

The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge

by

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

1787-1833



DjVu Editions E-books



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Coleridge: Poems

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Easter Holidays

1787

Hail! festal Easter that dost bring
Approach of sweetly-smiling spring,
When Nature's clad in green:
When feather'd songsters through the grove
With beasts confess the power of love
And brighten all the scene.

Now youths the breaking stages load
That swiftly rattling o'er the road
To Greenwich haste away:
While some with sounding oars divide
Of smoothly-flowing Thames the tide
All sing the festive lay.

With mirthful dance they beat the ground,
Their shouts of joy the hills resound
And catch the jocund noise:
Without a tear, without a sigh
Their moments all in transports fly
Till evening ends their joys.

But little think their joyous hearts
Of dire Misfortune's varied smarts
Which youthful years conceal:
Thoughtless of bitter-smiling Woe
Which all mankind are born to know
And they themselves must feel.

Yet he who Wisdom's paths shall keep
And Virtue firm that scorns to weep
At ills in Fortune's power,
Through this life's variegated scene
In raging storms or calm serene
Shall cheerful spend the hour.

While steady Virtue guides his mind
Heav'n-born Content he still shall find
That never sheds a tear:
Without respect to any tide
His hours away in bliss shall glide
Like Easter all the year.

Dura Navis

1787

To tempt the dangerous deep, too venturous youth,
 Why does thy breast with fondest wishes glow?
 No tender parent there thy cares shall sooth,
 No much-lov'd Friend shall share thy every woe.
 Why does thy mind with hopes delusive burn?
 Vain are thy Schemes by heated Fancy plann'd:
 Thy promis'd joy thou'lt see to Sorrow turn
 Exil'd from Bliss, and from thy native land.

Hast thou foreseen the Storm's impending rage,
 When to the Clouds the Waves ambitious rise,
 And seem with Heaven a doubtful war to wage,
 Whilst total darkness overspreads the skies;
 Save when the lightnings darting wingéd Fate
 Quick bursting from the pitchy clouds between
 In forkéd Terror, and destructive state
 Shall shew with double gloom the horrid scene?

Shalt thou be at this hour from danger free?
 Perhaps with fearful force some falling Wave
 Shall wash thee in the wild tempestuous Sea,
 And in some monster's belly fix thy grave;
 Or (woful hap!) against some wave-worn rock
 Which long a Terror to each Bark had stood
 Shall dash thy mangled limbs with furious shock
 And stain its craggy sides with human blood.

Yet not the Tempest, or the Whirlwind's roar
 Equal the horrors of a Naval Fight,
 When thundering Cannons spread a sea of Gore
 And varied deaths now fire and now affright:
 The impatient shout, that longs for closer war,
 Reaches from either side the distant shores;
 Whilst frighten'd at His streams ensanguin'd far
 Loud on his troubled bed huge Ocean roars.

What dreadful scenes appear before my eyes!
 Ah! see how each with frequent slaughter red,
 Regardless of his dying fellows' cries
 O'er their fresh wounds with impious order tread!
 From the dread place does soft Compassion fly!
 The Furies fell each alter'd breast command;

Whilst Vengeance drunk with human blood stands by
And smiling fires each heart and arms each hand.

Should'st thou escape the fury of that day
A fate more cruel still, unhappy, view.
Opposing winds may stop thy luckless way,
And spread fell famine through the suffering crew,
Canst thou endure th' extreme of raging Thirst
Which soon may scorch thy throat, ah! thoughtless Youth!
Or ravening hunger canst thou bear which erst
On its own flesh hath fix'd the deadly tooth?

Dubious and fluttering 'twixt hope and fear
With trembling hands the lot I see thee draw,
Which shall, or sentence thee a victim drear,
To that ghaunt Plague which savage knows no law:
Or, deep thy dagger in the friendly heart,
Whilst each strong passion agitates thy breast,
Though oft with Horror back I see thee start,
Lo! Hunger *drives* thee to th' inhuman feast.

These are the ills, that may the course attend
Then with the joys of home contented rest —
Here, meek-eyed Peace with humble Plenty lend
Their aid united still, to make thee blest.
To ease each pain, and to increase each joy —
Here mutual Love shall fix thy tender wife,
Whose offspring shall thy youthful care employ
And gild with brightest rays the evening of thy Life.

Nil Pejus est Caelibe Vitæ

1787

in Christ's Hospital book

What pleasures shall he ever find?
What joys shall ever glad his heart?
Or who shall heal his wounded mind,
If tortur'd by Misfortune's smart?
Who Hymeneal bliss will never prove,
That more than friendship, friendship mix'd with love.

Then without child or tender wife,
To drive away each care, each sigh,
Lonely he treads the paths of life
A stranger to Affection's tye:
And when from Death he meets his final doom
No mourning wife with tears of love shall wet his tomb.

Tho' Fortune, Riches, Honours, Pow'r,
Had giv'n with every other toy,
Those gilded trifles of the hour,
Those painted nothings sure to cloy:
He dies forgot, his name no son shall bear
To shew the man so blest once breath'd the vital air.

Sonnet to the Autumnal Moon

1788

Mild Splendour of the various-vested Night!
Mother of wildly-working visions! hail!
I watch thy gliding, while with watery light
Thy weak eye glimmers through a fleecy veil;
And when thou lovest thy pale orb to shroud
Behind the gather'd blackness lost on high;
And when thou dartest from the wind-rent cloud
Thy placid lightning o'er the awaken'd sky.

Ah such is Hope! as changeful and as fair!
Now dimly peering on the wistful sight;
Now hid behind the dragon-wing'd Despair:
But soon emerging in her radiant might
She o'er the sorrow-clouded breast of Care
Sails, like a meteor kindling in its flight.

Anthem for the Children of Christ's Hospital

1789

Seraphs! around th' Eternal's seat who throng
With tuneful ecstasies of praise:
O! teach our feeble tongues like yours the song
Of fervent gratitude to raise —

Like you, inspired with holy flame
To dwell on that Almighty name
Who bade the child of Woe no longer sigh,
And Joy in tears o'erspread the widow's eye.

Th' all-gracious Parent hears the wretch's prayer;
The meek tear strongly pleads on high;
Wan Resignation struggling with despair
The Lord beholds with pitying eye;
Sees cheerless Want unpitied pine,
Disease on earth its head recline,
And bids Compassion seek the realms of woe
To heal the wounded, and to raise the low.

She comes! she comes! the meek-eyed Power I see
With liberal hand that loves to bless;
The clouds of Sorrow at her presence flee;
Rejoice! rejoice! ye Children of Distress!
The beams that play around her head
Thro' Want's dark vale their radiance spread:
The young uncultur'd mind imbibes the ray,
And Vice reluctant quits th' expected prey.

Cease, thou lorn mother! cease thy wailings drear;
Ye babes! the unconscious sob forego;
Or let full Gratitude now prompt the tear
Which erst did Sorrow force to flow.
Unkindly cold and tempest shrill
In Life's morn oft the traveller chill,
But soon his path the sun of Love shall warm;
And each glad scene look brighter for the storm!

Julia

1789

in Christ's Hospital book

Medio de fonte leporum Surgit amari aliquid.

Julia was blest with beauty, wit, and grace:
 Small poets lov'd to sing her blooming face.
 Before her altars, lo! a numerous train
 Preferr'd their vows; yet all preferr'd in vain,

Till charming Florio, born to conquer, came
 And touch'd the fair one with an equal flame.
 The flame she felt, and ill could she conceal
 What every look and action would reveal.
 With boldness then, which seldom fails to move,
 He pleads the cause of Marriage and of Love:
 The course of Hymeneal joys he rounds,
 The fair one's eyes danc'd pleasure at the sounds.
 Nought now remain'd but "Noes" — how little meant!
 And the sweet coyness that endears consent.
 The youth upon his knees enraptur'd fell:
 The strange misfortune, oh! what words can tell?
 Tell! ye neglected sylphs! who lap-dogs guard,
 Why snatch'd ye not away your precious ward?
 Why suffer'd ye the lover's weight to fall
 On the ill-fated neck of much-lov'd Ball?
 The favourite on his mistress casts his eyes,
 Gives a short melancholy howl, and — dies.
 Sacred his ashes lie, and long his rest!
 Anger and grief divide poor Julia's breast.
 Her eyes she fixt on guilty Florio first:
 On him the storm of angry grief must burst.
 That storm he fled: he woos a kinder fair,
 Whose fond affections no dear puppies share.
 'Twere vain to tell, how Julia pin'd away:
 Unhappy Fair! that in one luckless day —
 From future Almanacks the day be crost! —
 At once her Lover and her Lap-dog lost.

Quae Nocent Docent

1789

in Christ's Hospital book

O! mihi praeteritos referat si Jupiter annos!

Oh! might my ill-past hours return again!
No more, as then, should Sloth around me throw
Her soul-enslaving, leaden chain!
No more the precious time would I employ
In giddy revels, or in thoughtless joy,
A present joy producing future woe.

But o'er the midnight Lamp I'd love to pore,
I'd seek with care fair Learning's depths to sound,
And gather scientific Lore:
Or to mature the embryo thoughts inclin'd,
That half-conceiv'd lay struggling in my mind,
The cloisters' solitary gloom I'd round.

'Tis vain to wish, for Time has ta'en his flight —
For follies past be ceas'd the fruitless tears:
Let follies past to future care incite.
Averse maturer judgements to obey
Youth owns, with pleasure owns, the Passions' sway,
But sage Experience only comes with years.

The Nose

1789

Ye souls unus'd to lofty verse
 Who sweep the earth with lowly wing,
 Like sand before the blast disperse —
 A Nose! a mighty Nose I sing!
 As erst Prometheus stole from heaven the fire
 To animate the wonder of his hand;
 Thus with unhallow'd hands, O Muse, aspire,
 And from my subject snatch a burning brand!
 So like the Nose I sing — my verse shall glow —
 Like Phlegethon my verse in waves of fire shall flow!

Light of this once all darksome spot
 Where now their glad course mortals run,
 First-born of Sirius begot
 Upon the focus of the Sun —
 I'll call thee — ! for such thy earthly name —
 What name so high, but what too low must be?
 Comets, when most they drink the solar flame
 Are but faint types and images of thee!

Burn madly, Fire! o'er earth in ravage run,
 Then blush for shame more red by fiercer — outdone!¹

I saw when from the turtle feast
 The thick dark smoke in volumes rose!
 I saw the darkness of the mist
 Encircle thee, O Nose!
 Shorn of thy rays thou shott'st a fearful gleam
 (The turtle quiver'd with prophetic fright)
 Gloomy and sullen thro' the night of steam: —
 So Satan's Nose when Dunstan urg'd to flight,
 Glowing from gripe of red-hot pincers dread
 Athwart the smokes of Hell disastrous twilight shed!

The Furies to madness my brain devote —
 In robes of ice my body wrap!
 On billowy flames of fire I float,
 Hear ye my entrails how they snap?
 Some power unseen forbids my lungs to breathe!
 What fire-clad meteors round me whizzing fly!
 I vitrify thy torrid zone beneath,
 Proboscis fierce! I am calcined! I die!

Thus, like great Pliny, in Vesuvius' fire,
I perish in the blaze while I the blaze admire.

¹by fiercer Gill outdone. MS

To the Muse

1789

Tho' no bold flights to thee belong;
And tho' thy lays with conscious fear,
Shrink from Judgement's eye severe,
Yet much I thank thee, Spirit of my song!
For, lovely Muse! thy sweet employ
Exalts my soul, refines my breast,
Gives each pure pleasure keener zest,
And softens sorrow into pensive Joy.
From thee I learn'd the wish to bless,
From thee to commune with my heart;
From thee, dear Muse! the gayer part,
To laugh with pity at the crowds that press
Where Fashion flaunts her robes by Folly spun,
Whose hues gay-varying wanton in the sun.

Destruction of the Bastille

?1789

Heard'st thou yon universal cry,
 And dost thou linger still on Gallia's shore?
 Go, Tyranny! beneath some barbarous sky
 Thy terrors lost and ruin'd power deplore!
 What tho' through many a groaning age
 Was felt thy keen suspicious rage,
 Yet Freedom rous'd by fierce Disdain
 Has wildly broke thy triple chain,
 And like the storm which Earth's deep entrails hide,
 At length has burst its way and spread the ruins wide.

* * * * * 1

In sighs their sickly breath was spent; each gleam
 Of Hope had ceas'd the long long day to cheer;
 Or if delusive, in some flitting dream,
 It gave them to their friends and children dear —
 Awaked by lordly Insult's sound
 To all the doubled horrors round,
 Oft shrunk they from Oppression's band
 While Anguish rais'd the desperate hand
 For silent death; or lost the mind's controll,
 Thro' every burning vein would tides of Frenzy roll.

But cease, ye pitying bosoms, cease to bleed!
 Such scenes no more demand the tear humane;
 I see, I see! glad Liberty succeed
 With every patriot virtue in her train!
 And mark yon peasant's raptur'd eyes;
 Secure he views his harvests rise;
 No fetter vile the mind shall know,
 And Eloquence shall fearless glow.
 Yes! Liberty the soul of Life shall reign,
 Shall throb in every pulse, shall flow thro' every vein!

Shall France alone a Despot spurn?
 Shall she alone, O Freedom, boast thy care?
 Lo, round thy standard Belgia's heroes burn,
 Tho' Power's blood-stain'd streamers fire the air,
 And wider yet thy influence spread,
 Nor e'er recline thy weary head,
 Till every land from pole to pole

Shall boast one independent soul!
And still, as erst, let favour'd Britain be
First ever of the first and freest of the free!

¹ Stanzas second and third are lost. We may gather from the context that they alluded to the Bastile and its inhabitants.

Life

1789

As late I journeyed o'er the extensive plain
Where native Otter sports his scanty stream,
Musing in torpid woe a Sister's pain,
The glorious prospect woke me from the dream.

At every step it widen'd to my sight —
Wood, Meadow, verdant Hill, and dreary Steep,
Following in quick succession of delight, —
Till all — at once — did my eye ravish'd sweep!

May this (I cried) my course through Life portray!
New scenes of Wisdom may each step display,
And Knowledge open as my days advance!
Till what time Death shall pour the undarken'd ray,
My eye shall dart thro' infinite expanse,
And thought suspended lie in Rapture's blissful trance.

Progress of Vice

1790

Nemo repente turpissimus

Deep in the gulph of Vice and Woe
Leaps Man at once with headlong throw?
Him inborn Truth and Virtue guide,
Whose guards are Shame and conscious Pride.
In some gay hour Vice steals into the breast;
Perchance she wears some softer Virtue's vest.
By unperceiv'd degrees she tempts to stray,
Till far from Virtue's path she leads the feet away.

Then swift the soul to disenthral
Will Memory the past recall,
And Fear before the Victim's eyes
Bid future ills and dangers rise.
But hark! the Voice, the Lyre, their charms combine —
Gay sparkles in the cup the generous Wine —
Th' inebriate dance, the fair frail Nymph inspires,
And Virtue vanquish'd — scorn'd — with hasty flight retires.

But soon to tempt the Pleasures cease;
Yet Shame forbids return to peace.
And stern Necessity will force
Still to urge on the desperate course.

The drear black paths of Vice the wretch must try,
Where Conscience flashes horror on each eye,
Where Hate — where Murder scowl — where starts Affright!
Ah! close the scene — ah! close — for dreadful is the sight.

Monody on the Death of Chatterton

1790

[first version, in Christ's Hospital book — 1790]

Cold penury repress'd his noble rage,
And froze the genial current of his soul.

Now prompts the Muse poetic lays,
And high my bosom beats with love of Praise!
But Chatterton! methinks I hear thy name,
For cold my Fancy grows, and dead each Hope of Fame.

When Want and cold Neglect had chill'd thy soul,
Athirst for Death I see thee drench the bowl!
Thy corpse of many a livid hue
On the bare ground I view,
Whilst various passions all my mind engage;
Now is my breast distended with a sigh,
And now a flash of Rage
Darts through the tear, that glistens in my eye.

Is this the land of liberal Hearts!
Is this the land, where Genius ne'er in vain
Pour'd forth her soul-enchancing strain?
Ah me! yet Butler 'gainst the bigot foe
Well-skill'd to aim keen Humour's dart,
Yet Butler felt Want's poignant sting;
And Otway, Master of the Tragic art,
Whom Pity's self had taught to sing,
Sank beneath a load of Woe;
This ever can the generous Briton hear,
And starts not in his eye th' indignant Tear?

Elate of Heart and confident of Fame,
From vales where Avon sports, the Minstrel came,
Gay as the Poet hastes along
He meditates the future song,
How ælla battled with his country's foes,
And whilst Fancy in the air
Paints him many a vision fair
His eyes dance rapture and his bosom glows.
With generous joy he views th' ideal gold:
He listens to many a Widow's prayers,
And many an Orphan's thanks he hears;
He soothes to peace the care-worn breast,

He bids the Debtor's eyes know rest,
 And Liberty and Bliss behold:
 And now he punishes the heart of steel,
 And her own iron rod he makes Oppression feel.

Fated to heave sad Disappointment's sigh,
 To feel the Hope now rais'd, and now deprest,
 To feel the burnings of an injur'd breast,
 From all thy Fate's deep sorrow keen
 In vain, O Youth, I turn th' affrighted eye;
 For powerful Fancy evernigh
 The hateful picture forces on my sight.
 There, Death of every dear delight,
 Frowns Poverty of Giant mien!
 In vain I seek the charms of youthful grace,
 Thy sunken eye, thy haggard cheeks it shews,
 The quick emotions struggling in the Face
 Faint index of thy mental Throes,
 When each strong Passion spurn'd controll,
 And not a Friend was nigh to calm thy stormy soul.

Such was the sad and gloomy hour
 When anguish'd Care of sullen brow
 Prepared the Poison's death-cold power.
 Already to thy lips was rais'd the bowl,
 When filial Pity stood thee by,
 Thy fixéd eyes she bade thee roll
 On scenes that well might melt thy soul —
 Thy native cot she held to view,
 Thy native cot, where Peace ere long
 Had listen'd to thy evening song;
 Thy sister's shrieks she bade thee hear,
 And mark thy mother's thrilling tear,
 She made thee feel her deep-drawn sigh,
 And all her silent agony of Woe.

And from *thy* Fate shall such distress ensue?
 Ah! dash the poison'd chalice from thy hand!
 And thou had'st dash'd it at her soft command;
 But that Despair and Indignation rose,
 And told again the story of thy Woes,
 Told the keen insult of th' unfeeling Heart,
 The dread dependence on the low-born mind,
 Told every Woe, for which thy breast might smart,
 Neglect and grinning scorn and Want combin'd —
 Recoiling back, thou sent'st the friend of Pain
 To roll a tide of Death thro' every freezing vein.

O Spirit blest!
Whether th' eternal Throne around,
Amidst the blaze of Cherubim,
Thou pourest forth the grateful hymn,
Or, soaring through the blest Domain,
Enraptur' st Angels with thy strain, —
Grant me, like thee, the lyre to sound,
Like thee, with fire divine to glow —
But ah! when rage the Waves of Woe,
Grant me with firmer breast t' oppose their hate,
And soar beyond the storms with upright eye elate!

An Invocation

1790

Sweet Muse! companion of my every hour!
Voice of my Joy! Sure soother of the sigh!
Now plume thy pinions, now exert each power,
And fly to him who owns the candid eye.

And if a smile of Praise thy labour hail
(Well shall thy labours then my mind employ)
Fly fleetly back, sweet Muse! and with the tale
O'erspread my Features with a flush of Joy!

Anna and Harland

?1790

Within these wilds was Anna wont to rove
While Harland told his love in many a sigh,
But stern on Harland roll'd her brother's eye,
They fought, they fell — her brother and her love!

To Death's dark house did grief-worn Anna haste,
Yet here her pensive ghost delights to stay;
Oft pouring on the winds the broken lay —
And hark, I hear her — 'twas the passing blast.

I love to sit upon her tomb's dark grass,
Then Memory backward rolls Time's shadowy tide;
The tales of other days before me glide:
With eager thought I seize them as they pass;
For fair, tho' faint, the forms of Memory gleam,
Like Heaven's bright beauteous bow reflected in the stream.

To the Evening Star

?1790

O meek attendant of Sol's setting blaze,
I hail, sweet star, thy chaste effulgent glow;
On thee full oft with fixéd eye I gaze
Till I, methinks, all spirit seem to grow.

O first and fairest of the starry choir,
O loveliest 'mid the daughters of the night,
Must not the maid I love like thee inspire
Pure joy and *calm* Delight?

Must she not be, as is thy placid sphere
Serenely brilliant? Whilst to gaze a while
Be all my wish 'mid Fancy's high career
E'en till she quit this scene of earthly toil;
Then Hope perchance might fondly sigh to join
Her spirit in thy kindred orb, O Star benign!

Pain

?1790

Once could the Morn's first beams, the healthful breeze,
All Nature charm, and gay was every hour: —
But ah! not Music's self, nor fragrant bower
Can glad the trembling sense of wan Disease.
Now that the frequent pangs my frame assail,
Now that my sleepless eyes are sunk and dim,
And seas of Pain seem waving through each limb —
Ah what can all Life's gilded scenes avail?
I view the crowd, whom Youth and Health inspire,
Hear the loud laugh, and catch the sportive lay,
Then sigh and think — I too could laugh and play
And gaily sport it on the Muse's lyre,
Ere Tyrant Pain had chas'd away delight,
Ere the wild pulse throbb'd anguish thro' the night!

On a Lady Weeping: Imitation from the Latin of Nicolaus Archius

?1790

Lovely gems of radiance meek
Trembling down my Laura's cheek,
As the streamlets silent glide
Thro' the Mead's enamell'd pride,
Pledges sweet of pious woe,
Tears which Friendship taught to flow,
Sparkling in yon humid light
Love embathes his pinions bright:
There amid the glitt'ring show'r
Smiling sits th' insidious Power;
As some wingéd Warbler oft
When Spring-clouds shed their treasures soft
Joyous tricks his plumes anew,
And flutters in the fost'ring dew.

