lord spares.
Maybe yer never lost a son — leastwise not like our lad, —
Yer wouldn't be able to tell on't, more na me, if yer had.
Our Jem war jist his own mother's son, jist like my poor wife;
Tall, handsome, and free, he war the very joy of her life.

[210]

I never know'd him to swear, or take too much at the feast;
All he yarnt he brought home to us, from the most to the least.
“There's Jem Dean,” says the girls, and watched to see him goin' by;
“Jem Dean,” they whispers in church long afore he com'd anigh.
But he tootk no more notice than a cow takes of a hen.
And goes right on, and sits him down among the farmin' men.
He war our idol, that's the truth, and the Lord broke't i' twain;
We've often thought o' that since, Sir, when thinkin' war in wain.
He war ridin' on the shaft, and the young horse gave a start;
He jumps down too quick, and slips, and falls right under the cart.
He said " Good-bye, Mother," as he went out afore 'twar light;

[211]

Says “Good-bye, Mother,” when they brought him home dyin' that night.
'Ive thought when I've seigh 'em a cuttin' down trees i' the wood,
How the Lord fell'd 'im wi' one stroke, and laid him where he stood.
He'd broke us at last, and we know'd as this arth ain't our home;
We read our old Bible more, and prayed for the world to come.
They'd preachin' in the chapel of an evening i' the week,
And asked us to join 'em, bein' the Lord we wished to seek.
I humbly asks pardon, but ta fares a pity to me,
That the churches should be shut up at them hours when maybe
A poor man could and would go, arter his work, in his smock.

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And would na mind if he worn't clent, nit nor kivered a crock.
Howsumbe arter we'd tried 'em and know'd all their queer ways,

[212]

We com'd back agen to church half-ashamed, and there we stays.
We put our biggest girl out to service in a fine place,
As we thought. She'd only one fault; 'twar her own pretty face.
The missus was techy, and if the girl made a mistake,
She dropped on to her in no time, and no excuse wouldn't take.
So she tootk to a young carpenter what fared to be kind.
And they married and went to 'Merica, and left us behind.
Next our Peggie married, and my wife begun to drop off.
Leaner and leaner; she war shuk to pieces by her cough.
Somethin' changed she war from what she war on our weddin' day.
For good looks fare to go, and sickness and sorrow to stay.
But she war the same woman to me, for we'd the same heart;

[213]

Nit poverty nor sickness, but death only could us part.
And that won't be for long now. It'll be fifteen years come May.
My club broke next, and all I'd paid was clean throw'd away.
The old members com'd heavy on't. Young chaps would na come in:
I'd 'long to the Providence now, if I war to begin.
'Twarnt for Peggy and for you, Sir, to the House I must go;
But I wouldn't do that if I could help, war it ever so.
So I sits, and thinks, and puggles my little bit o' fire,
And each day as goes I fares as though I'm drawin' nigher.
Old days is all gone, and it's most time old folks were gone too;
If I could plough a stech now, I should do it all askew.
I am't told yer now how the militia used to be drard,

And we must either sarve or pay, which we used to count hard.

[214]

Nit nor about the New Poor Law, and the threshing machine,
And the drills, and they what for a thin's that's now to be seen.
Yer sees 'em yerself, but yer can't see what we used to do,
The barn work and that, what served to keep us all winter through;
And the white smocks worked so beautiful right round the neck,
As used to be in church of a Sunday wi'out a speck:
And the women's red cloaks and neckerchiefs, yellor and bright,
Like a daffodowndilly. Yer'd a said that war a sight.
But I'm an old fool, too old I counts to be fettled now;
So I'll leave it to them to manage as knows better how.
Yer may depend when a man gets the wrong side o' fourscore,
And doant like things as is now like them what he know'd afore,

[215]

It's time for him to go; and when I'm laid by my old wife,
I'll bless the Lord as gave, and as spared, and as took my life.
They says as some time or other we're all kings in our day;
I doant know as I war, 'cept when I war a boy at play.
But I prays that yer, Sir, and the land, and th' Hundreds 'll thrive,
When old Jemmy Dean's gone, better nor when he war alive.