Monody on a Tea-kettle

1790

O Muse who sangest late another's pain,
 To griefs domestic turn thy coal-black steed!
 With slowest steps thy funeral steed must go,
 Nodding his head in all the pomp of woe:
 Wide scatter round each dark and deadly weed,
 And let the melancholy dirge complain,
 (Whilst Bats shall shriek and Dogs shall howling run)
 The tea-kettle is spoilt and Coleridge is undone!

Your cheerful songs, ye unseen crickets, cease!
 Let songs of grief your alter'd minds engage!
 For he who sang responsive to your lay,
 What time the joyous bubbles 'gan to play,
 The *sooty swain* has felt the fire's fierce rage; —
 Yes, he is gone, and all my woes increase;
 I heard the water issuing from the wound —
 No more the Tea shall pour its fragrant steams around!

O Goddess best belov'd! Delightful Tea!
 With thee compar'd what yields the madd'ning Vine?
 Sweet power! who know'st to spread the calm delight,
 And the pure joy prolong to midmost night!
 Ah! must I all thy varied sweets resign?
 Enfolded close in grief thy form I see;
 No more wilt thou extend thy willing arms,
 Receive the *fervent Jove*, and yield him all thy charms!

How sink the mighty low by Fate opprest! —
 Perhaps, O Kettle! thou by scornful toe
 Rude urg'd t' ignoble place with plaintive din,
 May'st rust obscure midst heaps of vulgar tin; —
 As if no joy had ever seiz'd my breast
 When from thy spout the streams did arching fly, —
 As if, infus'd, thou ne'er hadst known t' inspire
 All the warm raptures of poetic fire!

But hark! or do I fancy the glad voice —
 "What tho' the swain did wondrous charms disclose —
 (Not such did Memnon's sister sable drest)
 Take these bright arms with royal face imprest,
 A better Kettle shall thy soul rejoice,
 And with Oblivion's wings o'erspread thy woes!"

Thus Fairy Hope can soothe distress and toil;
On empty Trivets she bids fancied Kettles boil!

Genevieve

1789-90

Maid of my Love, sweet Genevieve!
In Beauty's light you glide along:
Your eye is like the Star of Eve,
And sweet your voice, as Seraph's song.
Yet not your heavenly beauty gives
This heart with Passion soft to glow:
Within your soul a voice there lives!
It bids you hear the tale of Woe.
When sinking low the sufferer wan
Beholds no hand outstretch'd to save,
Fair, as the bosom of the Swan
That rises graceful o'er the wave,
I've seen your breast with pity heave,
And *therefore* love I you, sweet Genevieve!

On Receiving an Account that his Only Sister's Death was Inevitable

1791

The tear which mourn'd a brother's fate scarce dry —
Pain after pain, and woe succeeding woe —
Is my heart destin'd for another blow?
O my sweet sister! and must thou too die?
Ah! how has Disappointment pour'd the tear
O'er infant Hope destroy'd by early frost!
How are ye gone, whom most my soul held dear!
Scarce had I lov'd you ere I mourn'd you lost;
Say, is this hollow eye, this heartless pain,
Fated to rove thro' Life's wide cheerless plain —
Nor father, brother, sister meet its ken —
My woes, my joys unshared! Ah! long ere then
On me thy icy dart, stern Death, be prov'd; —
Better to die, than live and not be lov'd!

On Seeing a Youth Affectionately Welcomed by a Sister

1791

I too a sister had! too cruel Death!
How sad Remembrance bids my bosom heave!
Tranquil her soul, as sleeping Infant's breath;
Meek were her manners as a vernal Eve.
Knowledge, that frequent lifts the bloated mind,
Gave her the treasure of a lowly breast,
And Wit to venom'd Malice oft assign'd,
Dwelt in her bosom in a Turtle's nest.
Cease, busy Memory! cease to urge the dart;
Nor on my soul her love to me impress!
For oh I mourn in anguish — and my heart
Feels the keen pang, th' unutterable distress.
Yet wherefore grieve I that her sorrows cease,
For Life was misery, and the Grave is Peace!

A Mathematical Problem

1791

If Pegasus will let *thee* only ride him,
Spurning my clumsy efforts to o'erstride him,
Some fresh expedient the Muse will try,
And walk on stilts, although she cannot fly.

To the Rev. George Coleridge.
Dear Brother,

I have often been surprised that Mathematics, the quintessence of Truth, should have found admirers so few and so languid. Frequent consideration and minute scrutiny have at length unravelled the cause; viz. that though Reason is feasted, Imagination is starved; whilst Reason is luxuriating in its proper Paradise, Imagination is wearily travelling on a dreary desert. To assist Reason by the stimulus of Imagination is the design of the following production. In the execution of it much may be objectionable. The verse (particularly in the introduction of the ode) may be accused of unwarrantable liberties, but they are liberties equally homogeneal with the exactness of Mathematical disquisition, and the boldness of Pindaric daring. I have three strong champions to defend me against the attacks of Criticism: the Novelty, the Difficulty, and the Utility of the work. I may justly plume myself that I first have drawn the nymph Mathesis from the visionary caves of abstracted idea, and caused her to unite with Harmony. The first-born of this Union I now present to you; with interested motives indeed — as I expect to receive in return the more valuable offspring of your Muse.

Thine ever,
S.T.C.

[Christ's Hospital *March* 31, 1791.]

This is now — this was erst,
Proposition the first — and Problem the first.

On a given finite line
Which must no way incline;
To describe an equi —
— lateral Tri —
— A, N, G, L, E.
Now let A. B.
Be the given line
Which must no way incline;
The great Mathematician
Makes this Requisition,
That we describe an Equi —
— lateral Tri —
— angle on it:
Aid us, Reason — aid us, Wit!

From the centre A. at the distance A. B.
 Describe the circle B. C. D.
 At the distance B. A. from B. the centre
 The round A. C. E. to describe boldly venture.
 (Third postulate see.)
 And from the point C.
 In which the circles make a pothor
 Cutting and slashing one another,
 Bid the straight lines a journeying go.
 C. A. C. B. those lines will show.
 To the points, which by A. B. are reckon'd,
 And postulate the second
 For Authority ye know.
 A. B. C.
 Triumphant shall be
 An Equilateral Triangle,
 Not Peter Pindar carp, nor Zoilus can wrangle.

Because the point A. is the centre
 Of the circular B. C. D.
 And because the point B. is the centre
 Of the circular A. C. E.
 A. C. to A. B. and B. C. to B. A.
 Harmoniously equal for ever must stay;
 Then C. A. and B. C.
 Both extend the kind hand
 To the basis, A. B.
 Unambitiously join'd in Equality's Band.
 But to the same powers, when two powers are equal,
 My mind forbodes the sequel;
 My mind does some celestial impulse teach,
 And equalises each to each.
 Thus C. A. with B. C. strikes the same sure alliance,
 That C. A. and B. C. had with A. B. before;
 And in mutual affiance
 None attempting to soar
 Above another,
 The unanimous three
 C. A. and B. C. and A. B.
 All are equal, each to his brother,
 Preserving the balance of power so true:
 Ah! the like would the proud Autocratrix do!
 At taxes impending not Britain would tremble,
 Nor Prussia struggle her fear to dissemble;
 Nor the Mah'met-sprung Wight
 The great Mussulman
 Would stain his Divan

With Urine the soft-flowing daughter of Fright.

But rein your stallion in, too daring Nine!
Should Empires bloat the scientific line?
Or with dishevell'd hair all madly do ye run
For transport that your task is done?
For done it is — the cause is tried!
And Proposition, gentle Maid,
Who soothly ask'd stern Demonstration's aid,
Has proved her right, and A. B. C.
Of Angles three
Is shown to be of equal side;
And now our weary steed to rest in fine,
'Tis rais'd upon A. B. the straight, the given line.

Honour

1791

O, curas hominum! O, quantum est in rebus inane!

The fervid Sun had more than halv'd the day,
 When gloomy on his couch Philedon lay;
 His feeble frame consumptive as his purse,
 His aching head did wine and women curse;
 His fortune ruin'd and his wealth decay'd,
 Clamorous his duns, his gaming debts unpaid,
 The youth indignant seiz'd his tailor's bill,
 And on its back thus wrote with moral quill:
 "Various as colours in the rainbow shown,
 Or similar in emptiness alone,
 How false, how vain are Man's pursuits below!
 Wealth, Honour, Pleasure — what can ye bestow?
 Yet see, how high and low, and young and old
 Pursue the all-delusive power of Gold.
 Fond man! should all Peru thy empire own,
 For thee tho' all Golconda's jewels shone,
 What greater bliss could all this wealth supply?
 What, but to eat and drink and sleep and die?
 Go, tempt the stormy sea, the burning soil —
 Go, waste the night in thought, the day in toil,
 Dark frowns the rock, and fierce the tempests rave —
 Thy ingots go the unconscious deep to pave!
 Or thunder at thy door the midnight train,
 Or Death shall knock that never knocks in vain.
 Next Honour's sons come bustling on amain;
 I laugh with pity at the idle train.
 Infirm of soul! who think'st to lift thy name
 Upon the waxen wings of human fame, —
 Who for a sound, articulated breath —
 Gazest undaunted in the face of death!
 What art thou but a Meteor's glaring light —
 Blazing a moment and then sunk in night?
 Caprice which rais'd thee high shall hurl thee low,
 Or Envy blast the laurels on thy brow.
 To such poor joys could ancient Honour lead
 When empty fame was toiling Merit's meed;
 To Modern Honour other lays belong;
 Profuse of joy and Lord of right and wrong,
 Honour can game, drink, riot in the stew,
 Cut a friend's throat; — what cannot Honour do?

Ah me! — the storm within can Honour still
For Julio's death, whom Honour made me kill?
Or will this lordly Honour tell the way
To pay those debts, which Honour makes me pay?
Or if with pistol and terrific threats
I make some traveller pay my Honour's debts,
A medicine for this wound can Honour give?
Ah, no! my Honour dies to make my Honour live.
But see! young Pleasure, and her train advance,
And joy and laughter wake the inebriate dance;
Around my neck she throws her fair white arms,
I meet her loves, and madden at her charms.
For the gay grape can joys celestial move,
And what so sweet below as Woman's love?
With such high transport every moment flies,
I curse Experience that he makes me wise;
For at his frown the dear deliriums flew,
And the changed scene now wears a gloomy hue.
A hideous hag th' Enchantress Pleasure seems,
And all her joys appear but feverous dreams.
The vain resolve still broken and still made,
Disease and loathing and remorse invade;
The charm is vanish'd and the bubble's broke, —
A slave to pleasure is a slave to smoke!''
Such lays repentant did the Muse supply;
When as the Sun was hastening down the sky,
In glittering state twice fifty guineas come, —
His Mother's plate antique had rais'd the sum.
Forth leap'd Philedon of new life possest: —
'Twas Brookes's all till two, — 'twas Hackett's all the rest!

On Imitation

?1791

All are not born to soar — and ah! how few
In tracks where Wisdom leads their paths pursue!
Contagious when to wit or wealth allied,
Folly and Vice diffuse their venom wide.
On Folly every fool his talent tries;
It asks some toil to imitate the wise;
Tho' few like Fox can speak — like Pitt can think —
Yet all like Fox can game — like Pitt can drink.

Inside the Coach

1791

'Tis hard on Bagshot Heath to try
Unclos'd to keep the weary eye;
But ah! Oblivion's nod to get
In rattling coach is harder yet.
Slumbrous God of half-shut eye!
Who lovest with limbs supine to lie;
Soother sweet of toil and care
Listen, listen to my prayer;
And to thy votary dispense
Thy soporific influence!
What tho' around thy drowsy head
The seven-fold cap of night be spread,
Yet lift that drowsy head awhile
And yawn propitiously a smile;
In drizzly rains poppean dews
O'er the tired inmates of the Coach diffuse;
And when thou'st charm'd our eyes to rest,
Pillowing the chin upon the breast,
Bid many a dream from thy dominions
Wave its various-painted pinions,
Till ere the splendid visions close
We snore quartettes in ecstasy of nose.
While thus we urge our airy course,
O may no jolt's electric force
Our fancies from their steeds unhorse,
And call us from thy fairy reign
To dreary Bagshot Heath again!

Devonshire Roads

1791

The indignant Bard composed this furious ode,
As tired he dragg'd his way thro' Plimtree road!
Crusted with filth and stuck in mire
Dull sounds the Bard's bemudded lyre;
Nathless Revenge and Ire the Poet goad
To pour his imprecations on the road.

Curst road! whose execrable way
Was darkly shadow'd out in Milton's lay,
When the sad fiends thro' Hell's sulphureous roads
Took the first survey of their new abodes;
Or when the fall'n Archangel fierce
Dar'd through the realms of Night to pierce,
What time the Bloodhound lur'd by Human scent
Thro' all Confusion's quagmires floundering went.

Nor cheering pipe, nor Bird's shrill note
Around thy dreary paths shall float;
Their boding songs shall scritch-owls pour
To fright the guilty shepherds sore,
Led by the wandering fires astray
Thro' the dank horrors of thy way!
While they their mud-lost sandals hunt
May all the curses, which they grunt
In raging moan like goaded hog,
Alight upon thee, damnéd Bog!

Music

1791

Hence, soul-dissolving Harmony
That lead'st th' oblivious soul astray —
Though thou sphere-descended be —
Hence away! —
Thou mightier Goddess, thou demand'st my lay,
Born when earth was seiz'd with cholic;
Or as more sapient sages say,
What time the Legion diabolic
Compell'd their beings to enshrine
In bodies vile of herded swine,
Precipitate adown the steep
With hideous rout were plunging in the deep,
And hog and devil mingling grunt and yell
Seiz'd on the ear with horrible obtrusion; —
Then if aright old legendaries tell,
Wert thou begot by Discord on Confusion!

What though no name's sonorous power
Was given thee at thy natal hour! —
Yet oft I feel thy sacred might,
While concords wing their distant flight.
Such Power inspires thy holy son
Sable clerk of Tiverton!
And oft where Otter sports his stream,
I hear thy banded offspring scream.
Thou Goddess! thou inspir'st each throat;
'Tis thou who pour'st the scritch-owl note!
Transported hear'st thy children all
Scrape and blow and squeak and squall;
And while old Otter's steeple rings,
Clapest hoarse thy raven wings!

Sonnet: On Quitting School for College

1791

Farewell parental scenes! a sad farewell!
To you my grateful heart still fondly clings,
Tho' fluttering round on Fancy's burnish'd wings
Her tales of future Joy Hope loves to tell.
Adieu, adieu! ye much-lov'd cloisters pale!
Ah! would those happy days return again,
When 'neath your arches, free from every stain,
I heard of guilt and wonder'd at the tale!
Dear haunts! where oft my simple lays I sang,
Listening meanwhile the echoings of my feet,
Lingering I quit you, with as great a pang,
As when erewhile, my weeping childhood, torn
By early sorrow from my native seat,
Mingled its tears with hers — my widow'd Parent lorn.

Absence: A Farewell Ode on Quitting School for Jesus College, Cambridge

1791

Where graced with many a classic spoil
CAM rolls his reverend stream along,
I haste to urge the learned toil
That sternly chides my love-lorn song:
Ah me! too mindful of the days
Illumed by Passion's orient rays,
When Peace, and Cheerfulness and Health
Enriched me with the best of wealth.
Ah fair Delights! that o'er my soul
On Memory's wing, like shadows fly!
Ah Flowers! which Joy from Eden stole
While Innocence stood smiling by! —
But cease, fond Heart! this bootless moan:
Those Hours on rapid Pinions flown
Shall yet return, by Absence crown'd,
And scatter livelier roses round.
The Sun who ne'er remits his fires
On heedless eyes may pour the day:
The Moon, that oft from Heaven retires,
Endears her renovated ray.
What though she leave the sky unblest
To mourn awhile in murky vest?
When she relumes her lovely light,
We bless the Wanderer of the Night.

Happiness

1791

On wide or narrow scale shall Man
Most happily describe Life's plan?
Say shall he bloom and wither there,
Where first his infant buds appear;
Or upwards dart with soaring force,
And tempt some more ambitious course?
Obedient now to Hope's command
I bid each humble wish expand,
And fair and bright Life's prospects seem,
While Hope displays her cheering beam,
And Fancy's vivid colourings stream,
While Emulation stands me nigh
The Goddess of the eager eye.
With foot advanc'd and anxious heart
Now for the fancied goal I start: —
Ah! why will Reason intervene
Me and my promis'd joys between!
She stops my course, she chains my speed,
While thus her forceful words proceed: —
“Ah! listen, Youth, ere yet too late,
What evils on thy course may wait!
To bow the head, to bend the knee,
A minion of Servility,
At low Pride's frequent frowns to sigh,
And watch the glance in Folly's eye;
To toil intense, yet toil in vain,
And feel with what a hollow pain
Pale Disappointment hangs her head
O'er darling Expectation dead!
The scene is changed and Fortune's gale
Shall belly out each prosperous sail.
Yet sudden wealth full well I know
Did never happiness bestow.
That wealth to which we were not born
Dooms us to sorrow or to scorn.
Behold yon flock which long had trod
O'er the short grass of Devon's sod,
To Lincoln's rank rich meads transferr'd,
And in their fate thy own be fear'd;
Through every limb contagions fly,
Deform'd and choked they burst and die.
When Luxury opens wide her arms,

And smiling woos thee to those charms,
Whose fascination thousands own,
Shall thy brows wear the stoic frown?
And when her goblet she extends
Which maddening myriads press around,
What power divine thy soul befriends
That thou should'st dash it to the ground? —
No, thou shalt drink, and thou shalt know
Her transient bliss, her lasting woe,
Her maniac joys, that know no measure,
And Riot rude and painted Pleasure; —
Till (sad reverse!) the Enchantress vile
To frowns converts her magic smile;
Her train impatient to destroy,
Observe her frown with gloomy joy;
On thee with harpy fangs they seize
The hideous offspring of Disease,
Swoln Dropsy ignorant of Rest,
And Fever garb'd in scarlet vest.
Consumption driving the quick hearse,
And Gout that howls the frequent curse,
With Apoplex of heavy head
That surely aims his dart of lead.
But say Life's joys unmix'd were given
To thee some favourite of Heaven:
Within, without, tho' all were health —
Yet what e'en thus are Fame, Power, Wealth,
But sounds that variously express,
What's thine already — Happiness!
'Tis thine the converse deep to hold
With all the famous sons of old;
And thine the happy waking dream
While Hope pursues some favourite theme,
As oft when Night o'er Heaven is spread,
Round this maternal seat you tread,
Where far from splendour, far from riot,
In silence wrapt sleeps careless Quiet.
'Tis thine with Fancy oft to talk,
And thine the peaceful evening walk;
And what to thee the sweetest are —
The setting sun, the Evening Star —
The tints, which live along the sky,
And Moon that meets thy raptur'd eye,
Where oft the tear shall grateful start,
Dear silent pleasures of the Heart!
Ah! Being blest, for Heaven shall lend

To share thy simple joys a friend!
Ah! doubly blest, if Love supply
His influence to complete thy joy,
If chance some lovely maid thou find
To read thy visage in thy mind.
One blessing more demands thy care: —
Once more to Heaven address the prayer:
For humble independence pray
The guardian genius of thy way;
Whom (sages say) in days of yore
Meek Competence to Wisdom bore,
So shall thy little vessel glide
With a fair breeze adown the tide,
And Hope, if e'er thou 'ginst to sorrow,
Remind thee of some fair to-morrow,
Till Death shall close thy tranquil eye
While Faith proclaims 'Thou shalt not die!''

A Wish: Written in Jesus Wood, Feb. 10, 1792

1792

Lo! through the dusky silence of the groves,
Thro' vales irriguous, and thro' green retreats,
With languid murmur creeps the placid stream
And works its secret way.

Awhile meand'ring round its native fields
It rolls the playful wave and winds its flight:
Then downward flowing with awaken'd speed
Embosoms in the Deep!

Thus thro' its silent tenor may my Life
Smooth its meek stream by sordid wealth unclogg'd,
Alike unconscious of forensic storms,
And Glory's blood-stain'd palm!

And when dark Age shall close Life's little day,
Satiated of sport, and weary of its toils,
E'en thus may slumbrous Death my decent limbs
Compose with icy hand!

An Ode in the Manner of Anacreon

1792

As late, in wreaths, gay flowers I bound,
Beneath some roses Love I found:
And by his little frolic pinion
As quick as thought I seiz'd the minion,
Then in my cup the prisoner threw,
And drank him in its sparkling dew:
And sure I feel my angry guest
Fluttering *his wings* within my breast!

To Disappointment

1792

Hence! thou fiend of gloomy sway,
That lov'st on withering blast to ride
O'er fond Illusion's air-built pride.
Sullen Spirit! Hence! Away!

Where Avarice lurks in sordid cell,
Or mad Ambition builds the dream,
Or Pleasure plots th' unholy scheme
There with Guilt and Folly dwell!

But oh! when Hope on Wisdom's wing
Prophetic whispers pure delight,
Be distant far thy cank'rous blight,
Demon of envenom'd sting.

Then haste thee, Nymph of balmy gales!
Thy poet's prayer, sweet May! attend!
Oh! place my parent and my friend
'Mid her lovely native vales.

Peace, that lists the woodlark's strains,
Health, that breathes divinest treasures,
Laughing Hours, and Social Pleasures
Wait my friend in Cambria's plains.

Affection there with mingled ray
Shall pour at once the raptures high
Of filial and maternal Joy;
Haste thee then, delightful May!

And oh! may Spring's fair flowerets fade,
May Summer cease her limbs to lave
In cooling stream, may Autumn grave
Yellow o'er the corn-cloath'd glade;

Ere, from sweet retirement torn,
She seek again the crowded mart:
Nor thou, my selfish, selfish heart
Dare her slow return to mourn!