[NP]

APPENDIX.

THE DEATH OF HENRI DE LA ROCHEJAQUELEIN.

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[Henri fell March 4, 1794, age twenty-one, in an attack made on Trémentine sur Nouaillé, by the ball of a grenadier, who would have been killed by his men, but for the interference of Henri on his behalf. A column of the enemy approached, and a grave was hastily dug, in which Henri and his murderer were buried together.— *Memoirs of Madame de la R.*]

QUICKLY lay him where he fell:

Like a flash of light

He lived; he conquered. All is well.

Dawn, and noon, and night.

Let the earth her hero keep;

No sad train he needs.

Him shall every patriot weep.

France, not Henri, bleeds.

[217]

Spring her plumes shall o'er him wave:

Lay him side by side

With the wretch he sought to save,

And by whom he died.

See his breast the Red Cross wear

Wrought on spotless white; ¹

One he was, and one he bare:

Both became his right.

Comrades, ye shall perish all;

None will know this spot.

But your Captain's life and fall

Cannot be forgot.

Fearless, by the man who slew
Lay your hero down;
Him let man and angels view
As he won his crown.

¹ The Vendean badge was a † on a heart, red upon a white ground.

[218]

A CROSS FOR ALL.

FROM the driving squalls and rain
Seeking shelter, but in vain;
Breathless there behind a tree
Crouched they down as near might be;
Mother, daughter, cold and worn,
Face and dress alike forlorn.
Unseen saw they, as the throng
Rolled in luxury along,
Warm and safe from rain and wind,
Leaving want and woe behind.
Then as eve came thick and dark.
Lamps flashed up across the Park,
And before the Palace Yard
Gleamed like warriors placed on guard.

From her bitterness of soul.
And in passion past control.
Spake that mother: "Hard our lot.

[219]

Close the Palace to the cot,
But far off the owner's state;
Far the poor live from the great.
Who has placed this gulf between
Simple women and a Queen?
She has neither want nor care,
Nor a single grief to bear.
Oh that I might have her gold!
She might feel our want and cold."

Then the daughter made reply:
"We are low, and they are high.
Would I were the Prince's bride,
On a throne, my lord beside.
Why should he bestow his hand
On a girl from foreign land?
Do not English mothers bear
Daughters full as good and fair?
Look on her, and look on me.
Is it not a shame to see?
Is it not a foul disgrace?
Oh that I were in her place!"

[220]

But they saw not England's Queen:
Much had wondered, had they seen.
Had they seen her 'neath her Cross,
Mourning still her hopeless loss:
Mourning for the great and good
With the heart of widowhood;

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Had they felt the load of care
Which unaided she must bear,
Unsupported, unconsoled,
Loathing state, despising gold;
Kingdoms pressing on her head,
He who shared the burden — dead;
Ah! how sick of life she felt,
And how solitary dwelt;
How abundance all around
Made her heart's wants more profound;
How the woman's heart prevailed,
Till the Royal almost failed:
Had they seen her tearful eyes,
Had they heard her deep-drawn sighs,
Surely they had come to know
Theirs was not the only woe.

[211]

They had marvelled had they known
How the Princess made her moan;
How she laid her down to sleep,
And arose, afresh to weep,
When her native country bled,
And its gore was vainly shed,
As the fierce o'erpowering foe,
Laid its sons and banners low;
Whilst the land to which she came
Coldly gazed in sullen shame.
Turning from her tears aside,
Whom they welcomed as a bride.

Simple child of simple care.
Take the crown, its burden bear.
She has hers, and thou hast thine;
One for all the law divine.
Woe in palace, woe in cot;
Diverse woe for diverse lot;
Sorrow for the great and small,
And one Comforter for all.

[222]

THE FISHERMAN'S GRANDCHILD.

OLD James has unmoored his crazy boat,
His granddaughter is his mate.
They keep all on while the skiff will float,
Every day, early and late.

He makes the Gull Rock, so black and steep
Rising up out of the sea.
On the weather side the breakers leap;
All is still under the lee.

He moors her fast round an old grey stone.
Where long she is used to ride;
And where Jane can sit and sing alone,
Watching the set of the tide.

Old James is gone the island around.
Poking in every cleft;
There is not a hole he does not sound,
Soon as the water has left.

[223]

There is but one thought in all his mind,
 And but one sound in his ear;
The mail-clad fish which he hopes to find,
 And the roaring breakers near.

Oh, dear, dear child, how quiet she seems;
 She ceases from her sweet play!
A bright tear-drop in her blue eye gleams,
 And her thoughts are far away.

For this is the day her mother died;
 And now she sees her again;
Kneeling in heart at that bedside
 Where she soothed her mother's pain.

She cannot feel the freshening breeze,
 Nor the change of the heavens' note,
Her heart is under the churchyard trees.
 And not with the rocking boat.

It jumps and pulls like a champing horse
 Which frets and strives to be free.
Will the poor old tackle stand the force
 And strain of the rising sea?

[224]

All chafed and rough, it gives and it breaks.
 She catches it off the stone;
And round her a running knot she makes,

Though it cuts her to the bone.

“O Father, quick, I cannot hold on.”

The old man could not hear.

“Father” — but voice and speaker were gone

Long before help was near.

He marked at last the change of the sky;

But his step was weak and slow.

He saw his old boat drift empty by,

And the empty rocks below.

“O Jane! O Jane! Where art thou, my child?”

As he searched the rocks around.

The sea-birds screamed out their answer wild,

The rocks re-echoed the sound.

The Fisherman saw the old boat ride

All quietly in the bay;

Marvelled, and feared no good did betide;

And pulled out to where she lay.

[225]

Her anchor unbent, yet there she rode,

Safely moored under the land.

The strong ebb tide by her counter flowed,

Stirring up eddies of sand.

They hauled in the cable silently,

And straight the moorings let fall:

For the grief and shock which met their eye

Was too heavy for them all.

They drew her in, with many a sigh,
And smoothed out her dripping hair,
In all the sweetness of death to lie,
Like some broken lily fair.

Silent they sat, nor a word they said.
They knew, for they felt it all.
Then they laid their coats beneath her head,
A sail above for a pall.

The old man saw the sweet child once more,
In her snow-white garments wound;
To rest where oft she had wept before,
And her Easter garlands bound.

[226]

The boat still rots on the storm-swept strand,
None breaks up her planks to burn;
Though James is gone to the far, far land,
From which there is no return.

THE SOUL.

NOR gold, nor boundless lands, nor softest ease,
Nor sparkling words and eyes, nor all the ways
Wherewith men seek their idol world to please;
Nor praises, changeful as the air which plays
On Ocean's smiling face in summer days;

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Nor that philosophy which dwells alone,
And without love; nor all that hope portrays,
In fond Ambition's mirage, can atone
To the poor hungering soul from whom you keep her own.

The Soul lives on the beautiful and good.
Her eye athirst drinks in unsatisfied,
Because still thirsting, all the hoary wood

[227]

In glowing morn or tinted eventide,
Of light and shade, within, or on the side
Of grassy slopes exhibits hour by hour.
Till darkness for a while its beauties hide;
Ere the calm moon regains her wonted power,
And silvers all the pines and ivy-mantled tower.

Stretched on the mossy sward, my ravished ear
Lists to the music of the pious bees,
Chanting around the hives; and yet more near
Across the bending grass a plaintive breeze
Responds to each sweet movement of the trees,
Whilst up the winding vale a shepherd's lay
And various notes of birds, who never cease
Their happy changes, borne by gales away
With them o'er hill and dale, like playful children stray.