A Fragment Found in a Lecture-Room

1792

Where deep in mud Cam rolls his slumbrous stream,
And bog and desolation reign supreme;
Where all Boeotia clouds the misty brain,
The owl Mathesis pipes her loathsome strain.
Far, far aloof the frightened Muses fly,
Indignant Genius scowls and passes by:
The frolic Pleasures start amid their dance,
And Wit congeal'd stands fix'd in wintry trance.
But to the sounds with duteous haste repair
Cold Industry, and wary-footed Care;
And Dulness, dosing on a couch of lead,
Pleas'd with the song uplifts her heavy head,
The sympathetic numbers lists awhile,
Then yawns propitiously a frosty smile....

[Caetera desunt.]

Ode

1792

Ye Gales, that of the Lark's repose
 The impatient Silence break,
 To yon poor Pilgrim's wearying Woes
 Your gentle Comfort speak!
 He heard the midnight whirlwind die,
 He saw the sun-awaken'd Sky
 Resume its slowly-purpling Blue:
 And ah! he sigh'd — that I might find
 The cloudless Azure of the Mind
 And Fortune's brightning Hue!

Where'er in waving Foliage hid
 The Bird's gay Charm ascends,
 Or by the fretful current chid
 Some giant Rock impends —
 There let the lonely Cares respire
 As small airs thrill the mourning Lyre
 And teach the Soul her native Calm;
 While Passion with a languid Eye
 Hangs o'er the fall of Harmony
 And drinks the sacred Balm.

Slow as the fragrant whisper creeps
 Along the liliated Vale,
 The alter'd Eye of Conquest weeps,
 And ruthless War grows pale
 Relenting that his Heart forsook
 Soft Concord of auspicious Look,
 And Love, and social Poverty;
 The Family of tender Fears,
 The Sigh, that saddens and endears,
 And Cares, that sweeten Joy.

Then cease, thy frantic Tumults cease,
 Ambition, Sire of War!
 Nor o'er the mangled Corse of Peace
 Urge on thy scythéd Car.
 And oh! that Reason's voice might swell
 With whisper'd Airs and holy Spell
 To rouse thy gentler Sense,
 As bending o'er the chilly bloom
 The Morning wakes its soft Perfume

With breezy Influence.

A Lover's Complaint to his Mistress

Who deserted him in quest of a more wealthy husband in the East Indies

1792

The dubious light sad glimmers o'er the sky:
'Tis silence all. By lonely anguish torn,
With wandering feet to gloomy groves I fly,
And wakeful Love still tracks my course forlorn.

And will you, cruel Julia! will you go?
And trust you to the Ocean's dark dismay?
Shall the wide wat'ry world between us flow?
And winds unpitying snatch my Hopes away?

Thus could you sport with my too easy heart?
Yet tremble, lest not unaveng'd I grieve!
The winds may learn your own delusive art,
And faithless Ocean smile — but to deceive!

With Fielding's "Amelia"

?1792

Virtues and Woes alike too great for man
In the soft tale oft claim the useless sigh;
For vain the attempt to realise the plan,
On Folly's wings must Imitation fly.
With other aim has Fielding here display'd
Each social duty and each social care;
With just yet vivid colouring portray'd
What every wife should be, what many are.
And sure the Parent of a race so sweet
With double pleasure on the page shall dwell,
Each scene with sympathizing breast shall meet,
While Reason still with smiles delights to tell
Maternal hope, that her loved progeny
In all but sorrows shall Amelias be!

Written After a Walk Before Supper

1792

Tho' much averse, dear Jack, to flicker,
 To find a likeness for friend V—ker,
 I've made thro' Earth, and Air, and Sea,
 A Voyage of Discovery!
 And let me add (to ward off strife)
 For V—ker and for V—ker's Wife —
 She large and round beyond belief,
 A superfluity of beef!

Her mind and body of a piece,
 And both composed of kitchen-grease.
 In short, Dame Truth might safely dub her
 Vulgarity enshrin'd in blubber!
 He, meagre bit of littleness,
 All snuff, and musk, and politesse;
 So thin, that strip him of his clothing,
 He'd totter on the edge of Nothing!
 In case of foe, he well might hide
 Snug in the collops of her side.

Ah then, what simile will suit?
 Spindle-leg in great jack-boot?
 Pismire crawling in a rut?
 Or a spigot in a butt?
 Thus I humm'd and ha'd awhile,
 When Madam Memory with a smile
 Thus twitch'd my ear — “Why sure, I ween,
 In London streets thou oft hast seen
 The very image of this pair:
 A little Ape with huge She-Bear
 Link'd by hapless chain together:
 An unlick'd mass the one — the other
 An antic small with nimble crupper — “
 But stop, my Muse! for here comes supper.

Imitated from Ossian

1793

The stream with languid murmur creeps,
In Lumin's *flowery* vale:
Beneath the dew the Lily weeps
Slow-waving to the gale.

“Cease, restless gale!” it seems to say,
“Nor wake me with thy sighing!
The honours of my vernal day
On rapid wing are flying.

To-morrow shall the Traveller come
Who late beheld me blooming:
His searching eye shall vainly roam
The *dreary* vale of Lumin.”

With eager gaze and wetted cheek
My wonted haunts along,
Thus, faithful Maiden! *thou* shalt seek
The Youth of simplest song.

But I along the breeze shall roll
The voice of feeble power;
And dwell, the Moon-beam of thy soul,
In Slumber's nightly hour.

The Complaint of Ninathóma: From the same

1793

How long will ye round me be swelling,
O ye blue-tumbling waves of the sea?
Not always in caves was my dwelling,
Nor beneath the cold blast of the tree.
Through the high-sounding halls of Cathlóma
In the steps of my beauty I strayed;
The warriors beheld Ninathóma,
And they blesséd the white-bosom'd Maid!

A Ghost! by my cavern it darted!
In moon-beams the Spirit was drest —
For lovely appear the Departed
When they visit the dreams of my rest!
But disturb'd by the tempest's commotion
Fleet the shadowy forms of delight —
Ah cease, thou shrill blast of the Ocean!
To howl through my cavern by night.

Songs of the Pixies

1793

The Pixies, in the superstition of Devonshire, are a race of beings invisibly small, and harmless or friendly to man. At a small distance from a village in that county, half-way up a wood-covered hill, is an excavation called the Pixies' Parlour. The roots of old trees form its ceiling; and on its sides are innumerable cyphers, among which the author discovered his own cypher and those of his brothers, cut by the hand of their childhood. At the foot of the hill flows the river Otter.

To this place the Author, during the summer months of the year 1793, conducted a party of young ladies; one of whom, of stature elegantly small, and of complexion colourless yet clear, was proclaimed the Faery Queen. On which occasion the following Irregular Ode was written.

Whom the untaught Shepherds call
 Pixies in their madrigal,
 Fancy's children, here we dwell:
 Welcome, Ladies! to our cell.
 Here the wren of softest note
 Builds its nest and warbles well;
 Here the blackbird strains his throat;
 Welcome, Ladies! to our cell.

When fades the moon to shadowy-pale,
 And scuds the cloud before the gale,
 Ere the Morn all gem-bedight
 Hath streak'd the East with rosy light,
 We sip the furze-flower's fragrant dews
 Clad in robes of rainbow hues;
 Or sport amid the shooting gleams
 To the tune of distant-tinkling teams,
 While lusty Labour scouting sorrow
 Bids the Dame a glad good-morrow,
 Who jogs the accustom'd road along,
 And paces cheery to her cheering song.

But not our filmy pinion
 We scorch amid the blaze of day,
 When Noontide's fiery-tresséd minion
 Flashes the fervid ray.
 Aye from the sultry heat
 We to the cave retreat
 O'er-canopied by huge roots interwin'd
 With wildest texture, blacken'd o'er with age:
 Round them their mantle green the ivies bind,
 Beneath whose foliage pale

Fann'd by the unfrequent gale
 We shield us from the Tyrant's mid-day rage.

Thither, while the murmuring throng
 Of wild-bees hum their drowsy song,
 By Indolence and Fancy brought,
 A youthful Bard, "unknown to Fame,"
 Wooes the Queen of Solemn Thought,
 And heaves the gentle misery of a sigh
 Gazing with tearful eye,
 As round our sandy grot appear
 Many a rudely-sculptur'd name
 To pensive Memory dear!
 Weaving gay dreams of sunny-tinctur'd hue,
 We glance before his view:
 O'er his hush'd soul our soothing witcheries shed
 And twine the future garland round his head.

When Evening's dusky car
 Crown'd with her dewy star
 Steals o'er the fading sky in shadowy flight;
 On leaves of aspen trees
 We tremble to the breeze
 Veil'd from the grosser ken of mortal sight.
 Or, haply, at the visionary hour,
 Along our wildly-bower'd sequester'd walk,
 We listen to the enamour'd rustic's talk;
 Heave with the heavings of the maiden's breast,
 Where young-eyed Loves have hid their turtle nest;
 Or guide of soul-subduing power
 The glance that from the half-confessing eye
 Darts the fond question or the soft reply.

Or through the mystic ringlets of the vale
 We flash our faery feet in gamesome prank;
 Or, silent-sandal'd, pay our defter court,
 Circling the Spirit of the Western Gale,
 Where wearied with his flower-caressing sport,
 Supine he slumbers on a violet bank;
 Then with quaint music hymn the parting gleam
 By lonely Otter's sleep-persuading stream;
 Or where his wave with loud unquiet song
 Dash'd o'er the rocky channel froths along;
 Or where, his silver waters smooth'd to rest,
 The tall tree's shadow sleeps upon his breast.

Hence thou lingerer, Light!
Eve saddens into Night.
Mother of wildly-working dreams! we view
The sombre hours, that round thee stand
With down-cast eyes (a duteous band!)
Their dark robes dripping with the heavy dew.
Sorceress of the ebon throne!
Thy power the Pixies own,
When round thy raven brow
Heaven's lucent roses glow,
And clouds in watery colours drest
Float in light drapery o'er thy sable vest:
What time the pale moon sheds a softer day
Mellowing the woods beneath its pensive beam:
For mid the quivering light 'tis ours to play,
Aye dancing to the cadence of the stream.

Welcome, Ladies! to the cell
Where the blameless Pixies dwell:
But thou, Sweet Nymph! proclaim'd our Faery Queen,
With what obeisance meet
Thy presence shall we greet?
For lo! attendant on thy steps are seen
Graceful Ease in artless stole,
And white-robed Purity of soul,
With Honour's softer mien;
Mirth of the loosely-flowing hair,
And meek-eyed Pity eloquently fair,
Whose tearful cheeks are lovely to the view,
As snow-drop wet with dew.

Unboastful Maid! though now the Lily pale
Transparent grace thy beauties meek;
Yet ere again along the impurpling vale,
The purpling vale and elfin-haunted grove,
Young Zephyr his fresh flowers profusely throws,
We'll tinge with livelier hues thy cheek;
And, haply, from the nectar-breathing Rose
Extract a Blush for Love!

The Rose

1793

As late each flower that sweetest blows
I pluck'd, the Garden's pride!
Within the petals of a Rose
A sleeping Love I spied.

Around his brows a beamy wreath
Of many a lucent hue;
All purple glow'd his cheek, beneath,
Inebriate with dew.

I softly seiz'd the unguarded Power,
Nor scared his balmy rest:
And placed him, caged within the flower,
On spotless Sara's breast.

But when unweeting of the guile
Awoke the prisoner sweet,
He struggled to escape awhile
And stamp'd his faery feet.

Ah! soon the soul-entrancing sight
Subdued the impatient boy!
He gazed! he thrill'd with deep delight!
Then clapp'd his wings for joy.
"And O!" he cried — "Of magic kind
What charms this Throne endear!
Some other Love let Venus find —
I'll fix *my* empire *here*."

Kisses

1793

Cupid, if storying Legends tell aright,
Once fram'd a rich Elixir of Delight.
A Chalice o'er love-kindled flames he fix'd,
And in it Nectar and Ambrosia mix'd:
With these the magic dews which Evening brings,
Brush'd from the Idalian star by faery wings:
Each tender pledge of sacred Faith he join'd,
Each gentler Pleasure of th' unspotted mind —
Day-dreams, whose tints with sportive brightness glow,
And Hope, the blameless parasite of Woe.
The eyeless Chemist heard the process rise,
The steamy Chalice bubbled up in sighs;
Sweet sounds transpired, as when the enamour'd Dove
Pours the soft murmuring of responsive Love.
The finish'd work might Envy vainly blame,
And "Kisses" was the precious Compound's name.
With half the God his Cyprian Mother blest,
And breath'd on Sara's lovelier lips the rest.

The Gentle Look

?1793

Thou gentle Look, that didst my soul beguile,
Why hast thou left me? Still in some fond dream
Revisit my sad heart, auspicious Smile!
As falls on closing flowers the lunar beam:
What time, in sickly mood, at parting day
I lay me down and think of happier years;
Of joys, that glimmer'd in Hope's twilight ray,
Then left me darkling in a vale of tears.
O pleasant days of Hope — for ever gone!
Could I recall you! — But that thought is vain.
Availeth not Persuasion's sweetest tone
To lure the fleet-wing'd Travellers back again:
Yet fair, though faint, their images shall gleam
Like the bright Rainbow on a willowy stream.

Sonnet: To the River Otter

?1793

Dear native Brook! wild Streamlet of the West!
How many various-fated years have past,
What happy and what mournful hours, since last
I skimm'd the smooth thin stone along thy breast,
Numbering its light leaps! yet so deep imprest
Sink the sweet scenes of childhood, that mine eyes
I never shut amid the sunny ray,
But straight with all their tints thy waters rise,
Thy crossing plank, thy marge with willows grey,
And bedded sand that vein'd with various dyes
Gleam'd through thy bright transparence! On my way,
Visions of Childhood! oft have ye beguil'd
Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs:
Ah! that once more I were a careless Child!

An Effusion at Evening

[First draft Written in August, 1792]

Imagination, Mistress of my Love!
 Where shall mine Eye thy elfin haunt explore?
 Dost thou on yon rich Cloud thy pinions bright
 Embathe in amber-glowing Floods of Light?
 Or, wild of speed, pursue the track of Day
 In other worlds to hail the morning Ray?
 'Tis time to bid the faded shadowy Pleasures move
 On shadowy Memory's wings across the Soul of Love;
 And thine o'er *Winter's* icy plains to fling
 Each flower, that binds the breathing Locks of *Spring*,
 When blushing, like a bride, from primrose Bower
 She starts, awaken'd by the pattering Shower!

Now sheds the setting Sun a purple gleam,
 Aid, lovely Sorc'ress! aid the Poet's dream.
 With faery wand O bid my Love arise,
 The dewy brilliance dancing in her Eyes;
 As erst she woke with soul-entrancing Mien
 The thrill of Joy extatic yet serene,
 When link'd with Peace I bounded o'er the Plain
 And Hope itself was all I knew of Pain!

Propitious Fancy hears the votive sigh —
 The absent Maiden flashes on mine Eye!
 When first the matin Bird with startling Song
 Salutes the Sun his veiling Clouds among,
 I trace her footsteps on the steaming [accustomed] Lawn,
 I view her glancing in the gleams of Dawn!
 When the bent Flower beneath the night-dew weeps
 And on the Lake the silver Lustre sleeps,
 Amid the paly Radiance soft and sad
 She meets my lonely path in moonbeams clad.
 With *her* along the streamlet's brink I rove;
 With *her* I list the warblings of the Grove;
 And seems in each low wind *her* voice to float,
 Lone-whispering Pity in each soothing Note!

As oft in climes beyond the western Main
 Where boundless spreads the wildly-silent Plain,
 The savage Hunter, who his drowsy frame
 Had bask'd beneath the Sun's unclouded Flame,
 Awakes amid the tempest-troubled air,
 The Thunder's Peal and Lightning's lurid glare —

Aghast he hears the rushing Whirlwind's Sweep,
And sad recalls the sunny hour of Sleep!
So lost by storms along Life's wild'ring Way
Mine Eye reverted views that cloudless Day,
When, — ! on thy banks I joy'd to rove
While Hope with kisses nurs'd the infant Love!

Sweet — ! where Pleasure's streamlet glides
Fann'd by soft winds to curl in mimic tides;
Where Mirth and Peace beguile the blameless Day;
And where Friendship's fixt star beams a mellow'd Ray;
Where Love a crown of thornless Roses wears;
Where soften'd Sorrow smiles within her tears;
And Memory, with a Vestal's meek employ,
Unceasing feeds the lambent flame of Joy!
No more thy Sky Larks less'ning from my sight
Shall thrill th'attunéd Heartstring with delight;
No more shall deck thy pensive Pleasures sweet
With wreaths of sober hue my evening seat!
Yet dear to [My] Fancy's Eye thy varied scene
Of Wood, Hill, Dale and sparkling Brook between:
Yet sweet to [My] Fancy's Ear the warbled song,
That soars on Morning's wing thy fields among!

Scenes of my Hope! the aching Eye ye leave,
Like those rich Hues that paint the clouds of Eve!
Tearful and saddening with the sadden'd Blaze
Mine Eye the gleam pursues with wistful Gaze —
Sees Shades on Shades with deeper tint impend,
Till chill and damp the moonless Night descend!

Lines: On an Autumnal Evening

1793

O thou wild Fancy, check thy wing! No more
 Those thin white flakes, those purple clouds explore!
 Nor there with happy spirits speed thy flight
 Bath'd in rich amber-glowing floods of light;
 Nor in yon gleam, where slow descends the day,
 With western peasants hail the morning ray!
 Ah! rather bid the perish'd pleasures move,
 A shadowy train, across the soul of Love!
 O'er Disappointment's wintry desert fling
 Each flower that wreath'd the dewy locks of Spring,
 When blushing, like a bride, from Hope's trim bower
 She leapt, awaken'd by the pattering shower.

Now sheds the sinking Sun a deeper gleam,
 Aid, lovely Sorceress! aid thy Poet's dream!
 With faery wand O bid the Maid arise,
 Chaste Joyance dancing in her bright-blue eyes;
 As erst when from the Muses' calm abode
 I came, with Learning's meed not unbestowed!
 When as she twin'd a laurel round my brow,
 And met my kiss, and half return'd my vow,
 O'er all my frame shot rapid my thrill'd heart,
 And every nerve confess'd the electric dart.

O dear Deceit! I see the Maiden rise,
 Chaste Joyance dancing in her bright-blue eyes!
 When first the lark high-soaring swells his throat,
 Mocks the tir'd eye, and scatters the loud note,
 I trace her footsteps on the accustom'd lawn,
 I mark her glancing mid the gleam of dawn.

When the bent flower beneath the night-dew weeps
 And on the lake the silver lustre sleeps,
 Amid the paly radiance soft and sad,
 She meets my lonely path in moon-beams clad.
 With her along the streamlet's brink I rove;
 With her I list the warblings of the grove;
 And seems in each low wind her voice to float
 Lone-whispering Pity in each soothing note!

Spirits of Love! ye heard her name! Obey
 The powerful spell, and to my haunt repair.
 Whether on clust'ring pinions ye are there,
 Where rich snows blossom on the Myrtle-trees,
 Or with fond languishment around my fair
 Sigh in the loose luxuriance of her hair;
 O heed the spell, and hither wing your way,
 Like far-off music, voyaging the breeze!

Spirits! to you the infant Maid was given
 Form'd by the wond'rous Alchemy of Heaven!
 No fairer Maid does Love's wide empire know,
 No fairer Maid e'er heav'd the bosom's snow.
 A thousand Loves around her forehead fly;
 A thousand Loves sit melting in her eye;
 Love lights her smile — in Joy's red nectar dips
 His myrtle flower, and plants it on her lips.
 She speaks! and hark that passion-warbled song —
 Still, Fancy! still that voice, those notes prolong.
 As sweet as when that voice with rapturous falls
 Shall wake the soften'd echoes of Heaven's Halls!

O (have I sigh'd) were mine the wizard's rod,
 Or mine the power of Proteus, changeful God!
 A flower-entangled Arbour I would seem
 To shield my Love from Noontide's sultry beam:
 Or bloom a Myrtle, from whose od'rous boughs
 My Love might weave gay garlands for her brows.
 When Twilight stole across the fading vale,
 To fan my Love I'd be the Evening Gale;
 Mourn in the soft folds of her swelling vest,
 And flutter my faint pinions on her breast!
 On Seraph wing I'd float a Dream by night,
 To soothe my Love with shadows of delight: —
 Or soar aloft to be the Spangled Skies,
 And gaze upon her with a thousand eyes!

As when the Savage, who his drowsy frame
 Had bask'd beneath the Sun's unclouded flame,
 Awakes amid the troubles of the air,
 The skiey deluge, and white lightning's glare —
 Aghast he scours before the tempest's sweep,
 And sad recalls the sunny hour of sleep: —
 So tossed by storms along Life's wild'ring way,
 Mine eye reverted views that cloudless day,
 When by my native brook I wont to rove,
 While Hope with kisses nurs'd the Infant Love.

Dear native brook! like Peace, so placidly
Smoothing through fertile fields thy current meek!
Dear native brook! where first young Poesy
Stared wildly-eager in her noontide dream!
Where blameless pleasures dimple Quiet's cheek,
As water-lilies ripple thy slow stream!
Dear native haunts! where Virtue still is gay,
Where Friendship's fix'd star sheds a mellow'd ray,
Where Love a crown of thornless Roses wears,
Where soften'd Sorrow smiles within her tears;
And Memory, with a Vestal's chaste employ,
Unceasing feeds the lambent flame of joy!
No more your sky-larks melting from the sight
Shall thrill the attuned heart-string with delight —
No more shall deck your pensive Pleasures sweet
With wreaths of sober hue my evening seat.
Yet dear to Fancy's eye your varied scene
Of wood, hill, dale, and sparkling brook between!
Yet sweet to Fancy's ear the warbled song,
That soars on Morning's wing your vales among.

Scenes of my Hope! the aching eye ye leave
Like yon bright hues that paint the clouds of eve!
Tearful and saddening with the sadden'd blaze
Mine eye the gleam pursues with wistful gaze:
Sees shades on shades with deeper tint impend,
Till chill and damp the moonless night descend.

To Fortune: On buying a ticket in the Irish Lottery

To the editor of the “Morning Chronicle” Sir, —

The following poem you may perhaps deem admissible into your journal — if not, you will commit it εις ιερὸν μενος Ηφαιστοιο.

— I am, with more respect and gratitude than I ordinarily feel for Editors of Papers, your obliged,
&c., Cantab. — S.T.C.

[Composed during a walk to and from the Queen’s Head, Gray’s Inn Lane, Holborn, and Hornsby’s and Co., Cornhill.]

Promptress of unnumber’d sighs,
O snatch that circling bandage from thine eyes!
O look, and smile! No common prayer
Solicits, Fortune! thy propitious care!
For, not a silken son of dress,
I clink the gilded chains of *politesse*,
Nor ask thy boon what time I scheme
Unholy Pleasure’s frail and feverish dream;
Nor yet my view life’s *dazzle* blinds —
Pomp! — Grandeur! Power! — I give you to the winds!
Let the little bosom cold
Melt only at the sunbeam ray of gold —
My pale cheeks glow — the big drops start —
The rebel *Feeling* riots at my heart!
And if in lonely durance pent,
Thy poor mite mourn a brief imprisonment —
That mite at Sorrow’s faintest sound
Leaps from its scrip with an elastic bound!
But oh! if ever song thine ear
Might soothe, O haste with fost’ring hand to rear
One Flower of Hope! At Love’s behest,
Trembling, I plac’d it in my secret breast:
And thrice I’ve view’d the vernal gleam,
Since oft mine eye, with Joy’s electric beam,
Illum’d it — and its sadder hue
Oft moisten’d with the Tear’s ambrosial dew!
Poor wither’d floweret! on its head
Has dark Despair his sickly mildew shed!
But thou, O Fortune! canst relume
Its deaden’d tints — and thou with hardier bloom
May’st haply tinge its beauties pale,
And yield the unsunn’d stranger to the western gale!

Perspiration. A Travelling Eclogue

1794

The dust flies smothering, as on clatt'ring wheel
Loath'd Aristocracy careers along;
The distant track quick vibrates to the eye,
And white and dazzling undulates with heat,
Where scorching to the unwary traveller's touch,
The stone fence flings its narrow slip of shade;
Or, where the worn sides of the chalky road
Yield their scant excavations (sultry grotts!),
Emblem of languid patience, we behold
The fleecy files faint-ruminating lie.

[Ave, Atque Vale!]

1794

Vivit sed mihi non vivit — nova forte marita
Ah dolor! alterius caræ a cervice pependit.
Vos, malefida valetæ accensæ insomnia mentis,
Littora amata valetæ! Vale, ah! formosa Maria!

On Bala Hill

1794

With many a weary step at length I gain
Thy summit, Bala! and the cool breeze plays
Cheerily round my brow — as hence the gaze
Returns to dwell upon the journey'd plain.

'Twas a long way and tedious! — to the eye
Tho' fair th' extended Vale, and fair to view
The falling leaves of many a faded hue
That eddy in the wild gust moaning by!

Ev'n so it far'd with Life! in discontent
Restless thro' Fortune's mingled scenes I went,
Yet wept to think they would return no more!
O cease fond heart! in such sad thoughts to roam,
For surely thou ere long shalt reach thy home,
And pleasant is the way that lies before.

Lines: Written at the King's Arms, Ross, formerly the House of the "Man of Ross"

1794

Richer than Miser o'er his countless hoards,
Nobler than Kings, or king-polluted Lords,
Here dwelt the Man of Ross! O Traveller, hear!
Departed Merit claims a reverent tear.
Friend to the friendless, to the sick man health,
With generous joy he view'd his modest wealth;
He heard the widow's heaven-breath'd prayer of praise,
He mark'd the shelter'd orphan's tearful gaze,
Or where the sorrow-shrivell'd captive lay,
Pour'd the bright blaze of Freedom's noon-tide ray.

Beneath this roof if thy cheer'd moments pass,
Fill to the good man's name one grateful glass:
To higher zest shall Memory wake thy soul,
And Virtue mingle in the ennobled bowl.
But if, like me, through Life's distressful scene
Lonely and sad thy pilgrimage hath been;
And if thy breast with heart-sick anguish fraught,
Thou journeyest onward tempest-tossed in thought;
Here cheat thy cares! in generous visions melt,
And *dream* of Goodness, thou hast never felt!

Imitated from the Welsh

1794

If while my passion I impart,
You deem my words untrue,
O place your hand upon my heart —
Feel how it throbs for *you!*

Ah no! reject the thoughtless claim
In pity to your Lover!
That thrilling touch would aid the flame
It wishes to discover.

Lines: To a Beautiful Spring in a Village

1794

Once more! sweet Stream! with slow foot wandering near,
I bless thy milky waters cold and clear.
Escap'd the flashing of the noontide hours,
With one fresh garland of Pierian flowers
(Ere from thy zephyr-haunted brink I turn)
My languid hand shall wreath thy mossy urn.
For not through pathless grove with murmur rude
Thou soothest the sad wood-nymph, Solitude;
Nor thine unseen in cavern depths to well,
The Hermit-fountain of some dripping cell!

Pride of the Vale! thy useful streams supply
The scatter'd cots and peaceful hamlet nigh.
The elfin tribe around thy friendly banks
With infant uproar and soul-soothing pranks,
Releas'd from school, their little hearts at rest,
Launch paper navies on thy waveless breast.
The rustic here at eve with pensive look
Whistling lorn ditties leans upon his crook,
Or, starting, pauses with hope-mingled dread
To list the much-lov'd maid's accustom'd tread:
She, vainly mindful of her dame's command,
Loiters, the long-fill'd pitcher in her hand.

Unboastful Stream! thy fount with pebbled falls
The faded form of past delight recalls,
What time the morning sun of Hope arose,
And all was joy; save when another's woes
A transient gloom upon my soul imprest,
Like passing clouds impictur'd on thy breast.
Life's current then ran sparkling to the noon,
Or silvery stole beneath the pensive Moon:
Ah! now it works rude brakes and thorns among,
Or o'er the rough rock bursts and foams along!

Imitations: Ad Lyrum

1794

(Casimir, Book II. Ode 3)

The solemn-breathing air is ended —
Cease, O Lyre! thy kindred lay!
From the poplar-branch suspended
Glitter to the eye of Day!

On thy wires hov'ring, dying,
Softly sighs the summer wind:
I will slumber, careless lying,
By yon waterfall reclin'd.

In the forest hollow-roaring
Hark! I hear a deep'ning sound —
Clouds rise thick with heavy low'ring!
See! th' horizon blackens round!

Parent of the soothing measure,
Let me seize thy wetted string!
Swiftly flies the flatterer, Pleasure,
Headlong, ever on the wing.

To Lesbia

?1794

Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus.

Catullus

My Lesbia, let us love and live,
And to the winds, my Lesbia, give
Each cold restraint, each boding fear
Of age and all her saws severe.
Yon sun now posting to the main
Will set, — but 'tis to rise again; —
But we, when once our mortal light
Is set, must sleep in endless night.
Then come, with whom alone I'll live,
A thousand kisses take and give!
Another thousand! — to the store
Add hundreds — then a thousand more!
And when they to a million mount,
Let confusion take the account, —
That you, the number never knowing,
May continue still bestowing —
That I for joys may never pine,
Which never can again be mine!

The Death of the Starling

?1794

Lugete, O Veneres, Cupidinesque. —

Catullus

Pity! mourn in plaintive tone
The lovely starling dead and gone!
Pity mourns in plaintive tone
The lovely starling dead and gone.
Weep, ye Loves! and Venus! weep
The lovely starling fall'n asleep!
Venus sees with tearful eyes —
In her lap the starling lies!
While the Loves all in a ring
Softly stroke the stiffen'd wing.

Moriens Superstiti

The hour-bell sounds, and I must go;
Death waits — again I hear him calling; —
No cowardly desires have I,
Nor will I shun his face appalling.

I die in faith and honour rich —
But ah! I leave behind my treasure
In widowhood and lonely pain; —
To live were surely then a pleasure!

My lifeless eyes upon thy face
Shall never open more to-morrow;
To-morrow shall thy beauteous eyes
Be closed to Love, and drown'd in Sorrow;
To-morrow Death shall freeze this hand,
And on thy breast, my wedded treasure,
I never, never more shall live; —
Alas! I quit a life of pleasure.

Morienti Superstes

?1794

Yet art thou happier far than she
Who feels the widow's love for thee!
For while her days are days of weeping,
Thou, in peace, in silence sleeping,
In some still world, unknown, remote,
The mighty parent's care hast found,
Without whose tender guardian thought
No sparrow falleth to the ground.

The Sigh

1794

When Youth his faery reign began
Ere Sorrow had proclaim'd me man;
While Peace the present hour beguil'd,
And all the lovely Prospect smil'd;
Then Mary! 'mid my lightsome glee
I heav'd the painless Sigh for thee.

And when, along the waves of woe,
My harass'd Heart was doom'd to know
The frantic burst of Outrage keen,
And the slow Pang that gnaws unseen;
Then shipwreck'd on Life's stormy sea
I heaved an anguish'd Sigh for thee!

But soon Reflection's power imprest
A stiller sadness on my breast;
And sickly Hope with waning eye
Was well content to droop and die:
I yielded to the stern decree,
Yet heav'd a languid Sigh for thee!

And though in distant climes to roam,
A wanderer from my native home,
I fain would soothe the sense of Care,
And lull to sleep the Joys that were!
Thy Image may not banish'd be —
Still, Mary! still I sigh for thee.

The Kiss

?1792

One kiss, dear Maid! I said and sigh'd —
Your scorn the little boon denied.
Ah why refuse the blameless bliss?
Can danger lurk within a kiss?

Yon viewless wanderer of the vale,
The Spirit of the Western Gale,
At Morning's break, at Evening's close
Inhales the sweetness of the Rose,
And hovers o'er the uninjur'd bloom
Sighing back the soft perfume.
Vigour to the Zephyr's wing
Her nectar-breathing kisses fling;
And He the glitter of the Dew
Scatters on the Rose's hue.
Bashful lo! she bends her head,
And darts a blush of deeper Red!

Too well those lovely lips disclose
The triumphs of the opening Rose;
O fair! O graceful! bid them prove
As passive to the breath of Love.
In tender accents, faint and low,
Well-pleas'd I hear the whisper'd "No!"
The whispered "No" — how little meant!
Sweet Falsehood that endears Consent!
For on those lovely lips the while
Dawns the soft relenting smile,
And tempts with feign'd dissuasion coy
The gentle violence of Joy.

To a Young Lady: with a Poem on the French Revolution

1794

Much on my early youth I love to dwell,
 Ere yet I bade that friendly dome farewell,
 Where first, beneath the echoing cloisters pale,
 I heard of guilt and wonder'd at the tale!
 Yet though the hours flew by on careless wing,
 Full heavily of Sorrow would I sing.
 Aye as the Star of Evening flung its beam
 In broken radiance on the wavy stream,
 My soul amid the pensive twilight gloom
 Mourned with the breeze, O Lee Boo! o'er thy tomb.
 Where'er I wander'd, Pity still was near,
 Breath'd from the heart and glisten'd in the tear:
 No knell that toll'd but fill'd my anxious eye,
 And suffering Nature wept that *one* should die!

Thus to sad sympathies I sooth'd my breast,
 Calm, as the rainbow in the weeping West:
 When slumbering Freedom roused by high Disdain
 With giant Fury burst her triple chain!
 Fierce on her front the blasting Dog-star glow'd;
 Her banners, like a midnight meteor, flow'd;
 Amid the yelling of the storm-rent skies!
 She came, and scatter'd battles from her eyes!
 Then Exultation waked the patriot fire
 And swept with wild hand the Tyrtæan lyre:
 Red from the Tyrant's wound I shook the lance,
 And strode in joy the reeking plains of France!

Fallen is the Oppressor, friendless, ghastly, low,
 And my heart aches, though Mercy struck the blow.
 With wearied thought once more I seek the shade,
 Where peaceful Virtue weaves the Myrtle braid.
 And O! if Eyes whose holy glances roll,
 Swift messengers, and eloquent of soul;
 If Smiles more winning, and a gentler Mien
 Than the love-wilder'd Maniac's brain hath seen
 Shaping celestial forms in vacant air,
 If these demand the empassion'd Poet's care —
 If Mirth and soften'd Sense and Wit refined,
 The blameless features of a lovely mind;
 Then haply shall my trembling hand assign
 No fading wreath to Beauty's saintly shrine.

Nor, Sara! thou these early flowers refuse —
Ne'er lurk'd the snake beneath their simple hues;
No purple bloom the Child of Nature brings
From Flattery's night-shade: as he feels he sings.

Translation of Wrangham's

'Hendecasyllabi ad Bruntonam e Granta Exituram'
 1794
 [Kal. Oct. MDCCXC]

Maid of unboastful charms! whom white-robed Truth
 Right onward guiding through the maze of youth,
 Forbade the Circe Praise to witch thy soul,
 And dash'd to earth th' intoxicating bowl:
 Thee meek-eyed Pity, eloquently fair,
 Clasp'd to her bosom with a mother's care;
 And, as she lov'd thy kindred form to trace,
 The slow smile wander'd o'er her pallid face.
 For never yet did mortal voice impart
 Tones more congenial to the sadden'd heart:
 Whether, to rouse the sympathetic glow,
 Thou pourest lone Monimia's tale of woe;
 Or haply clothest with funereal vest
 The bridal loves that wept in Juliet's breast.
 O'er our chill limbs the thrilling Terrors creep,
 Th' entrancéd Passions their still vigil keep;
 While the deep sighs, responsive to the song,
 Sound through the silence of the trembling throng.

But purer raptures lighten'd from thy face,
 And spread o'er all thy form an holier grace,
 When from the daughter's breasts the father drew
 The life he gave, and mix'd the big tear's dew.
 Nor was it thine th' heroic strain to roll
 With mimic feelings foreign from the soul:
 Bright in thy parent's eye we mark'd the tear;
 Methought he said, "Thou art no Actress here!
 A semblance of thyself the *Grecian* dame,
 And Brunton and Euphrasia still the same!"

O soon to seek the city's busier scene,
 Pause thee awhile, thou chaste-eyed maid serene,
 Till Granta's sons from all her sacred bowers
 With grateful hand shall weave Pierian flowers
 To twine a fragrant chaplet round thy brow,
 Enchanting mistress of virtuous woe!

To Miss Brunton: with the preceding Translation

1794

That darling of the Tragic Muse,
When Wrangham sung her praise,
Thalia lost her rosy hues,
And sicken'd at her lays:

But transient was th' unwonted sigh;
For soon the Goddess spied
A sister-form of mirthful eye,
And danc'd for joy and cried:

“Meek Pity's sweetest child, proud dame,
The fates have given to you!
Still bid your Poet boast her name;
I have my Brunton too.”

Epitaph on an Infant

1794

Ere Sin could blight or Sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care:
The opening Bud to Heaven convey'd,
And bade it blossom *there*.

Pantisocracy

1794

No more my visionary soul shall dwell
On joys that were; no more endure to weigh
The shame and anguish of the evil day,
Wisely forgetful! O'er the ocean swell
Sublime of Hope, I seek the cottag'd dell
Where Virtue calm with careless step may stray,
And dancing to the moonlight roundelay,
The wizard Passions weave an holy spell.
Eyes that have ach'd with Sorrow! Ye shall weep
Tears of doubt-mingled joy, like theirs who start
From Precipices of distemper'd sleep,
On which the fierce-eyed Fiends their revels keep,
And see the rising Sun, and feel it dart
New rays of pleasance trembling to the heart.

On the Prospect of Establishing a Pantisocracy in America

1794

Whilst pale Anxiety, corrosive Care,
The tear of Woe, the gloom of sad Despair,
And deepen'd Anguish generous bosoms rend; —
Whilst patriot souls their country's fate lament;
Whilst mad with rage demoniac, foul intent,
Embattled legions Despots vainly send
To arrest the immortal mind's expanding ray
Of everlasting Truth; — I other climes
Where dawns, with hope serene, a brighter day
Than e'er saw Albion in her happiest times,
With mental eye exulting now explore,
And soon with kindred minds shall haste to enjoy
(Free from the ills which here our peace destroy)
Content and Bliss on Transatlantic shore.

Elegy: Imitated from one of Akenside's Blank-verse Inscriptions

[(No.) III.]

?1794

Near the lone pile with ivy overspread,
Fast by the rivulet's sleep-persuading sound,
Where "sleeps the moonlight" on yon verdant bed —
O humbly press that consecrated ground!

For there does Edmund rest, the learned swain!
And there his spirit most delights to rove:
Young Edmund! fam'd for each harmonious strain,
And the sore wounds of ill-requited Love.

Like some tall tree that spreads its branches wide,
And loads the West-wind with its soft perfume,
His manhood blossom'd; till the faithless pride
Of fair Matilda sank him to the tomb.

But soon did righteous Heaven her Guilt pursue!
Where'er with wilder'd step she wander'd pale,
Still Edmund's visage rose to blast her view,
Still Edmund's voice accus'd her in each gale.

With keen regret, and conscious Guilt's alarms,
Amid the pomp of Affluence she pined;
Nor all that lur'd her faith from Edmund's arms
Could lull the wakeful horror of her mind.

Go, Traveller! tell the tale with sorrow fraught:
Some tearful Maid perchance, or blooming Youth,
May hold it in remembrance; and be taught
That Riches cannot pay for Love or Truth.

The Faded Flower

1794

Ungrateful he, who pluck'd thee from thy stalk,
Poor faded flow'ret! on his careless way;
Inhal'd awhile thy odours on his walk,
Then onward pass'd and left thee to decay.
Ah! melancholy emblem! had I seen
Thy modest beauties dew'd with Evening's gem,
I had not rudely cropp'd thy parent stem,
But left thee, blushing, 'mid the enliven'd green.
And now I bend me o'er thy wither'd bloom,
And drop the tear — as Fancy, at my side,
Deep-sighing, points the fair frail Abra's tomb —
“Like thine, sad Flower, was that poor wanderer's pride!
Oh! lost to Love and Truth, whose selfish joy
Tasted her vernal sweets, but tasted to destroy!”

The Outcast

?1794

Pale Roamer through the night! thou poor Forlorn!
Remorse that man on his death-bed possess,
Who in the credulous hour of tenderness
Betrayed, then cast thee forth to Want and Scorn!
The world is pitiless: the chaste one's pride
Mimic of Virtue scowls on thy distress:
Thy Loves and they that envied thee deride:
And Vice alone will shelter Wretchedness!
O! I could weep to think that there should be
Cold-bosom'd lewd ones, who endure to place
Foul offerings on the shrine of Misery,
And force from Famine the caress of Love;
May He shed healing on the sore disgrace,
He, the great Comforter that rules above!

Domestic Peace

1794 [From “The Fall of Robespierre”, Act I, L. 210]

Tell me, on what holy ground
May Domestic Peace be found?
Halcyon daughter of the skies,
Far on fearful wings she flies,
From the pomp of Sceptered State,
From the rebel’s noisy hate.

In a cottag’d vale She dwells,
Listening to the Sabbath bells!
Still around her steps are seen
Spotless Honour’s meeker mien,
Love, the sire of pleasing fears,
Sorrow smiling through her tears,
And conscious of the past employ
Memory, bosom-spring of joy.

On a Discovery Made too Late

1794

Thou bleedest, my poor Heart! and thy distress
Reasoning I ponder with a scornful smile
And probe thy sore wound sternly, though the while
Swoln be mine eye and dim with heaviness.
Why didst thou listen to Hope's whisper bland?
Or, listening, why forget the healing tale,
When Jealousy with feverous fancies pale
Jarr'd thy fine fibres with a maniac's hand?
Faint was that Hope, and rayless! — Yet 'twas fair
And sooth'd with many a dream the hour of rest:
Thou should'st have lov'd it most, when most opprest,
And nurs'd it with an agony of care,
Even as a mother her sweet infant heir
That wan and sickly droops upon her breast!

To the Author of "The Robbers"

?1794

Schiller! that hour I would have wish'd to die.
If thro' the shuddering midnight I had sent
From the dark dungeon of the Tower time-rent
That fearful voice, a famish'd Father's cry —
Lest in some after moment aught more mean
Might stamp me mortal! A triumphant shout
Black Horror scream'd, and all her *goblin* rout
Diminish'd shrunk from the more withering scene!
Ah! Bard tremendous in sublimity!
Could I behold thee in thy loftier mood
Wandering at eve with finely-frenzied eye
Beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood!
Awhile with mute awe gazing I would brood:
Then weep aloud in a wild ecstasy!

Melancholy: A Fragment

?1794

Stretch'd on a moulder'd Abbey's broadest wall,
Where ruining ivies propp'd the ruins steep —
Her folded arms wrapping her tatter'd pall,
Had Melancholy mus'd herself to sleep.

The fern was press'd beneath her hair,
The dark green Adder's Tongue was there;
And still as pass'd the flagging sea-gale weak,
The long lank leaf bow'd fluttering o'er her cheek.

That pallid cheek was flush'd: her eager look
Beam'd eloquent in slumber! Inly wrought,
Imperfect sounds her moving lips forsook,
And her bent forehead work'd with troubled thought.
Strange was the dream —

To a Young Ass: Its Mother being tethered near it

1794

Poor little Foal of an oppresséd race!
 I love the languid patience of thy face:
 And oft with gentle hand I give thee bread,
 And clap thy ragged coat, and pat thy head.
 But what thy dulled spirits hath dismay'd,
 That never thou dost sport along the glade?
 And (most unlike the nature of things young)
 That earthward still thy moveless head is hung?
 Do thy prophetic fears anticipate,
 Meek Child of Misery! thy future fate?
 The starving meal, and all the thousand aches
 "Which patient Merit of the Unworthy takes"?'
 Or is thy sad heart thrill'd with filial pain
 To see thy wretched mother's shorten'd chain?
 And truly, very piteous is *her* lot —
 Chain'd to a log within a narrow spot,
 Where the close-eaten grass is scarcely seen,
 While sweet around her waves the tempting green!