And yet my soul drinks on, and still athirst
Waits 'neath the sea-beat rocks on ceaseless waves,
Which, rolling inwards, on the white sand burst
Or dash into unfathomable caves,

With deafening roar. Oh how the Sea-God raves

[228]

Baffled and broke when forth he pours again!
And now the rustling shells he idly laves;
And flagging sails to fainting airs complain
That morn and eve they spread their snowy folds in vain.

Mark the ripe corn 'neath summer breezes smile;
And watch how round the water-lilies bright
Eddies the stream; where emerald flies beguile
The trout to fruitless leaps, whence rings of light
Expand. O Water, Water, day and night
So passing lovely, or as diamond dew,
Or marble frost, or snow of purest white,
Or silver shield, or waving green or blue,
Or mirror where the stars their trembling image view!

Ye countless flowers who rainbow colours share.
Amid your race, or singly each possess;
Ye coral groves and purple caverns where
The ocean creatures play; and ye no less
Yield to my soul a speechless happiness,
Celestial mountains rising height on height,
In changeful form for fancy's playful guess;

[229]

Or spreading out in lines divinely bright,
Like golden bars to gates of realms beyond our sight.

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And what then of the mountains? Pile on pile
Of Parian white, save where each virgin crest
Blushes to feel Apollo on her smile;
Or where upon the lake their shadows rest,
Whilst dying hues still linger in the West.
Or where the sharp-horned moon, or piercing ray
Of one sole star, like glances from the blest,
Gleams between rifted crags till dawn of day,
A kindly light for those who on the mountain stray.

Or else to commune with the eras past.
And hear them tell their deeds, or in the page
Of ancient times, or 'mid the shadows cast
By towering relics of heroic age,
Which coming death to present life presage,
In oak-clad Greece, or on Palmyra's sand,
Or what survives from time or hostile rage
In Canaan, Rome; or our now happier land,
Where Druid masses mourn beneath the rocks they spanned.

[230]

Oh shame and woe to see the God-like mind
Contemptuous cast its priceless self away,
And keen for trifles, whilst to mysteries blind,
See its bright gifts in cold neglect decay,
As if our life were but a childish play!
The living laws which earth and sky control,
Less than the garb or gossip of the day,
Find no response in Folly's empty soul,
Though faster than the earth she toward her limit roll.

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It may be that the mind a-weary lies,
And for a time foregoes her wish to soar,
Like some poor bird which prematurely flies,
And sinks upon the nest it held before.
Expecting strength to make one effort more.
So may the spirit plume her ruffled wings;
But to make folly joy, and gold her store,
Inverts the value of created things,
And into deep contempt her vaunted honour brings.

Oh village bells, and echoes down the aisle
From vaulted choir; with all true harmonies;

[231]

Chaste beauty; and the angel-prompted smile
Of sleeping babes; and that securest prize
Of patient toil, the wisdom truly wise;
And thou pure air to which the soul aspires,
On heavenward wings which Poetry supplies,
Higher and higher yet with strong desires,
Illumined, not consumed, by those celestial fires.

But who can tell, what stranger can believe
The infinite delights which ceaseless flow
Forth from the Rock? which simply to receive
Is never more to thirst, and yet to know
Sweet yearning loves which still by loving grow.
A Word there is on which the spirit feeds:
Immortal feasts perpetual altars show:
Truths, sacred rites, high Sacraments and Creeds
Sustain the fainting soul and meet her inmost needs.

The dying saints in contemplation lost
Tell us what lofty thoughts may yet be ours;
The nature of the soul; the Heavenly Host,
And loving order of celestial powers.
Count and count out Time's measurable hours,

[232]

And on their steps from out of Time ascend,
Through gates of pearl beyond the jasper towers,
To Him whence all things come and whither tend,
In whom what was and is and shall be meet and blend.¹

Then is it so, or can it ever be,
That the chief part of God's chief work on earth,
In which high angels can His image see,
Reflected ere the Fall, now by New Birth
Restored, and blest with gifts of priceless worth —
Is it or can it be that she should try
With swinish husks to glut her sinful dearth?
Then shall she find that none can satisfy
But One whom now she spurns; and, wanting Him, must die.