Poor Ass! thy master should have learnt to show
 Pity — best taught by fellowship of Woe!
 For much I fear me that *He* lives like thee,
 Half famish'd in a land of Luxury!
 How *askingly* its footsteps hither bend?
 It seems to say, "And have I then *one* friend?"
 Innocent foal! thou poor despis'd forlorn!
 I hail thee *Brother* — spite of the fool's scorn!
 And fain would take thee with me, in the Dell
 Of Peace and mild Equality to dwell,
 Where Toil shall call the charmer Health his bride,
 And Laughter tickle Plenty's ribless side!
 How thou wouldst toss thy heels in gamesome play,
 And frisk about, as lamb or kitten gay!
 Yea! and more musically sweet to me
 Thy dissonant harsh bray of joy would be,
 Than warbled melodies that soothe to rest
 The aching of pale Fashion's vacant breast!

Lines on a Friend who Died of a Frenzy Fever induced by Calumnious Reports

1794

Edmund! thy grave with aching eye I scan,
 And inly groan for Heaven's poor outcast — Man!
 'Tis tempest all or gloom: in early youth
 If gifted with th' Ithuriel lance of Truth
 We force to start amid her feign'd caress
 Vice, siren-hag! in native ugliness;
 A Brother's fate will haply rouse the tear,
 And on we go in heaviness and fear!
 But if our fond hearts call to Pleasure's bower
 Some pigmy Folly in a careless hour,
 The faithless guest shall stamp the enchanted ground,
 And mingled forms of Misery rise around:
 Heart-fretting Fear, with pallid look aghast,
 That courts the future woe to hide the past;
 Remorse, the poison'd arrow in his side,
 And loud lewd Mirth, to Anguish close allied:
 Till Frenzy, fierce-eyed child of moping Pain,
 Darts her hot lightning-flash athwart the brain.

Rest, injur'd shade! Shall Slander squatting near
 Spit her cold venom in a dead man's ear?
 'Twas thine to feel the sympathetic glow
 In Merit's joy, and Poverty's meek woe;
 Thine all, that cheer the moment as it flies,
 The zoneless Cares, and smiling Courtesies.
 Nurs'd in thy heart the firmer Virtues grew,
 And in thy heart they wither'd! Such chill dew
 Wan Indolence on each young blossom shed,
 And Vanity her filmy net-work spread,
 With eye that roll'd around in asking gaze,
 And tongue that traffick'd in the trade of praise.
 Thy follies such! the hard world mark'd them well!
 Were they more wise, the Proud who never fell?
 Rest, injur'd shade! the poor man's grateful prayer
 On heaven-ward wing thy wounded soul shall bear.

As oft at twilight gloom thy grave I pass,
 And sit me down upon its recent grass,
 With introverted eye I contemplate
 Similitude of soul, perhaps of — Fate!
 To me hath Heaven with bounteous hand assign'd
 Energic Reason and a shaping mind,

The daring ken of Truth, the Patriot's part,
And Pity's sigh, that breathes the gentle heart —
Sloth-jaundic'd all! and from my graspless hand
Drop Friendship's precious pearls, like hour-glass sand.
I weep, yet stoop not! the faint anguish flows,
A dreamy pang in Morning's feverous doze.

Is this piled earth our Being's passless mound?
Tell me, cold grave! is Death with poppies crown'd?
Tired Sentinel! mid fitful starts I nod,
And fain would sleep, though pillowed on a clod!

To a Friend

[Charles Lamb] together with an Unfinished Poem

1794

Thus far my scanty brain hath built the rhyme
Elaborate and swelling: yet the heart
Not owns it. From thy spirit-breathing powers
I ask not now, my friend! the aiding verse,
Tedious to thee, and from thy anxious thought
Of dissonant mood. In fancy (well I know)
From business wandering far and local cares,
Thou creepest round a dear-lov'd Sister's bed
With noiseless step, and watchest the faint look,
Soothing each pang with fond solicitude,
And tenderest tones medicinal of love.
I too a Sister *had*, an only Sister —
She lov'd me dearly, and I doted on her!
To her I pour'd forth all my puny sorrows
(As a sick Patient in a Nurse's arms)
And of the heart those hidden maladies
That e'en from Friendship's eye will shrink asham'd.
O! I have wak'd at midnight, and have wept,
Because she was not! — cheerily, dear Charles!
Thou thy best friend shalt cherish many a year:
Such warm presages feel I of high Hope.
For not uninterested the dear Maid
I've view'd — her soul affectionate yet wise,
Her polish'd wit as mild as lambent glories
That play around a sainted infant's head.
He knows (the Spirit that in secret sees,
Of whose omniscient and all-spreading Love
Aught to *implore* were impotence of mind)
That my mute thoughts are sad before his throne,
Prepar'd, when he his healing ray vouchsafes,
Thanksgiving to pour forth with lifted heart,
And praise Him Gracious with a Brother's Joy!

Sonnets on Eminent Characters: Contributed to the "Morning Chronicle" in December 1794 and January 1795

1, 1794

[The Sonnets were introduced by the following letter: —]

“Mr. Editor

— If, Sir, the following Poems will not disgrace your poetical department, I will transmit you a series of *Sonnets* (as it is the fashion to call them) addressed like these to eminent Contemporaries.””

Jesus College, Cambridge.”;S.T.C.

To the Honourable Mr. Erskine

When British Freedom for an happier land
Spread her broad wings, that flutter'd with affright,
ERSKINE! thy voice she heard, and paus'd her flight
Sublime of hope, for dreadless thou didst stand

(Thy censer glowing with the hallow'd flame)
A hireless Priest before the insulted shrine,
And at her altar pour the stream divine
Of unmatch'd eloquence. Therefore thy name

Her sons shall venerate, and cheer thy breast
With blessings heaven-ward breath'd. And when the doom
Of Nature bids thee die, beyond the tomb
Thy light shall shine: as sunk beneath the West

Though the great Summer Sun eludes our gaze,
Still burns wide Heaven with his distended blaze.

Burke

As late I lay in Slumber's shadowy vale,
With wetted cheek and in a mourner's guise,
I saw the sainted form of FREEDOM rise:
She spake! not sadder moans the autumnal gale —

“Great Son of Genius! sweet to me thy name,
Ere in an evil hour with alter'd voice
Thou bad'st Oppression's hireling crew rejoice
Blasting with wizard spell my laurell'd fame.

Yet never, BURKE! thou drank'st Corruption's bowl!
 Thee stormy Pity and the cherish'd lure
 Of Pomp, and proud Precipitance of soul
 Wilder'd with meteor fires. Ah Spirit pure!

That Error's mist had left thy purgéd eye:
 So might I clasp thee with a Mother's joy!"
December 9, 1794

Priestley

Though rous'd by that dark Vizir Riot rude
 Have driven our PRIESTLEY o'er the Ocean swell;
 Though Superstition and her wolfish brood
 Bay his mild radiance, impotent and fell;

Calm in his halls of brightness he shall dwell!
 For lo! RELIGION at his strong behest
 Starts with mild anger from the Papal spell,
 And flings to Earth her tinsel-glittering vest,

Her mitred State and cumbrous Pomp unholy;
 And JUSTICE wakes to bid th' Oppressor wail
 Insulting aye the wrongs of patient Folly;
 And from her dark retreat by Wisdom won

Meek NATURE slowly lifts her matron veil
 To smile with fondness on her gazing Son!
December 11, 1794

La Fayette

As when far off the warbled strains are heard
 That soar on Morning's wing the vales among;
 Within his cage the imprison'd Matin Bird
 Swells the full chorus with a generous song:

He bathes no pinion in the dewy light,
 No Father's joy, no Lover's bliss he shares,
 Yet still the rising radiance cheers his sight —
 His fellows' Freedom soothes the Captive's cares!

Thou, FAYETTE! who didst wake with startling voice
 Life's better Sun from that long wintry night,
 Thus in thy Country's triumphs shalt rejoice
 And mock with raptures high the Dungeon's might:

For lo! the Morning struggles into Day,
 And Slavery's spectres shriek and vanish from the ray!
December 15, 1794

Koskiusko

O what a loud and fearful shriek was there,
 As though a thousand souls one death-groan pour'd!
 Ah me! they saw beneath a Hireling's sword
 Their KOSKIUSKO fall! Through the swart air
 (As pauses the tir'd Cossac's barbarous yell
 Of Triumph) on the chill and midnight gale
 Rises with frantic burst or sadder swell
 The dirge of murder'd Hope! while Freedom pale
 Bends in such anguish o'er her destin'd bier,
 As if from eldest time some Spirit meek
 Had gather'd in a mystic urn each tear
 That ever on a Patriot's furrow'd cheek
 Fit channel found; and she had drain'd the bowl
 In the mere wilfulness, and sick despair of soul!
December 16, 1794

Pitt

Not always should the Tear's ambrosial dew
 Roll its soft anguish down thy furrow'd cheek!
 Not always heaven-breath'd tones of Suppliance meek
 Beseem thee, Mercy! Yon dark Scowler view,
 Who with proud words of dear-lov'd Freedom came —
 More blasting than the mildew from the South!
 And kiss'd his country with Iscariot mouth
 (Ah! foul apostate from his Father's fame!)
 Then fix'd her on the Cross of deep distress,
 And at safe distance marks the thirsty Lance
 Pierce her big side! But O! if some strange trance
 The eye-lids of thy stern-brow'd Sister press,
 Seize, Mercy! thou more terrible the brand,
 And hurl her thunderbolts with fiercer hand!
December 23, 1794

To the Rev W.L. Bowles

[First version, printed in "Morning Chronicle", December 26, 1794]

My heart has thank'd thee, BOWLES! for those soft strains,
 That, on the still air floating, tremblingly
 Wak'd in me Fancy, Love, and Sympathy!
 For hence, not callous to a Brother's pains

Thro' Youth's gay prime and thornless paths I went;
 And, when the *darker* day of life began,
 And I did roam, a thought-bewilder'd man!
 Thy kindred Lays an healing solace lent,

Each lonely pang with dreamy joys combin'd,
 And stole from vain REGRET her scorpion stings;
 While shadowy PLEASURE, with mysterious wings,
 Brooded the wavy and tumultuous mind,

Like that great Spirit, who with plastic sweep
 Mov'd on the darkness of the formless Deep!

To the Rev W.L. Bowles

[Second version]

My heart has thank'd thee, BOWLES! for those soft strains
 Whose sadness soothes me, like the murmuring
 Of wild-bees in the sunny showers of spring!
 For hence not callous to the mourner's pains

Through Youth's gay prime and thornless paths I went:
 And when the mightier Throes of mind began,
 And drove me forth, a thought-bewilder'd man,
 Their mild and manliest melancholy lent

A mingled charm, such as the pang consign'd
 To slumber, though the big tear it renew'd;
 Bidding a strange mysterious PLEASURE brood
 Over the wavy and tumultuous mind,

As the great SPIRIT erst with plastic sweep
 Mov'd on the darkness of the unform'd deep.

Mrs Siddons

As when a child on some long Winter's night
 Affrighted clinging to its Grandam's knees
 With eager wond'ring and perturb'd delight
 Listens strange tales of fearful dark decrees

Mutter'd to wretch by necromantic spell;
 Or of those hags, who at the witching time
 Of murky Midnight ride the air sublime,
 And mingle foul embrace with fiends of Hell:

Cold Horror drinks its blood! Anon the tear
 More gentle starts, to hear the Beldame tell
 Of pretty Babes, that lov'd each other dear,
 Murder'd by cruel Uncle's mandate fell:

Even such the shiv'ring joys thy tones impart,
 Even so thou, SIDDONS! meltest my sad heart!
December 29, 1794

To William Godwin Author of "Political Justice"

O form'd t' illumine a sunless world forlorn,
 As o'er the chill and dusky brow of Night,
 In Finland's wintry skies the Mimic Morn
 Electric pours a stream of rosy light,

Pleas'd I have mark'd OPPRESSION, terror-pale,
 Since, thro' the windings of her dark machine,
 Thy steady eye has shot its glances keen —
 And bade th' All-lovely "scenes at distance hail".

Nor will I not thy holy guidance bless,
 And hymn thee, GODWIN! with an ardent lay;
 For that thy voice, in Passion's stormy day,
 When wild I roam'd the bleak Heath of Distress,

Bade the bright form of Justice meet my way —
 And told me that her name was HAPPINESS.
January 10, 1795

To Robert Southey of Baliol College, Oxford, Author of The "Retrospect", and other Poems

SOUTHEY! thy melodies steal o'er mine ear
 Like far-off joyance, or the murmuring
 Of wild bees in the sunny showers of Spring —
 Sounds of such mingled import as may cheer

The lonely breast, yet rouse a mindful tear:
 Wak'd by the Song doth Hope-born FANCY fling
 Rich showers of dewy fragrance from her wing,
 Till sickly PASSION's drooping Myrtles sear

Blossom anew! But O! more thrill'd, I prize
 Thy sadder strains, that bid in MEMORY'S Dream
 The faded forms of past Delight arise;
 Then soft, on Love's pale cheek, the tearful gleam

Of Pleasure smiles — as faint yet beauteous lies
 The imag'd Rainbow on a willowy stream.
January 14, 1795

To Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq.

It was some Spirit, SHERIDAN! that breath'd
 O'er thy young mind such wildly-Barious power!
 My soul hath mark'd thee in her shaping hour,
 Thy temples with Hymettian flow'rets wreath'd:

And sweet thy voice, as when o'er LAURA's bier
 Sad Music trembled thro' Vauclusa's glade
 Sweet, as at dawn the love-lorn Serenade
 That wafts soft dreams to SLUMBER's listening ear.

Now patriot Rage and Indignation high
 Swell the full tones! And now thine eye-beams dance
 Meanings of Scorn and Wit's quaint revelry!
 Writhes inly from the bosom-probing glance

The Apostate by the brainless rout ador'd,
 As erst that elder Fiend beneath great Michael's sword.
January 29, 1795

To Lord Stanhope on Reading his Late Protest in the House of Lords

["Morning Chronicle," Jan. 31, 1795]

STANHOPE! I hail, with ardent Hymn, thy name!
 Thou shalt be bless'd and lov'd, when in the dust
 Thy corse shall moulder — Patriot pure and just!
 And o'er thy tomb the grateful hand of FAME!

Shall grave: — "Here sleeps the Friend of Humankind!"
 For thou, untainted by CORRUPTION's bowl,
 Or foul AMBITION, with undaunted soul
 Hast spoke the language of a Free-born mind

Pleading the cause of Nature! Still pursue
 Thy path of Honour! — To thy Country true,

Still watch th' expiring flame of Liberty!
 O Patriot! still pursue thy virtuous way,
 As holds his course the splendid Orb of Day,
 Or thro' the stormy or the tranquil sky!
 One of the People.

To Earl Stanhope

Not, STANHOPE! with the Patriot's doubtful name
I mock thy worth — Friend of the Human Race!
Since scorning faction's low and partial aim
Aloof thou wendest in thy stately pace,

Thyself redeeming from that leprous stain,
Nobility: and aye unterrify'd
Pourest thine Abdiel warnings on the train
That sit complotting with rebellious pride

'Gainst *Her* who from the Almighty's bosom leapt
With whirlwind arm, fierce Minister of Love!
Wherefore, ere Virtue o'er thy tomb hath wept,
Angels shall lead thee to the Throne above:

And thou from forth its clouds shalt hear the voice,
Champion of Freedom and her God! rejoice!

Lines: To a Friend in Answer to a Melancholy Letter

?1795

Away, those cloudy looks, that labouring sigh,
The peevish offspring of a sickly hour!
Nor meanly thus complain of Fortune's power,
When the blind Gamester throws a luckless die.

Yon setting Sun flashes a mournful gleam
Behind those broken clouds, his stormy train:
To-morrow shall the many-colour'd main
In brightness roll beneath his orient beam!

Wild, as the autumnal gust, the hand of Time
Flies o'er his mystic lyre: in shadowy dance
The alternate groups of Joy and Grief advance
Responsive to his varying strains sublime!

Bears on its wing each hour a load of Fate;
The swain, who lull'd by Seine's mild murmurs, led
His weary oxen to their nightly shed,
To-day may rule a tempest-troubled State.

Nor shall not Fortune with a vengeful smile
Survey the sanguinary Despot's might,
And haply hurl the Pageant from his height
Unwept to wander in some savage isle.

There shiv'ring sad beneath the tempest's frown
Round his tir'd limbs to wrap the purple vest;
And mix'd with nails and beads, an equal jest!
Barter for food, the jewels of his crown.

To an Infant

1795

Ah! cease thy tears and sobs, my little Life!
I did but snatch away the unclasp'd knife:
Some safer toy will soon arrest thine eye,
And to quick laughter change this peevish cry!
Poor stumbler on the rocky coast of Woe,
Tutor'd by Pain each source of pain to know!
Alike the foodful fruit and scorching fire
Awake thy eager grasp and young desire;
Alike the Good, the Ill offend thy sight,
And rouse the stormy sense of shrill Affright!
Untaught, yet wise! mid all thy brief alarms
Thou closely clingest to thy Mother's arms,
Nestling thy little face in that fond breast
Whose anxious heavings lull thee to thy rest!
Man's breathing Miniature! thou mak'st me sigh —
A Babe art thou — and such a Thing am I!
To anger rapid and as soon appeas'd,
For trifles mourning and by trifles pleas'd,
Break Friendship's mirror with a tetchy blow,
Yet snatch what coals of fire on Pleasure's altar glow!

O thou that rearest with celestial aim
The future Seraph in my mortal frame,
Thrice holy Faith! whatever thorns I meet
As on I totter with unpractis'd feet,
Still let me stretch my arms and cling to thee,
Meek nurse of souls through their long Infancy!

To the Rev. W. J. Hort while teaching a Young Lady some Song-tunes on his Flute

1795

Hush! ye clamorous Cares! be mute!
Again, dear Harmonist! again
Thro' the hollow of thy flute
Breathe that passion-warbled strain:
Till Memory each form shall bring
The loveliest of her shadowy throng;
And Hope, that soars on sky-lark wing,
Carol wild her gladdest song!

O skill'd with magic spell to roll
The thrilling tones, that concentrate the soul!
Breathe thro' thy flute those tender notes again,
While near thee sits the chaste-eyed Maiden mild;
And bid her raise the Poet's kindred strain
In soft impassion'd voice, correctly wild.

In Freedom's UNDIVIDED dell,
Where *Toil* and *Health* with mellow'd *Love* shall dwell,
Far from folly, far from men,
In the rude romantic glen,
Up the cliff, and thro' the glade,
Wandering with the dear-lov'd maid,
I shall listen to the lay,
And ponder on thee far away
Still, as she bids those thrilling notes aspire
(*'Making my fond attuned heart her lyre'*),
Thy honour'd form, my Friend! shall reappear
And I will thank thee with a raptur'd tear.

Pity

?1795

Sweet Mercy! how my very heart has bled
To see thee, poor Old Man! and thy grey hairs
Hoar with the snowy blast: while no one cares
To clothe thy shrivell'd limbs and palsied head.
My Father! throw away this tatter'd vest
That mocks thy shivering! take my garment — use
A young man's arm! I'll melt these frozen dews
That hang from thy white beard and numb thy breast.
My Sara too shall tend thee, like a child:
And thou shalt talk, in our fireside's recess,
Of purple Pride, that scowls on Wretchedness —
He did not so, the Galilaeen mild,
Who met the Lazars turn'd from rich men's doors
And call'd them Friends, and heal'd their noisome sores!

To the Nightingale

1795

Sister of love-lorn Poets, Philomel!
How many Bards in city garret pent,
While at their window they with downward eye
Mark the faint lamp-beam on the kennell'd mud,
And listen to the drowsy cry of Watchmen
(Those hoarse unfeather'd Nightingales of Time!),
How many wretched Bards address *thy* name,
And hers, the full-orb'd Queen that shines above.
But I *do* hear thee, and the high bough mark,
Within whose mild moon-mellow'd foliage hid
Thou warblest sad thy pity-pleading strains.
O! I have listen'd, till my working soul,
Waked by those strains to thousand phantasies,
Absorb'd hath ceas'd to listen! Therefore oft,
I hymn thy name: and with a proud delight
Oft will I tell thee, Minstrel of the Moon!
'Most musical, most melancholy' Bird!
That all thy soft diversities of tone,
Tho' sweeter far than the delicious airs
That vibrate from a white-arm'd Lady's harp,
What time the languishment of lonely love
Melts in her eye, and heaves her breast of snow,
Are not so sweet as is the voice of her,
My Sara — best beloved of human kind!
When breathing the pure soul of tenderness,
She thrills me with the Husband's promis'd name!

**Lines: Composed while climbing the Left Ascent of Brockley Coomb, Somersetshire,
May 1795**

With many a pause and oft reverted eye
I climb the Coomb's ascent: sweet songsters near
Warble in shade their wild-wood melody:
Far off the unvarying Cuckoo soothes my ear.
Up scour the startling stragglers of the flock
That on green plots o'er precipices browse:
From the deep fissures of the naked rock
The Yew-tree bursts! Beneath its dark green boughs
(Mid which the May-thorn blends its blossoms white)
Where broad smooth stones jut out in mossy seats,
I rest: — and now have gain'd the topmost site.
Ah! what a luxury of landscape meets
My gaze! Proud towers, and Cots more dear to me,
Elm-shadow'd Fields, and prospect-bounding Sea!
Deep sighs my lonely heart: I drop the tear:
Enchanting spot! O were my Sara here!

Lines in the Manner of Spenser

1795

O Peace, that on a lilled bank dost love
 To rest thine head beneath an Olive-Tree,
 I would that from the pinions of thy Dove
 One quill withouten pain ypluck'd might be!
 For O! I wish my Sara's frowns to flee,
 And fain to her some soothing song would write,
 Lest she resent my rude discourtesy,
 Who vow'd to meet her ere the morning light,
 But broke my plighted word — ah! false and recreant wight!

Last night as I my weary head did pillow
 With thoughts of my dissever'd Fair engross'd,
 Chill Fancy droop'd wreathing herself with willow,
 As though my breast entomb'd a pining ghost.
 "From some blest couch, young Rapture's bridal boast,
 Rejected Slumber! hither wing thy way;
 But leave me with the matin hour, at most!
 As night-clos'd floweret to the orient ray,
 My sad heart will expand, when I the Maid survey."