¹ S. Anselm and R. Hooker on their death-bed; and Rev. xxi.

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ON THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL.

APRIL 6TH, 1866.

ALONG the slopes of Hursley's woodland vale,

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Through Merden's knotted yews and broken walls,
The rolling knell repeats its mournful tale;
And on my heart its death-like summons falls.

Gone, gone for ever from the verdant lea,
The Priest of Nature and of Nature's GOD!
That mien of love and peace we shall not see
When Spring returns to clothe the naked sod.

Yon fragrant limes the bees will chant above:
But that soft footstep will be heard no more,
Hasting to prayer, or some sweet work of love,
Along the churchward path or hallowed floor.

This tolling bell will ring "Rejoice! rejoice!"
And gladsome hymns resound through nave and aisle;
But hushed in death that long-beloved voice.
And set the sunshine of that heavenly smile.

[234]

Beneath the Lych-gate, in the churchyard wall,
Radiant with love, the holy man I met;
The meeting and the words with tears recall;
But all I can is — never to forget.

O sin! O death! O joys which turn to woe!
Why do we live and learn to love in vain?
Such short-lived bliss 'twere better not to know
Than seek the sweets which minister to pain.

Hush! hush! vain heart; how little dost thou learn

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From him whom thou presumest to lament:

From fruitless sighs and bitter waters turn,
And seek the healing branches of content.

“Rather in all to be resigned than blest” —

This was the secret of his soul’s repose;
And that sweet stream in which he found his rest
Forth from the stricken Rock perpetual flows.

Then let him rest; and let the church bells ring;

Let bees chant sweetly o’er the whisp’ring limes;
Let springtide still its flowery chaplets bring,
And all the gladness of the olden times.

[235]

Lift up the drooping hands; lift up the heart;
Fight for the Faith, and chiefly fight by prayer.
Let every friend of Keble do his part,
And his allotted cross with patience bear.

Soon shall Eternal Spring, with quick’ning breath,
Give life to seed long treasured in the tomb.
Immortal life shall “swallow up” this death.
And plants of heaven in heav’nly climates bloom.

CUT OFF.

HIM in the majesty of strength, and pride
Of perfect manhood; in the conscious power
Of body, mind, and will, a single hour

Sufficed to wreck. One flash, and far and wide
The riven oak strewed all the mountain-side;
Or like a ship which, bounding o'er the main,
Strikes sudden on a reef which billows hide.
And quivers through her frame, and rolls in pain,
Severe though brief, and moans and writhes in vain,
Then settles in the depths, nor e'er is seen again.

[236]

THE WAIF OF THE SEA.

She lay upon the wreck-strewn strand,
As driven foam from sea to land;
Not lightly hurled by reckless storm,
But straight her limbs, composed her form,
As though some late-repentant wave
Had borne her softly towards her grave.
Her hair lay tranquil on the sand,
And veiled her listless arm and hand.
No trace of pain, nor of distress;
But of delightsome weariness
And coming slumbers; and the cast
Set, ere the sweet expression past.
A locket on her naked breast.
Silent her silent love confessed.
Who would might gaze. There seemed a charm
Which kept the gazer's eye from harm.
Yea, had she suffered by the sea,
As woodmen strip their fallen tree,
So chaste, so pure, so virgin white,

[237]

She shone as snow in full moonlight,
That faintest thought of ill had died
Of its own shame, and purified
The fool had felt that beauty is
Too holy for a soul like his.
None came to seek, nor after, own;
And what she was remains unknown.
Only, a child, when asked, replied,
“An angel, if the angels died.”

THE MESSENGER CLOUD.