But Love, who heard the silence of my thought,
 Contriv'd a too successful wile, I ween:
 And whisper'd to himself, with malice fraught —
 "Too long our Slave the Damsel's *smiles* hath seen:
 To-morrow shall he ken her alter'd mien!"
 He spake, and ambush'd lay, till on my bed
 The morning shot her dewy glances keen,
 When as I 'gan to lift my drowsy head —
 "Now, Bard! I'll work thee woe!" the laughing Elfin said.

Sleep, softly-breathing God! his downy wing
 Was fluttering now, as quickly to depart;
 When twang'd an arrow from Love's mystic string,
 With pathless wound it pierc'd him to the heart.
 Was there some magic in the Elfin's dart?
 Or did he strike my couch with wizard lance?
 For straight so fair a Form did upwards start
 (No fairer deck'd the bowers of old Romance)
 That Sleep enamour'd grew, nor mov'd from his sweet trance!

My Sara came, with gentlest look divine;
Bright shone her eye, yet tender was its beam:
I felt the pressure of her lip to mine!
Whispering we went, and Love was all our theme —
Love pure and spotless, as at first, I deem,
He sprang from Heaven! Such joys with Sleep did 'bide,
That I the living Image of my Dream
Fondly forgot. Too late I woke, and sigh'd —
“O! how shall I behold my Love at eventide!”

The Hour when we shall meet again

?1795

(Composed during Illness, and in Absence.)

Dim Hour! that sleep'st on pillowing clouds afar,
O rise and yoke the Turtles to thy car!
Bend o'er the traces, blame each lingering Dove,
And give me to the bosom of my Love!
My gentle Love, caressing and carest,
With heaving heart shall cradle me to rest!
Shed the warm tear-drop from her smiling eyes,
Lull with fond woe, and medicine me with sighs!
While finely-flushing float her kisses meek,
Like melted rubies, o'er my pallid cheek.
Chill'd by the night, the drooping Rose of May
Mourns the long absence of the lovely Day;
Young Day returning at her promis'd hour
Weeps o'er the sorrows of her favourite Flower;
Weeps the soft dew, the balmy gale she sighs,
And darts a trembling lustre from her eyes.
New life and joy th' expanding flow'ret feels:
His pitying Mistress mourns, and mourning heals!

Lines written at Shurton Bars, near Bridgewater, September 1795, in Answer to a Letter from Bristol

1795

Good verse *most* good, and bad verse then seems better
Receiv'd from absent friend by way of Letter.
For what so sweet can labour'd lays impart
As one rude rhyme warm from a friendly heart? —

Anon.

Nor travels my meandering eye
The starry wilderness on high;
Nor now with curious sight
I mark the glow-worm, as I pass,
Move with "green radiance" through the grass,
An emerald of light.

O ever present to my view!
My wafted spirit is with you,
And sooths your boding fears:
I see you all oppressed with gloom
Sit lonely in that cheerless room —
Ah me! You are in tears!

Belovéd Woman! did you fly
Chill'd Friendship's dark disliking eye,
Or Mirth's untimely din?
With cruel weight these trifles press
A temper sore with tenderness,
When aches the void within.

But why with sable wand unblessed
Should Fancy rouse within my breast
Dim-visag'd shapes of Dread?
Untenanting its beauteous clay
My Sara's soul has wing'd its way,
And hovers round my head!

I felt it prompt the tender Dream,
When slowly sank the day's last gleam:
You rous'd each gentler sense,
As sighing o'er the Blossom's bloom
Meek Evening wakes its soft perfume

With viewless influence.

And hark, my Love! The sea-breeze moans
Through yon reft house! O'er rolling stones
In bold ambitious sweep
The onward-surgings supply
The silence of the cloudless sky
With mimic thunders deep.

Dark reddening from the channell'd Isle
(Where stands one solitary pile
Unslated by the blast)
The Watchfire, like a sullen star
Twinkles to many a dozing Tar
Rude cradled on the mast.

Even there — beneath that light-house tower —
In the tumultuous evil hour
Ere Peace with Sara came,
Time was, I should have thought it sweet
To count the echoings of my feet,
And watch the storm-vex'd flame.

And there in black soul-jaundic'd fit
A sad gloom-pamper'd Man to sit,
And listen to the roar:
When mountain surges bellowing deep
With an uncouth monster-leap
Plung'd foaming on the shore.

Then by the lightning's blaze to mark
Some toiling tempest-shatter'd bark;
Her vain distress-guns hear;
And when a second sheet of light
Flash'd o'er the blackness of the night —
To see *no* vessel there!

But Fancy now more gaily sings;
Or if awhile she droop her wings,
As skylarks 'mid the corn,
On summer fields she grounds her breast:
The oblivious poppy o'er her nest
Nods, till returning morn.

O mark those smiling tears, that swell
The open'd rose! From heaven they fell,
And with the sun-beam blend.
Blest visitations from above,

Such are the tender woes of Love
Fostering the heart they bend!

When stormy Midnight howling round
Beats on our roof with clattering sound,
To me your arms you'll stretch:
Great God! you'll say — To us so kind,
O shelter from this loud bleak wind
The houseless, friendless wretch!

The tears that tremble down your cheek,
Shall bathe my kisses chaste and meek
In Pity's dew divine;
And from your heart the sighs that steal
Shall make your rising bosom feel
The answering swell of mine!

How oft, my Love! with shapings sweet
I paint the moment, we shall meet!
With eager speed I dart —
I seize you in the vacant air,
And fancy, with a husband's care
I press you to my heart!

'Tis said, in Summer's evening hour
Flashes the golden-colour'd flower
A fair electric flame:
And so shall flash my love-charg'd eye
When all the heart's big ecstasy
Shoots rapid through the frame!

And many idle flitting phantasies,
Traverse my indolent and passive brain,
As wild and various as the random gales
That swell and flutter on this subject Lute!

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all?

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
Darts, O belovéd Woman! nor such thoughts
Dim and unhallow'd dost thou not reject,
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.
Meek Daughter in the family of Christ!
Well hast thou said and holily disprais'd
These shapings of the unregenerate mind;
Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.
For never guiltless may I speak of him,
The Incomprehensible! save when with awe
I praise him, and with Faith that inly *feels*;
Who with his saving mercies healéd me,
A sinful and most miserable man,
Wilder'd and dark, and gave me to possess
Peace, and this Cot, and thee, heart-honour'd Maid!

To the Author of Poems

[Joseph Cottle]

1795

published anonymously at Bristol in September 1795

Unboastful BARD! whose verse concise yet clear
 Tunes to smooth melody unconquer'd sense,
 May your fame fadeless live, as 'never-sere'
 The Ivy wreathes yon Oak, whose broad defence
 Embowers me from Noon's sultry influence!
 For, like that nameless Rivulet stealing by,
 Your modest verse to musing Quiet dear
 Is rich with tints heaven-borrow'd: the charm'd eye
 Shall gaze undazzled there, and love the soften'd sky.

Circling the base of the Poetic mount
 A stream there is, which rolls in lazy flow
 Its coal-black waters from Oblivion's fount:
 The vapour-poison'd Birds, that fly too low,
 Fall with dead swoop, and to the bottom go.
 Escaped that heavy stream on pinion fleet
 Beneath the Mountain's lofty-frowning brow,
 Ere aught of perilous ascent you meet,
 A mead of mildest charm delays th' unlabouring feet.

Not there the cloud-climb'd rock, sublime and vast,
 That like some giant king, o'er-glooms the hill;
 Nor there the Pine-grove to the midnight blast
 Makes solemn music! but th' unceasing rill
 To the soft Wren or Lark's descending trill
 Murmurs sweet undersong 'mid jasmin bowers.
 In this same pleasant meadow, at your will
 I ween, you wander'd — there collecting flowers
 Of sober tint, and herbs of med'cinable powers!

There for the monarch-murder'd Soldier's tomb
 You wove th' unfinished wreath of saddest hues;
 And to that holier chaplet added bloom
 Besprinkling it with Jordan's cleansing dews.
 But lo your Henderson awakes the Muse —
 His Spirit beckon'd from the mountain's height!
 You left the plain and soar'd mid richer views!
 So Nature mourn'd when sunk the First Day's light,
 With stars, unseen before, spangling her robe of night!

Still soar, my Friend, those richer views among,
Strong, rapid, fervent, flashing Fancy's beam!
Virtue and Truth shall love your gentler song;
But Poesy demands th' impassion'd theme:
Waked by Heaven's silent dews at Eve's mild gleam
What balmy sweets Pomona breathes around!
But if the vext air rush a stormy stream
Or Autumn's shrill gust moan in plaintive sound,
With fruits and flowers she loads the tempest-honor'd ground.

The Silver Thimble The production of a young lady, addressed to the Author of the poems alluded to in the preceding epistle

1795

She had lost her Silver Thimble, and her complaint being accidentally overheard by him, her Friend, he immediately sent her four others to take her choice of.

As oft mine eye with careless glance
 Has gallop'd thro' some old romance,
 Of speaking Birds and Steeds with wings,
 Giants and Dwarfs, and Fiends and Kings;
 Beyond the rest with more attentive care
 I've lov'd to read of elfin-favour'd Fair —
 How if she long'd for aught beneath the sky
 And suffer'd to escape one votive sigh,
 Wafted along on viewless pinions aery
 It laid itself obsequious at her feet:
 Such things, I thought, one might not hope to meet
 Save in the dear delicious land of Faery!
 But now (by proof I know it well)
 There's still some peril in free wishing —
Politeness is a licensed *spell*,
 And *you*, dear Sir! the Arch-magician.
 You much perplex'd me by the various set:
 They were indeed an elegant quartette!
 My mind went to and fro, and waver'd long;
 At length I've chosen (Samuel thinks me wrong)
That, around whose azure rim
 Silver figures seem to swim,
 Like fleece-white clouds, that on the skiey Blue,
 Waked by no breeze, the self-same shapes retain;
 Or ocean-Nymphs with limbs of snowy hue
 Slow-floating o'er the calm cerulean plain.

Just such a one, *mon cher ami*,
 (The finger shield of industry)
 Th' inventive Gods, I deem, to Pallas gave
 What time the vain Arachne, madly brave,
 Challeng'd the blue-eyed Virgin of the sky
 A duel in embroider'd work to try.
 And hence the thimble Finger of grave Pallas
 To th' erring Needle's point was more than callous.
 But ah the poor Arachne! She unarm'd
 Blundering thro' hasty eagerness, alarm'd
 With all a *Rival's* hopes, a *Mortal's* fears,
 Still miss'd the stitch, and stain'd the web with tears.

Unnumber'd punctures small yet sore
Full fretfully the maiden bore,
Till she her lily finger found
Crimson'd with many a tiny wound;
And to her eyes, suffus'd with watery woe,
Her flower-embroider'd web danc'd dim, I wist,
Like blossom'd shrubs in a quick-moving mist:
Till vanquish'd the despairing Maid sunk low.

O Bard! whom sure no common Muse inspires,
I heard your Verse that glows with vestal fires!
And I from unwatch'd needle's erring point
Had surely suffer'd on each finger-joint
Those wounds, which erst did poor Arachne meet;
While he, the much-lov'd Object of my choice
(My bosom thrilling with enthusiast heat),
Pour'd on mine ear with deep impressive voice,
How the great Prophet of the Desert stood
And preach'd of Penitence by Jordan's Flood;
On War; or else the legendary lays
In simplest measures hymn'd to Alla's praise;
Or what the Bard from his heart's inmost stores
O'er his *Friend's* grave in loftier numbers pours:
Yes, Bard polite! you but obey'd the laws
Of Justice, when the thimble you had sent;
What wounds your thought-bewildering Muse might cause
'Tis well your finger-shielding gifts prevent. SARA.

Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement

1795

Sermoni Propiora. — Hor.

Low was our pretty Cot: our tallest Rose
 Peep'd at the chamber-window. We could hear
 At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,
 The Sea's faint murmur. In the open air
 Our Myrtles blossom'd; and across the porch
 Thick Jasmins twined: the little landscape round
 Was green and woody, and refresh'd the eye.
 It was a spot which you might aptly call
 The Valley of Seclusion! Once I saw
 (Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quietness)
 A wealthy son of Commerce saunter by,
 Bristowa's citizen: methought, it calm'd
 His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
 With wiser feelings: for he paus'd, and look'd
 With a pleas'd sadness, and gaz'd all around,
 Then eyed our Cottage, and gaz'd round again,
 And sigh'd, and said, it was a Blesséd Place.
 And we *were* bless'd. Oft with patient ear
 Long-listening to the viewless sky-lark's note
 (Viewless, or haply for a moment seen
 Gleaming on sunny wings) in whisper'd tones
 I've said to my Belovéd, "Such, sweet Girl!
 The inobtrusive song of Happiness,
 Unearthly minstrelsy! then only heard
 When the Soul seeks to hear; when all is hush'd,
 And the Heart listens!"

But the time, when first
 From that low Dell, steep up the stony Mount
 I climb'd with perilous toil and reach'd the top,
 Oh! what a goodly scene! *Here* the bleak mount,
 The bare bleak mountain speckled thin with sheep;
 Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields;
 And river, now with bushy rocks o'er-brow'd,
 Now winding bright and full, with naked banks;
 And seats, and lawns, the Abbey and the wood,
 And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire;
 The Channel *there*, the Islands and white sails,
 Dim coasts, and cloud-like hills, and shoreless Ocean —
 It seem'd like Omnipresence! God, methought,
 Had built him there a Temple: the whole World

Seem'd *imag'd* in its vast circumference:
 No *wish* profan'd my overwhelméd heart.
 Blest hour! It was a luxury, — to be!

Ah! quiet Dell! dear Cot, and Mount sublime!
 I was constrain'd to quit you. Was it right,
 While my unnumber'd brethren toil'd and bled,
 That I should dream away the entrusted hours
 On rose-leaf beds, pampering the coward heart
 With feelings all too delicate for use?
 Sweet is the tear that from some Howard's eye
 Drops on the cheek of one he lifts from earth:
 And he that works me good with unmov'd face,
 Does it but half: he chills me while he aids,
 My benefactor, not my brother man!
 Yet even this, this cold beneficence
 Praise, praise it, O my Soul! oft as thou scann'st
 The sluggard Pity's vision-weaving tribe!
 Who sigh for Wretchedness, yet shun the Wretched,
 Nursing in some delicious solitude
 Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies!
 I therefore go, and join head, heart, and hand,
 Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight
 Of Science, Freedom, and the Truth in Christ.

Yet oft when after honourable toil
 Rests the tir'd mind, and waking loves to dream,
 My spirit shall revisit thee, dear Cot!
 Thy Jasmin and thy window-peeping Rose,
 And Myrtles fearless of the mild sea-air.
 And I shall sigh fond wishes — sweet Abode!
 Ah! — had none greater! And that all had such!
 It might be so — but the time is not yet.
 Speed it, O Father! Let thy Kingdom come!

Religious Musings A Desultory Poem, Written on the Christmas Eve of 1794

1794-1796

This is the time, when most divine to hear,
 The voice of Adoration rouses me,
 As with a Cherub's trump: and high upborne,
 Yea, mingling with the Choir, I seem to view
 The vision of the heavenly multitude,
 Who hymned the song of Peace o'er Bethlehem's fields!
 Yet thou more bright than all the Angel-blaze,
 That harbingered thy birth, Thou Man of Woes!
 Despised Galilaeen! For the Great
 Invisible (by symbols only seen)
 With a peculiar and surpassing light
 Shines from the visage of the oppressed good man,
 When heedless of himself the scourged saint
 Mourns for the oppressor. Fair the vernal mead,
 Fair the high grove, the sea, the sun, the stars;
 True impress each of their creating Sire!
 Yet nor high grove, nor many-colour'd mead,
 Nor the green ocean with his thousand isles,
 Nor the starred azure, nor the sovran sun,
 E'er with such majesty of portraiture
 Imaged the supreme beauty uncreate,
 As thou, meek Saviour! at the fearful hour
 When thy insulted anguish winged the prayer
 Harped by Archangels, when they sing of mercy!
 Which when the Almighty heard from forth his throne
 Diviner light filled Heaven with ecstasy!
 Heaven's hymnings paused: and Hell her yawning mouth
 Closed a brief moment.

Lovely was the death
 Of Him whose life was Love! Holy with power
 He on the thought-benighted Sceptic beamed
 Manifest Godhead, melting into day
 What floating mists of dark idolatry
 Broke and misshaped the omnipresent Sire:
 And first by Fear uncharmed the drowséd Soul.
 Till of its nobler nature it 'gan feel
 Dim recollections; and thence soared to Hope.
 Strong to believe whate'er of mystic good
 The Eternal dooms for His immortal sons.
 From Hope and firmer Faith to perfect Love
 Attracted and absorbed: and centered there

God only to behold, and know, and feel,
 Till by exclusive consciousness of God
 All self-annihilated it shall make
 God its Identity: God all in all!
 We and our Father one!

And blest are they,
 Who in this fleshly World, the elect of Heaven,
 Their strong eye darting through the deeds of men,
 Adore with steadfast unpresuming gaze
 Him Nature's essence, mind, and energy!
 And gazing, trembling, patiently ascend
 Treading beneath their feet all visible things
 As steps, that upward to their Father's throne
 Lead gradual — else nor glorified nor loved.
 They nor contempt embosom nor revenge:
 For they dare know of what may seem deform
 The Supreme Fair sole operant: in whose sight
 All things are pure, his strong controlling love
 Alike from all educating perfect good.
 Their's too celestial courage, inly armed —
 Dwarfing Earth's giant brood, what time they muse
 On their great Father, great beyond compare!
 And marching onwards view high o'er their heads
 His waving banners of Omnipotence.

Who the Creator love, created Might
 Dread not: within their tents no Terrors walk.
 For they are holy things before the Lord
 Aye unprofaned, though Earth should league with Hell;
 God's altar grasping with an eager hand
 Fear, the wild-visag'd, pale, eye-starting wretch,
 Sure-refug'd hears his hot pursuing fiends
 Yell at vain distance. Soon refresh'd from Heaven
 He calms the throb and tempest of his heart.
 His countenance settles; a soft solemn bliss
 Swims in his eye — his swimming eye uprais'd:
 And Faith's whole armour glitters on his limbs!
 And thus transfigured with a dreadless awe,
 A solemn hush of soul, meek he beholds
 All things of terrible seeming: yea, unmoved
 Views e'en the immitigable ministers
 That shower down vengeance on these latter days.
 For kindling with intenser Deity
 From the celestial Mercy-seat they come,
 And at the renovating wells of Love
 Have fill'd their vials with salutary wrath,

To sickly Nature more medicinal
 Than what soft balm the weeping good man pours
 Into the lone despoiléd traveller's wounds!

Thus from the Elect, regenerate through faith,
 Pass the dark Passions and what thirsty cares
 Drink up the spirit, and the dim regards
 Self-centre. Lo they vanish! or acquire
 New names, new features — by supernal grace
 Enrobed with Light, and naturalised in Heaven.
 As when a shepherd on a vernal morn
 Through some thick fog creeps timorous with slow foot,
 Darkling he fixes on the immediate road
 His downward eye: all else of fairest kind
 Hid or deformed. But lo! the bursting Sun!
 Touched by the enchantment of that sudden beam
 Straight the black vapour melteth, and in globes
 Of dewy glitter gems each plant and tree;
 On every leaf, on every blade it hangs!
 Dance glad the new-born intermingling rays,
 And wide around the landscape streams with glory!

There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
 Omnific. His most holy name is Love.
 Truth of subliming import! with the which
 Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,
 He from his small particular orbit flies
 With blest outstarting! From himself he flies,
 Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze
 Views all creation; and he loves it all,
 And blesses it, and calls it very good!
 This is indeed to dwell with the Most High!
 Cherubs and rapture-trembling Seraphim
 Can press no nearer to the Almighty's throne.
 But that we roam unconscious, or with hearts
 Unfeeling of our universal Sire,
 And that in His vast family no Cain
 Injures uninjured (in her best-aimed blow
 Victorious Murder a blind Suicide)
 Haply for this some younger Angel now
 Looks down on Human Nature: and, behold!
 A sea of blood bestrewed with wrecks, where mad
 Embattling Interests on each other rush
 With unhelmed rage!

'Tis the sublime of man,
 Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves
 Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole!
 This fraternises man, this constitutes
 Our charities and bearings. But 'tis God
 Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole;
 This the worst superstition, him except
 Aught to desire, Supreme Reality!
 The plenitude and permanence of bliss!
 O Fiends of Superstition! not that oft
 The erring Priest hath stained with brother's blood
 Your grisly idols, not for this may wrath
 Thunder against you from the Holy One!
 But o'er some plain that steameth to the sun,
 Peopled with Death; or where more hideous Trade
 Loud-laughing packs his bales of human anguish;
 I will raise up a mourning, O ye Fiends!
 And curse your spells, that film the eye of Faith,
 Hiding the present God; whose presence lost,
 The moral world's cohesion, we become
 An Anarchy of Spirits! Toy-bewitched,
 Made blind by lusts, disherited of soul,
 No common centre Man, no common sire
 Knoweth! A sordid solitary thing,
 Mid countless brethren with a lonely heart
 Through courts and cities the smooth savage roams
 Feeling himself, his own low self the whole;
 When he by sacred sympathy might make
 The whole one Self! Self, that no alien knows!
 Self, far diffused as Fancy's wing can travel!
 Self, spreading still! Oblivious of its own,
 Yet all of all possessing! This is Faith!
 This the Messiah's destined victory!

But first offences needs must come! Even now
 (Black Hell laughs horrible — to hear the scoff!)
 Thee to defend, meek Galilaeen! Thee
 And thy mild laws of Love unutterable,
 Mistrust and Enmity have burst the bands
 Of social peace: and listening Treachery lurks
 With pious fraud to snare a brother's life;
 And childless widows o'er the groaning land
 Wail numberless; and orphans weep for bread!
 Thee to defend, dear Saviour of Mankind!
 Thee, Lamb of God! Thee, blameless Prince of Peace!
 From all sides rush the thirsty brood of War! —
 Austria, and that foul Woman of the North,

The lustful murderess of her wedded lord!
 And he, connatural Mind! whom (in their songs
 So bards of elder time had haply feigned)
 Some Fury fondled in her hate to man,
 Bidding her serpent hair in mazy surge
 Lick his young face, and at his mouth imbreathe
 Horrible sympathy! And leagued with these
 Each petty German princeling, nursed in gore!
 Soul-hardened barterers of human blood!
 Death's prime slave-merchants! Scorpion-whips of Fate!
 Nor least in savagery of holy zeal,
 Apt for the yoke, the race degenerate,
 Whom Britain erst had blushed to call her sons!
 Thee to defend the Moloch Priest prefers
 The prayer of hate, and bellows to the herd,
 That Deity, Accomplice Deity
 In the fierce jealousy of wakened wrath
 Will go forth with our armies and our fleets
 To scatter the red ruin on their foes!
 O blasphemy! to mingle fiendish deeds
 With blessedness!

Lord of unsleeping Love,
 From everlasting Thou! We shall not die.
 These, even these, in mercy didst thou form,
 Teachers of Good through Evil, by brief wrong
 Making Truth lovely, and her future might
 Magnetic o'er the fixed untrembling heart.

In the primeval age a dateless while
 The vacant Shepherd wander'd with his flock,
 Pitching his tent where'er the green grass waved.
 But soon Imagination conjured up
 An host of new desires: with busy aim,
 Each for himself, Earth's eager children toiled.
 So Property began, twy-streaming fount,
 Whence Vice and Virtue flow, honey and gall.
 Hence the soft couch, and many-coloured robe,
 The timbrel, and arched dome and costly feast,
 With all the inventive arts, that nursed the soul
 To forms of beauty, and by sensual wants
 Unsensualised the mind, which in the means
 Learnt to forget the grossness of the end,
 Best pleased with its own activity.
 And hence Disease that withers manhood's arm,
 The daggered Envy, spirit-quenching Want,
 Warriors, and Lords, and Priests — all the sore ills

That vex and desolate our mortal life.
Wide-wasting ills! yet each the immediate source
Of mightier good. Their keen necessities
To ceaseless action goading human thought
Have made Earth's reasoning animal her Lord;
And the pale-featured Sage's trembling hand
Strong as an host of arméd Deities,
Such as the blind Ionian fabled erst.

From Avarice thus, from Luxury and War
Sprang heavenly Science; and from Science Freedom.
O'er waken'd realms Philosophers and Bards
Spread in concentric circles: they whose souls,
Conscious of their high dignities from God,
Brook not Wealth's rivalry! and they, who long
Enamoured with the charms of order, hate
The unseemly disproportion: and who'er
Turn with mild sorrow from the Victor's car
And the low puppetry of thrones, to muse
On that blest triumph, when the Patriot Sage
Called the red lightnings from the o'er-rushing cloud
And dashed the beauteous terrors on the earth
Smiling majestic. Such a phalanx ne'er
Measured firm paces to the calming sound
Of Spartan flute! These on the fated day,
When, stung to rage by Pity, eloquent men
Have roused with pealing voice the unnumbered tribes
That toil and groan and bleed, hungry and blind —
These, hush'd awhile with patient eye serene,
Shall watch the mad careering of the storm;
Then o'er the wild and wavy chaos rush
And tame the outrageous mass, with plastic might
Moulding Confusion to such perfect forms,
As erst were wont, — bright visions of the day! —
To float before them, when, the summer noon,
Beneath some arched romantic rock reclined
They felt the sea-breeze lift their youthful locks;
Or in the month of blossoms, at mild eve,
Wandering with desultory feet inhaled
The wafted perfumes, and the flocks and woods
And many-tinted streams and setting sun
With all his gorgeous company of clouds
Ecstatic gazed! then homeward as they strayed
Cast the sad eye to earth, and inly mused
Why there was misery in a world so fair.

Ah! far removed from all that glads the sense,
 From all that softens or ennobles Man,
 The wretched Many! Bent beneath their loads
 They gape at pageant Power, nor recognise
 Their cots' transmuted plunder! From the tree
 Of Knowledge, ere the vernal sap had risen
 Rudely disbranchéd! Blessed Society!
 Fitliest depicted by some sun-scorched waste,
 Where oft majestic through the tainted noon
 The Simoom sails, before whose purple pomp
 Who falls not prostrate dies! And where by night,
 Fast by each precious fountain on green herbs
 The lion couches: or hyaena dips
 Deep in the lucid stream his bloody jaws;
 Or serpent plants his vast moon-glittering bulk,
 Caught in whose monstrous twine Behemoth yells,
 His bones loud-crashing!

O ye numberless,
 Whom foul Oppression's ruffian gluttony
 Drives from Life's plenteous feast! O thou poor Wretch
 Who nursed in darkness and made wild by want,
 Roamest for prey, yea thy unnatural hand
 Dost lift to deeds of blood! O pale-eyed form,
 The victim of seduction, doomed to know
 Polluted nights and days of blasphemy;
 Who in loathed orgies with lewd wassailers
 Must gaily laugh, while thy remembered Home
 Gnaws like a viper at thy secret heart!
 O agéd Women! ye who weekly catch
 The morsel tossed by law-forced charity,
 And die so slowly, that none call it murder!
 O loathly suppliants! ye, that unreceived
 Totter heart-broken from the closing gates
 Of the full Lazar-house; or, gazing, stand,
 Sick with despair! O ye to Glory's field
 Forced or ensnared, who, as ye gasp in death,
 Bleed with new wounds beneath the vulture's beak!
 O thou poor widow, who in dreams dost view
 Thy husband's mangled corse, and from short doze
 Start'st with a shriek; or in thy half-thatched cot
 Waked by the wintry night-storm, wet and cold
 Cow'rst o'er thy screaming baby! Rest awhile
 Children of Wretchedness! More groans must rise,
 More blood must stream, or ere your wrongs be full.
 Yet is the day of Retribution nigh:
 The Lamb of God hath opened the fifth seal:

And upward rush on swiftest wing of fire
 The innumerable multitude of wrongs
 By man on man inflicted! Rest awhile,
 Children of Wretchedness! The hour is nigh
 And lo! the Great, the Rich, the Mighty Men,
 The Kings and the Chief Captains of the World,
 With all that fixed on high like stars of Heaven
 Shot baleful influence, shall be cast to earth,
 Vile and down-trodden, as the untimely fruit
 Shook from the fig-tree by a sudden storm.
 Even now the storm begins: each gentle name.
 Faith and meek Piety, with fearful joy
 Tremble far-off — for lo! the Giant Frenzy
 Uprooting empires with his whirlwind arm
 Mocketh high Heaven; burst hideous from the cell
 Where the old Hag, unconquerable, huge,
 Creation's eyeless drudge, black Ruin, sits
 Nursing the impatient earthquake.

O return!

Pure Faith! meek Piety! The abhorred Form
 Whose scarlet robe was stiff with earthly pomp,
 Who drank iniquity in cups of gold,
 Whose names were many and all blasphemous,
 Hath met the horrible judgment! Whence that cry?
 The mighty army of foul Spirits shrieked
 Dishherited of earth! For she hath fallen
 On whose black front was written Mystery;
 She that reeled heavily, whose wine was blood;
 She that worked whoredom with the Daemon Power,
 And from the dark embrace all evil things
 Brought forth and nurtured: mitred Atheism!
 And patient Folly who on bended knee
 Gives back the steel that stabbed him; and pale Fear
 Haunted by ghastlier shapings than surround
 Moon-blasted Madness when he yells at midnight!
 Return pure Faith! return meek Piety!
 The kingdoms of the world are your's: each heart
 Self-governed, the vast family of Love
 Raised from the common earth by common toil
 Enjoy the equal produce. Such delights
 As float to earth, permitted visitants!
 When in some hour of solemn jubilee
 The massy gates of Paradise are thrown
 Wide open, and forth come in fragments wild
 Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
 And odours snatched from beds of Amaranth,

And they, that from the crystal river of life
Spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales!
The favoured good man in his lonely walk
Perceives them, and his silent spirit drinks
Strange bliss which he shall recognise in heaven.
And such delights, such strange beatitudes
Seize on my young anticipating heart
When that blest future rushes on my view!
For in his own and in his Father's might
The Saviour comes! While as the Thousand Years
Lead up their mystic dance, the Desert shouts!
Old Ocean claps his hands! The mighty Dead
Rise to new life, who'er from earliest time
With conscious zeal had urged Love's wondrous plan,
Coadjutors of God. To Milton's trump
The high groves of the renovated Earth
Unbosom their glad echoes: inly hushed,
Adoring Newton his serener eye
Raises to heaven: and he of mortal kind
Wisest, he first who marked the ideal tribes
Up the fine fibres through the sentient brain.
Lo! Priestley there, patriot, and saint, and sage,
Him, full of years, from his loved native land
Statesmen blood-stained and priests idolatrous
By dark lies maddening the blind multitude
Drove with vain hate. Calm, pitying he retired,
And mused expectant on these promised years.

O Years! the blest pre-eminence of Saints!
Ye sweep athwart my gaze, so heavenly bright,
The wings that veil the adoring Seraphs' eyes,
What time they bend before the Jasper Throne
Reflect no lovelier hues! Yet ye depart,
And all beyond is darkness! Heights most strange,
Whence Fancy falls, fluttering her idle wing.
For who of woman born may paint the hour,
When seized in his mid course, the Sun shall wane
Making noon ghastly! Who of woman born
May image in the workings of his thought,
How the black-visaged, red-eyed Fiend outstretched
Beneath the unsteady feet of Nature groans,
In feverous slumbers — destined then to wake,
When fiery whirlwinds thunder his dread name
And Angels shout, Destruction! How his arm
The last great Spirit lifting high in air
Shall swear by Him, the ever-living One,
Time is no more!

Believe thou, O my soul,
Life is a vision shadowy of Truth;
And vice, and anguish, and the wormy grave,
Shapes of a dream! The veiling clouds retire,
And lo! the Throne of the redeeming God
Forth flashing unimagined day
Wraps in one blaze earth, heaven, and deepest hell.

Contemplant Spirits! ye that hover o'er
With untired gaze the immeasurable fount
Ebullient with creative Deity!
And ye of plastic power, that interfused
Roll through the grosser and material mass
In organizing surge! Holies of God!
(And what if Monads of the infinite mind?)
I haply journeying my immortal course
Shall sometime join your mystic choir! Till then
I discipline my young and novice thought
In ministeries of heart-stirring song,
And aye on Meditation's heaven-ward wing
Soaring aloft I breathe the empyreal air
Of Love, omnific, omnipresent Love,
Whose day-spring rises glorious in my soul
As the great Sun, when he his influence
Sheds on the frost-bound waters — The glad stream
Flows to the ray and warbles as it flows.

Monody on the Death of Chatterton

1790-1834

O what a wonder seems the fear of death,
 Seeing how gladly we all sink to sleep,
 Babes, Children, Youths, and Men,
 Night following night for threescore years and ten!
 But doubly strange, where life is but a breath
 To sigh and pant with, up Want's rugged steep.

Away, Grim Phantom! Scorpion King, away!
 Reserve thy terrors and thy stings display
 For coward Wealth and Guilt in robes of State!
 Lo! by the grave I stand of one, for whom
 A prodigal Nature and a niggard Doom
 (*That* all bestowing, *this* withholding all)
 Made each chance knell from distant spire or dome
 Sound like a seeking Mother's anxious call,
 Return, poor Child! Home, weary Truant, home!

Thee, Chatterton! these unblest stones protect
 From want, and the bleak freezings of neglect.
 Too long before the vexing Storm-blast driven
 Here hast thou found repose! beneath this sod!
 Thou! O vain word! *thou* dwell'st not with the clod!
 Amid the shining Host of the Forgiven
 Thou at the throne of mercy and thy God
 The triumph of redeeming Love dost hymn
 (Believe it, O my Soul!) to harps of Seraphim.

Yet oft, perforce ('tis suffering Nature's call),
 I weep that heaven-born Genius *so* should fall;
 And oft, in Fancy's saddest hour, my soul
 Averted shudders at the poison'd bowl.
 Now groans my sickening heart, as still I view
 Thy corse of livid hue;
 Now Indignation checks the feeble sigh,
 Or flashes through the tear that glistens in mine eye!

Is this the land of song-ennobled line?
 Is this the land, where Genius ne'er in vain
 Pour'd forth his lofty strain?
 Ah me! yet Spenser, gentlest bard divine,
 Beneath chill Disappointment's shade,
 His weary limbs in lonely anguish lay'd.

And o'er her darling dead
 Pity hopeless hung her head,
 While "mid the pelting of that merciless storm,"
 Sunk to the cold earth Otway's famish'd form!

Sublime of thought, and confident of fame,
 From vales where Avon winds the Minstrel came.
 Light-hearted youth! aye, as he hastes along,
 He meditates the future song,
 How dauntless ælla fray'd the Dacyan foe;
 And while the numbers flowing strong
 In eddies whirl, in surges throng,
 Exulting in the spirits' genial throe
 In tides of power his life-blood seems to flow.

And now his cheeks with deeper ardors flame,
 His eyes have glorious meanings, that declare
 More than the light of outward day shines there,
 A holier triumph and a sterner aim!
 Wings grow within him; and he soars above
 Or Bard's or Minstrel's lay of war or love.
 Friend to the friendless, to the sufferer health,
 He hears the widow's prayer, the good man's praise;
 To scenes of bliss transmutes his fancied wealth,
 And young and old shall now see happy days.
 On many a waste he bids trim gardens rise,
 Gives the blue sky to many a prisoner's eyes;
 And now in wrath he grasps the patriot steel,
 And her own iron rod he makes Oppression feel.
 Sweet Flower of Hope! free Nature's genial child!
 That didst so fair disclose thy early bloom,
 Filling the wide air with a rich perfume!
 For thee in vain all heavenly aspects smil'd;
 From the hard world brief respite could they win —
 The frost nipp'd sharp without, the canker prey'd within!
 Ah! where are fled the charms of vernal Grace,
 And Joy's wild gleams that lighten'd o'er thy face?
 Youth of tumultuous soul, and haggard eye!
 Thy wasted form, thy hurried steps I view,
 On thy wan forehead starts the lethal dew,
 And oh! the anguish of that shuddering sigh!

Such were the struggles of the gloomy hour,
 When Care, of wither'd brow,
 Prepar'd the poison's death-cold power:
 Already to thy lips was rais'd the bowl,
 When near thee stood Affection meek

(Her bosom bare, and wildly pale her cheek)
 Thy sullen gaze she bade thee roll
 On scenes that well might melt thy soul;
 Thy native cot she flash'd upon thy view,
 Thy native cot, where still, at close of day,
 Peace smiling sate, and listen'd to thy lay;
 Thy Sister's shrieks she bade thee hear,
 And mark thy Mother's thrilling tear;
 See, see her breast's convulsive throes,
 Her silent agony of woe!
 Ah! dash the poison'd chalice from thy hand!

And thou hadst dashed it, at her soft command,
 But that Despair and Indignation rose,
 And told again the story of thy woes;
 Told the keen insult of the unfeeling heart,
 The dread dependence on the low-born mind;
 Told every pang, with which thy soul must smart,
 Neglect, and grinning Scorn, and Want combined!
 Recoiling quick, thou badest the friend of pain
 Roll the black tide of Death through every freezing vein!

O spirit blest!
 Whether the Eternal's throne around,
 Amidst the blaze of Seraphim,
 Thou pourest forth the grateful hymn,
 Or soaring thro' the blest domain
 Enrapturest Angels with thy strain, —
 Grant me, like thee, the lyre to sound,
 Like thee with fire divine to glow; —
 But ah! when rage the waves of woe,
 Grant me with firmer breast to meet their hate,
 And soar beyond the storm with upright eye elate!

Ye woods! that wave o'er Avon's rocky steep,
 To Fancy's ear sweet is your murmuring deep!
 For here she loves the cypress wreath to weave;
 Watching with wistful eye, the saddening tints of eve.
 Here, far from men, amid this pathless grove,
 In solemn thought the Minstrel wont to rove,
 Like star-beam on the slow sequester'd tide
 Lone-glittering, through the high tree branching wide.

And here, in Inspiration's eager hour,
 When most the big soul feels the mastering power,
 These wilds, these caverns roaming o'er,
 Round which the screaming sea-gulls soar,

With wild unequal steps he pass'd along,
 Oft pouring on the winds a broken song:
 Anon, upon some rough rock's fearful brow
 Would pause abrupt — and gaze upon the waves below.

Poor Chatterton! *he* sorrows for thy fate
 Who would have prais'd and lov'd thee, ere too late.
 Poor Chatterton! farewell! of darkest hues
 This chaplet cast I on thy unshaped tomb;
 But dare no longer on the sad theme muse,
 Lest kindred woes persuade a kindred doom:
 For oh! big gall-drops, shook from Folly's wing,
 Have blacken'd the fair promise of my spring;
 And the stern Fate transpierc'd with viewless dart
 The last pale Hope that shiver'd at my heart!

Hence, gloomy thoughts! no more my soul shall dwell
 On joys that were! no more endure to weigh
 The shame and anguish of the evil day,
 Wisely forgetful! O'er the ocean swell
 Sublime of Hope I seek the cottag'd dell
 Where Virtue calm with careless step may stray;
 And, dancing to the moon-light roundelay,
 The wizard Passions weave an holy spell!

O Chatterton! that thou wert yet alive!
 Sure thou would'st spread the canvass to the gale,
 And love with us the tinkling team to drive
 O'er peaceful Freedom's undivided dale;
 And we, at sober eve, would round thee throng,
 Would hang, enraptur'd, on thy stately song,
 And greet with smiles the young-eyed Poesy
 All deftly mask'd as hoar Antiquity.

Alas, vain Phantasies! the fleeting brood
 Of Woe self-solac'd in her dreamy mood!
 Yet will I love to follow the sweet dream,
 Where Susquehannah pours his untamed stream;
 And on some hill, whose forest-frowning side
 Waves o'er the murmurs of his calmer tide,
 Will raise a solemn Cenotaph to thee,
 Sweet Harper of time-shrouded Minstrelsy!
 And there, sooth'd sadly by the dirgeful wind,
 Muse on the sore ills I had left behind.

The Destiny of Nations. A Vision

1796

Auspicious Reverence! Hush all meaner song,
 Ere we the deep preluding strain have poured
 To the Great Father, only Rightful King,
 Eternal Father! King Omnipotent!
 To the Will Absolute, the One, the Good!
 The I AM, the Word, the Life, the Living God!
 Such symphony requires best instrument.
 Seize, then, my soul! from Freedom's trophied dome
 The Harp which hangeth high between the Shields
 Of Brutus and Leonidas! With that
 Strong music, that soliciting spell, force back
 Man's free and stirring spirit that lies entranced.
 For what is Freedom, but the unfettered use
 Of all the powers which God for use had given?
 But chiefly this, him First, him Last to view
 Through meaner powers and secondary things
 Effulgent, as through clouds that veil his blaze.
 For all that meets the bodily sense I deem
 Symbolical, one mighty alphabet
 For infant minds; and we in this low world
 Placed with our backs to bright Reality,
 That we may learn with young unwounded ken
 The substance from its shadow. Infinite Love,
 Whose latence is the plenitude of All,
 Thou with retracted beams, and self-eclipse
 Veiling, revealest thine eternal Sun.

But some there are who deem themselves most free
 When they within this gross and visible sphere
 Chain down the wingéd thought, scoffing ascent,
 Proud in their meanness: and themselves they cheat
 With noisy emptiness of learned phrase,
 Their subtle fluids, impacts, essences,
 Self-working tools, uncaused effects, and all
 Those blind Omniscients, those Almighty Slaves,
 Untenanting creation of its God.

But Properties are God: the naked mass
 (If mass there be, fantastic guess or ghost)
 Acts only by its inactivity.
 Here we pause humbly. Others boldlier think
 That as one body seems the aggregate

Of atoms numberless, each organized;
 So by a strange and dim similitude
 Infinite myriads of self-conscious minds
 Are one all-conscious Spirit, which informs
 With absolute ubiquity of thought
 (His one eternal self-affirming act!)
 All his involv'd Monads, that yet seem
 With various province and apt agency
 Each to pursue its own self-centering end.
 Some nurse the infant diamond in the mine;
 Some roll the genial juices through the oak;
 Some drive the mutinous clouds to clash in air,
 And rushing on the storm with whirlwind speed,
 Yoke the red lightnings to their volleying car.
 Thus these pursue their never-varying course,
 No eddy in their stream. Others, more wild,
 With complex interests weaving human fates,
 Duteous or proud, alike obedient all,
 Evolve the process of eternal good.

And what if some rebellious, o'er dark realms
 Arrogate power? yet these train up to God,
 And on the rude eye, unconfirmed for day,
 Flash meteor-lights better than total gloom.
 As ere from Lieule-Oaive's vapoury head
 The Laplander beholds the far-off Sun
 Dart his slant beam on unobeying snows,
 While yet the stern and solitary Night
 Brooks no alternate sway, the Boreal Morn
 With mimic lustre substitutes its gleam,
 Guiding his course or by Niemi lake
 Or Balda Zhiok, or the mossy stone
 Of Solfar-kapper, while the snowy blast
 Drifts arrowy by, or eddies round his sledge,
 Making the poor babe at its mother's back
 Scream in its scanty cradle: he the while
 Wins gentle solace as with upward eye
 He marks the streamy banners of the North,
 Thinking himself those happy spirits shall join
 Who there in floating robes of rosy light
 Dance sportively. For Fancy is the power
 That first unsensualises the dark mind,
 Giving it new delights; and bids it swell
 With wild activity; and peopling air,
 By obscure fears of Beings invisible,
 Emancipates it from the grosser thrall
 Of the present impulse, teaching Self-control,

Till Superstition with unconscious hand
Seat Reason on her throne. Wherefore not vain,
Nor yet without permitted power impressed,
I deem those legends terrible, with which
The polar ancient thrills his uncouth throng:
Whether of pitying Spirits that make their moan
O'er slaughter'd infants, or that Giant Bird
Vuokho, of whose rushing wings the noise
Is Tempest, when the unutterable Shape
Speeds from the mother of Death, and utters once
That shriek, which never murderer heard, and lived.