I COME from Western shores as a herald of the gale,
Threshing out the crouching corn-fields with its thundering flail;
Or lifting up the billows, and hurling them on rocks,
Masses over masses, with reverberating shocks.
I saw a ship dismasted and driving on the shore,
And caught a shriek of terror, above the surge's roar:
And when the boat was lowered, one cried, “This bag of gold

[238]

For life. O mercy! mercy!” But no more would she hold.
Whilst the brave captain watched him with clear, untroubled eye,
And said, “We must remain, Sir; so let us calmly die.”

And on the broad Atlantic I saw a steamer roll,
Fireless, sailless, helpless, a body without a soul.
The water rose inside her: the water rose around:

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She plunged her bows right under; her dying moan was drowned.

I saw a cutter lying to, head first to the gale;

In the trough, or on the crest, with snow-white stitch of sail.

I saw a petrel floating upon the billow's crest,

Like to an infant sleeping upon its mother's breast.

I marked the pines uprooted along the mountain's side,

And shrubs and flowerets safely their heads in valleys hide.

Hear, O ye men, my warning. The gale is close at hand;

Rushing, roaring, rending, breaking over sea and land.

[239]

WAS HE MAD?

YES, you may ask me what I mean;

And I will tell you why

This hole is dug the graves between,

And why in it I He:

Why by the roots the grass I tear,

And burrow out the ground;

What are these earth-clouts in my hair,

And hair-clouts lying round.

But whether I am wild or sad

Today, I cannot tell.

Hush! hush! they say that I am mad.

I was. But I am well.

Look at my hands, all full of clay:

So is my heart of sin.

Soon could I wash this filth away.

But not the guilt within.

[240]

She was a drift of virgin snow,
A lily in a vale,
A dancing light where waters flow,
At sea a gleaming sail.

I won her heart against her fears,
Against itself I won.
I made her laugh amid her tears.
“I will,” and it was done.

How could I bid her safely rest
On such a heart as mine?
How could I press her virgin breast,
And with these arms entwine?

For when she knew what I had been,
And found what I am yet.
She leaped, as on some snake unseen
Her naked foot were set.

And more and more she thought and grieved;
And more and more she wept:
Until this grave her heart received —
Broken— and so she slept,

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And sleeps. But I! — Behold this clay.

So cleaves my deadly sin.
And what will wash the guilt away,
The damning guilt within?

THE SURF OF DEATH.

“In the hour of death, good Lord, deliver us.”

STILL as the moonlight, or the guileless sleep
Of weary children, lies the argent sea;
And on the world's foundations built, the steep
White cliffs, or gently shelving sand, do me
Invite to other and securer rest.
Sweetly in both, in this, more surely blest.
But what a surf divides! The Deep upheaves
His ponderous hammer, striking blow on blow:
Th' unbroken wave the broken mass receives:
Adown the beach the gurgling waters flow;
And how to cross that bar my terrors do not know.

[242]

Therefore 'twere hardly good to dwell in calm,
And on the face of one prosperity
To slumber free from any thought of harm,
When every man afloat on life must die
Before he win the perfect land above,
And that sole rest which basks in endless love:
For awful are the throes, and black the waves
Which part this world from that, and on the shore
Souls unexpectant meet eternal graves.
Lost in abysses not discerned before,

Where they astonied toss, and sink to rise no more.

CONSUMPTION IN SPRINGTIDE.

ABOVE is lucid, azure sky;
 Around, blue lucid air;
But I am at the point to die,
 Nor can the brightness bear.

The daisy lawn is dazzling white.
 The buttercups of gold
Emblazon to a sheen of light
 The splendour of the wold.

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There — lay me underneath the wall,
 For still the trees are bare;
Nor yield they any shade at all
 From this o'erpowering glare.

Sing out, ye larks; ye flocks, bespeak
 God's praise the best ye can;
For I am weaker than the weak,
 And just a dying man.

But for that more pellucid sky.
 And more pellucid air,
I shall be strengthened, when I die,
 The blaze of light to bear.

And I shall have a voice to sing,

And life in every vein;

Nor, turning thus away from Spring,

Of very joy complain.

THE END.

[NP]

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