Or if the Greenland Wizard in strange trance
Pierces the untravelled realms of Ocean's bed
Over the abysm, even to that uttermost cave
By mis-shaped prodigies beleaguered, such
As Earth ne'er bred, nor Air, nor the upper Sea:
Where dwells the Fury Form, whose unheard name
With eager eye, pale cheek, suspended breath,
And lips half-opening with the dread of sound,
Unsleeping Silence guards, worn out with fear
Lest haply 'scaping on some treacherous blast
The fateful word let slip the Elements
And frenzy Nature. Yet the wizard her,
Arm'd with Torngarsuck's power, the Spirit of Good,
Forces to unchain the foodful progeny
Of the Ocean stream; — thence thro' the realm of Souls,
Where live the Innocent, as far from cares
As from the storms and overwhelming waves
That tumble on the surface of the Deep,
Returns with far-heard pant, hotly pursued
By the fierce Warders of the Sea, once more,
Ere by the frost foreclosed, to repossess
His fleshly mansion, that had staid the while
In the dark tent within a cow'ring group
Untenanted. — Wild phantasies! yet wise,
On the victorious goodness of high God
Teaching reliance, and medicinal hope,
Till from Bethabra northward, heavenly Truth
With gradual steps, winning her difficult way,
Transfer their rude Faith perfected and pure.

If there be Beings of higher class than Man,
I deem no nobler province they possess,
Than by disposal of apt circumstance
To rear up kingdoms: and the deeds they prompt,
Distinguishing from mortal agency,

They choose their human ministers from such states
 As still the Epic song half fears to name,
 Repelled from all the minstrelsies that strike
 The palace-roof and soothe the monarch's pride.
 And such, perhaps, the Spirit, who (if words
 Witnessed by answering deeds may claim our faith)
 Held commune with that warrior-maid of France
 Who scourged the Invader. From her infant days,
 With Wisdom, mother of retired thoughts,
 Her soul had dwelt; and she was quick to mark
 The good and evil thing, in human lore
 Undisciplined. For lowly was her birth,
 And Heaven had doomed her early years to toil
 That pure from Tyranny's least deed, herself
 Unfeared by Fellow-natures, she might wait
 On the poor labouring man with kindly looks,
 And minister refreshment to the tired
 Way-wanderer, when along the rough-hewn bench
 The sweltry man had stretched him, and aloft
 Vacantly watched the rudely-pictured board
 Which on the Mulberry-bough with welcome creak
 Swung to the pleasant breeze. Here, too, the Maid
 Learnt more than Schools could teach: Man's shifting mind,
 His vices and his sorrows! And full oft
 At tales of cruel wrong and strange distress
 Had wept and shivered. To the tottering Eld
 Still as a daughter would she run: she placed
 His cold limbs at the sunny door, and loved
 To hear him story, in his garrulous sort,
 Of his eventful years, all come and gone.

So twenty seasons past. The Virgin's form,
 Active and tall, nor Sloth nor Luxury
 Had shrunk or paled. Her front sublime and broad,
 Her flexile eye-brows wildly haired and low,
 And her full eye, now bright, now unillumed,
 Spake more than Woman's thought; and all her face
 Was moulded to such features as declared
 That Pity there had oft and strongly worked,
 And sometimes Indignation. Bold her mien,
 And like an haughty huntress of the woods
 She moved: yet sure she was a gentle maid!
 And in each motion her most innocent soul
 Beamed forth so brightly, that who saw would say
 Guilt was a thing impossible in her!
 Nor idly would have said — for she had lived
 In this bad World, as in a place of Tombs,

And touched not the pollutions of the Dead.

'Twas the cold season when the Rustic's eye
 From the drear desolate whiteness of his fields
 Rolls for relief to watch the skiey tints
 And clouds slow-varying their huge imagery;
 When now, as she was wont, the healthful Maid
 Had left her pallet ere one beam of day
 Slanted the fog-smoke. She went forth alone
 Urged by the indwelling angel-guide, that oft,
 With dim inexplicable sympathies
 Disquieting the heart, shapes out Man's course
 To the predoomed adventure. Now the ascent
 She climbs of that steep upland, on whose top
 The Pilgrim-man, who long since eve had watched
 The alien shine of unconcerning stars,
 Shouts to himself, there first the Abbey-lights
 Seen in Neufchâtel's vale; now slopes adown
 The winding sheep-track vale-ward: when, behold
 In the first entrance of the level road
 An unattended team! The foremost horse
 Lay with stretched limbs; the others, yet alive
 But stiff and cold, stood motionless, their manes
 Hoar with the frozen night-dews. Dismally
 The dark-red dawn now glimmered; but its gleams
 Disclosed no face of man. The maiden paused,
 Then hailed who might be near. No voice replied.
 From the thwart wain at length there reached her ear
 A sound so feeble that it almost seemed
 Distant: and feebly, with slow effort pushed,
 A miserable man crept forth: his limbs
 The silent frost had eat, scathing like fire.
 Faint on the shafts he rested. She, meantime,
 Saw crowded close beneath the coverture
 A mother and her children — lifeless all,
 Yet lovely! not a lineament was marred —
 Death had put on so slumber-like a form!
 It was a piteous sight; and one, a babe,
 The crisp milk frozen on its innocent lips,
 Lay on the woman's arm, its little hand
 Stretched on her bosom.

Mutely questioning,
 The Maid gazed wildly at the living wretch.
 He, his head feebly turning, on the group
 Looked with a vacant stare, and his eye spoke
 The drowsy calm that steals on worn-out anguish.

She shuddered; but, each vainer pang subdued,
Quick disentangling from the foremost horse
The rustic bands, with difficulty and toil
The stiff cramped team forced homeward. There arrived,
Anxiously tends him she with healing herbs,
And weeps and prays — but the numb power of Death
Spreads o'er his limbs; and ere the noon-tide hour,
The hovering spirits of his Wife and Babes
Hail him immortal! Yet amid his pangs,
With interruptions long from ghastly throes,
His voice had faltered out this simple tale.

The Village, where he dwelt an husbandman,
By sudden inroad had been seized and fired
Late on the yester-evening. With his wife
And little ones he hurried his escape.
They saw the neighbouring hamlets flame, they heard
Uproar and shrieks! and terror-struck drove on
Through unfrequented roads, a weary way!
But saw nor house nor cottage. All had quenched
Their evening hearth-fire: for the alarm had spread.
The air clipt keen, the night was fanged with frost,
And they provisionless! The weeping wife
Ill hushed her children's moans; and still they moaned,
Till Fright and Cold and Hunger drank their life.
They closed their eyes in sleep, nor knew 'twas Death.
He only, lashing his o'er-wearied team,
Gained a sad respite, till beside the base
Of the high hill his foremost horse dropped dead.
Then hopeless, strengthless, sick for lack of food,
He crept beneath the coverture, entranced,
Till wakened by the maiden. — Such his tale.

Ah! suffering to the height of what was suffered,
Stung with too keen a sympathy, the Maid
Brooded with moving lips, mute, startful, dark!
And now her flushed tumultuous features shot
Such strange vivacity, as fires the eye
Of Misery fancy-crazed! and now once more
Naked, and void, and fixed, and all within
The unquiet silence of confuséd thought
And shapeless feelings. For a mighty hand
Was strong upon her, till in the heat of soul
To the high hill-top tracing back her steps,
Aside the beacon, up whose smouldered stones
The tender ivy-trails crept thinly, there,
Unconscious of the driving element,

Yea, swallowed up in the ominous dream, she sate
 Ghastly as broad-eyed Slumber! a dim anguish
 Breathed from her look! and still with pant and sob,
 Inly she toiled to flee, and still subdued,
 Felt an inevitable Presence near.

Thus as she toiled in troublous ecstasy,
 A horror of great darkness wrapt her round,
 And a voice uttered forth unearthly tones,
 Calming her soul, — ‘O Thou of the Most High
 Chosen, whom all the perfected in Heaven
 Behold expectant — ’

[The following fragments were intended to form part of the poem when finished.]

‘Maid beloved of Heaven!

(To her the tutelary Power exclaimed)
 Of Chaos the adventurous progeny
 Thou seest; foul missionaries of foul sire,
 Fierce to regain the losses of that hour
 When Love rose glittering, and his gorgeous wings
 Over the abyss fluttered with such glad noise,
 As what time after long and pestful calms,
 With slimy shapes and miscreated life
 Poisoning the vast Pacific, the fresh breeze
 Wakens the merchant-sail uprising. Night
 An heavy unimagined moan
 Sent forth, when she the Protoplast beheld
 Stand beauteous on Confusion’s charméd wave.
 Moaning she fled, and entered the Profound
 That leads with downward windings to the Cave
 Of Darkness palpable, Desert of Death
 Sunk deep beneath Gehenna’s massy roots.
 There many a dateless age the Beldame lurked
 And trembled; till engendered by fierce Hate,
 Fierce Hate and gloomy Hope, a Dream arose,
 Shaped like a black cloud marked with streaks of fire.
 It roused the Hell-Hag: she the dew-damp wiped
 From off her brow, and through the uncouth maze
 Retraced her steps; but ere she reached the mouth
 Of that drear labyrinth, shuddering she paused,
 Nor dared re-enter the diminished Gulph.
 As through the dark vaults of some mouldered Tower
 (Which, fearful to approach, the evening hind
 Circles at distance in his homeward way)
 The winds breathe hollow, deemed the plaining groan
 Of prisoned spirits; with such fearful voice

Night murmured, and the sound through Chaos went.
 Leaped at her call her hideous-fronted brood!
 A dark behest they heard, and rushed on earth;
 Since that sad hour, in Camps and Courts adored,
 Rebels from God, and Tyrants o'er Mankind!"

From his obscure haunt
 Shrieked Fear, of Cruelty the ghastly Dam,
 Feverous yet freezing, eager-paced yet slow,
 As she that creeps from forth her swampy reeds,
 Ague, the biform Hag! when early Spring
 Beams on the marsh-bred vapours.

"Even so (the exulting Maiden said)
 The sainted Heralds of Good Tidings fell,
 And thus they witnessed God! But now the clouds
 Treading, and storms beneath their feet, they soar
 Higher, and higher soar, and soaring sing
 Loud songs of triumph! O ye Spirits of God,
 Hover around my mortal agonies!"
 She spake, and instantly faint melody
 Melts on her ear, soothing and sad, and slow,
 Such measures, as at calmest midnight heard
 By aged Hermit in his holy dream,
 Foretell and solace death; and now they rise
 Louder, as when with harp and mingled voice
 The white-robed multitude of slaughtered saints
 At Heaven's wide-open'd portals grateful
 Receive some martyred patriot. The harmony
 Entranced the Maid, till each suspended sense
 Brief slumber seized, and confused ecstasy.

At length awakening slow, she gazed around:
 And through a mist, the relict of that trance
 Still thinning as she gazed, an Isle appeared,
 Its high, o'er-hanging, white, broad-breasted cliffs,
 Glassed on the subject ocean. A vast plain
 Stretched opposite, where ever and anon
 The plough-man following sad his meagre team
 Turned up fresh skulls unstartled, and the bones
 Of fierce hate-breathing combatants, who there
 All mingled lay beneath the common earth,
 Death's gloomy reconciliation! O'er the fields
 Stept a fair Form, repairing all she might,
 Her temples olive-wreathed; and where she trod,
 Fresh flowerets rose, and many a foodful herb.
 But wan her cheek, her footsteps insecure,

And anxious pleasure beamed in her faint eye,
 As she had newly left a couch of pain,
 Pale Convalescent! (Yet some time to rule
 With power exclusive o'er the willing world,
 That blessed prophetic mandate then fulfilled —
 Peace be on Earth!) An happy while, but brief,
 She seemed to wander with assiduous feet,
 And healed the recent harm of chill and blight,
 And nursed each plant that fair and virtuous grew.

But soon a deep precursive sound moaned hollow:
 Black rose the clouds, and now, (as in a dream)
 Their reddening shapes, transformed to Warrior-hosts,
 Coursed o'er the sky, and battled in mid-air.
 Nor did not the large blood-drops fall from Heaven
 Portentous! while aloft were seen to float,
 Like hideous features looming on the mist,
 Wan stains of ominous light! Resigned, yet sad,
 The fair Form bowed her olive-crownéd brow,
 Then o'er the plain with oft-reverted eye
 Fled till a place of Tombs she reached, and there
 Within a ruined Sepulchre obscure
 Found hiding-place.

The delegated Maid

Gazed through her tears, then in sad tones exclaimed; —
 “Thou mild-eyed Form! wherefore, ah! wherefore fled?
 The Power of Justice like a name all light,
 Shone from thy brow; but all they, who unblamed
 Dwelt in thy dwellings, call thee Happiness.
 Ah! why, uninjured and unprofited,
 Should multitudes against their brethren rush?
 Why sow they guilt, still reaping misery?
 Lenient of care, thy songs, O Peace! are sweet,
 As after showers the perfumed gale of eve,
 That flings the cool drops on a feverous cheek;
 And gay thy grassy altar piled with fruits.
 But boasts the shrine of Dæmon War one charm,
 Save that with many an orgie strange and foul,
 Dancing around with interwoven arms,
 The Maniac Suicide and Giant Murder
 Exult in their fierce union! I am sad,
 And know not why the simple peasants crowd
 Beneath the Chieftains' standard!” Thus the Maid.

To her the tutelary Spirit said:
 “When Luxury and Lust’s exhausted stores
 No more can rouse the appetites of kings;
 When the low flattery of their reptile lords
 Falls flat and heavy on the accustomed ear;
 When eunuchs sing, and fools buffoonery make,
 And dancers writhe their harlot-limbs in vain;
 Then War and all its dread vicissitudes
 Pleasingly agitate their stagnant hearts;
 Its hopes, its fears, its victories, its defeats,
 Insipid Royalty’s keen condiment!
Therefore uninjured and unprofited
 (Victims at once and executioners),
 The congregated Husbandmen lay waste
 The vineyard and the harvest. As along
 The Bothnic coast, or southward of the Line,
 Though hushed the winds and cloudless the high noon,
 Yet if Leviathan, weary of ease,
 In sports unwieldy toss his island-bulk,
 Ocean behind him billows, and before
 A storm of waves breaks foamy on the strand.
 And hence, for times and seasons bloody and dark,
 Short Peace shall skin the wounds of causeless War,
 And War, his strained sinews knit anew,
 Still violate the unfinished works of Peace.
 But yonder look! for more demands thy view!”
 He said: and straightway from the opposite Isle
 A vapour sailed, as when a cloud, exhaled
 From Egypt’s fields that steam hot pestilence,
 Travels the sky for many a trackless league,
 Till o’er some death-doomed land, distant in vain,
 It broods incumbent. Forthwith from the plain,
 Facing the Isle, a brighter cloud arose,
 And steered its course which way the vapour went.

The Maiden paused, musing what this might mean.
 But long time passed not, ere that brighter cloud
 Returned more bright; along the plain it swept;
 And soon from forth its bursting sides emerged
 A dazzling form, broad-bosomed, bold of eye,
 And wild her hair, save where with laurels bound.
 Not more majestic stood the healing God,
 When from his bow the arrow sped that slew
 Huge Python. Shriek’d Ambition’s giant throng,
 And with them hissed the locust-fiends that crawled
 And glittered in Corruption’s slimy track.
 Great was their wrath, for short they knew their reign;

And such commotion made they, and uproar,
 As when the mad Tornado bellows through
 The guilty islands of the western main,
 What time departing from their native shores,
 Eboe, or Koromantyn's plain of palms,
 The infuriate spirits of the murdered make
 Fierce merriment, and vengeance ask of Heaven.
 Warmed with new influence, the unwholesome plain
 Sent up its foulest fogs to meet the morn:
 The Sun that rose on Freedom, rose in Blood!

“Maiden beloved, and Delegate of Heaven!
 (To her the tutelary Spirit said)
 Soon shall the Morning struggle into Day,
 The stormy Morning into cloudless Noon.
 Much hast thou seen, nor all canst understand —
 But this be thy best omen — Save thy Country!”
 Thus saying, from the answering Maid he passed,
 And with him disappeared the heavenly Vision.

“Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven!
 All-conscious Presence of the Universe!
 Nature's vast ever-acting Energy!
 In will, in deed, Impulse of All to All!
 Whether thy Love with unrefracted ray
 Beam on the Prophet's purgéd eye, or if
 Diseasing realms the Enthusiast, wild of thought,
 Scatter new frenzies on the infected throng,
 Thou both inspiring and predooming both,
 Fit instruments and best, of perfect end:
 Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven!”

And first a landscape rose
 More wild and waste and desolate than where
 The white bear, drifting on a field of ice,
 Howls to her sundered cubs with piteous rage
 And savage agony.

Ver Perpetuum

1796

[Fragment from an Unpublished Poem]

The early Year's fast-flying vapours stray
In shadowing trains across the orb of day:
And we, poor Insects of a few short hours,
Deem it a world of Gloom.
Were it not better hope a nobler doom,
Proud to believe that with more active powers
On rapid many-coloured wing
We thro' one bright perpetual Spring
Shall hover round the fruits and flowers,
Screen'd by those clouds and cherish'd by those showers!

On Observing a Blossom on the First of February 1796

1796

Sweet flower! that peeping from thy russet stem
Unfoldest timidly, (for in strange sort
This dark, frieze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering month
Hath borrow'd Zephyr's voice, and gazed upon thee
With blue voluptuous eye) alas, poor Flower!
These are but flatteries of the faithless year.
Perchance, escaped its unknown polar cave,
Even now the keen North-East is on its way.
Flower that must perish! shall I liken thee
To some sweet girl of too too rapid growth
Nipp'd by consumption mid untimely charms?
Or to Bristowa's bard, the wondrous boy!
An amaranth, which earth scarce seem'd to own,
Till disappointment came, and pelting wrong
Beat it to earth? or with indignant grief
Shall I compare thee to poor Poland's hope,
Bright flower of hope killed in the opening bud?
Farewell, sweet blossom! better fate be thine
And mock my boding! Dim similitudes
Weaving in moral strains, I've stolen one hour
From anxious Self, Life's cruel taskmaster!
And the warm wooings of this sunny day
Tremble along my frame and harmonize
The attemper'd organ, that even saddest thoughts
Mix with some sweet sensations, like harsh tunes
Played deftly on a soft-toned instrument.

To a Primrose. The First seen in the Season

1796

Nitens et roboris expers
Turget et insolida est: et spe delectat

Metam. Ovid, [xv.203]

Thy smiles I note, sweet early Flower,
That peeping from thy rustic bower
The festive news to earth dost bring,
A fragrant messenger of Spring.

But, tender blossom, why so pale?
Dost hear stern Winter in the gale?
And didst thou tempt the ungentle sky
To catch one vernal glance and die?

Such the wan lustre Sickness wears
When Health's first feeble beam appears;
So languid are the smiles that seek
To settle on the care-worn cheek,

When timorous Hope the head uprears,
Still drooping and still moist with tears,
If, through dispersing grief, be seen
Of Bliss the heavenly spark serene.

And sweeter far the early blow,
Fast following after storms of Woe,
Than (Comfort's riper season come)
Are full-blown joys and Pleasure's gaudy bloom.

Verses Addressed to J. Horne Tooke and the Company
who met on June 28, 1796, to celebrate his Poll at the Westminster Election

1796

Britons! when last ye met, with distant streak
 So faintly promis'd the pale Dawn to break;
 So dim it stain'd the precincts of the Sky
 E'en *Expectation* gaz'd with doubtful Eye.
 But now such fair Varieties of Light
 O'ertake the heavy sailing Clouds of Night;
 Th' Horizon kindles with so rich a red,
 That tho' the *Sun still hides* his glorious head
 Th' impatient *Matin-bird, assur'd of Day,*
 Leaves his low nest to meet its earliest ray;
 Loud the sweet song of Gratulation sings,
 And high in air claps his rejoicing wings!
 Patriot and Sage! whose breeze-like Spirit first
 The lazy mists of Pedantry dispers'd
 (Mists in which Superstition's *pigmy* band
 Seem'd Giant Forms, the Genii of the Land!),
 Thy struggles soon shall wak'ning Britain bless,
 And Truth and Freedom hail thy wish'd success.
 Yes *Tooke!* tho' foul Corruption's wolfish throng
 Outmalice Calumny's imposthum'd Tongue,
 Thy Country's noblest and *determin'd* Choice,
 Soon shalt thou thrill the Senate with thy voice;
 With gradual Dawn bid Error's phantoms flit,
 Or wither with the lightning's flash of Wit;
 Or with sublimer mien and tones more deep,
 Charm sworded Justice from mysterious Sleep,
 "By violated Freedom's loud Lament,
 Her Lamps extinguish'd and her Temple rent;
 By the forc'd tears her captive Martyrs shed;
 By each pale Orphan's feeble cry for bread;
 By ravag'd Belgium's corse-impeded Flood,
 And Vendee steaming still with brothers' blood!"
 And if amid the strong impassion'd Tale,
 Thy Tongue should falter and thy Lips turn pale;
 If transient Darkness film thy awful Eye,
 And thy tir'd Bosom struggle with a sigh:
 Science and Freedom shall demand to hear
 Who practis'd on a Life so doubly dear;
 Infus'd the unwholesome anguish drop by drop,
 Pois'ning the sacred stream they could not stop!

Shall bid thee with recover'd strength relate
How dark and deadly is a Coward's Hate:
What seeds of death by wan Confinement sown,
When Prison-echoes mock'd Disease's groan!
Shall bid th' indignant Father flash dismay,
And drag the unnatural Villain into Day
Who to the sports of his flesh'd Ruffians left
Two lovely Mourners of their Sire bereft!
'Twas wrong, like this, which Rome's *first Consul* bore,
So by th' insulted Female's name *he* swore
Ruin (and rais'd her reeking dagger high)
Not to the *Tyrants* but the Tyranny!

On a Late Connubial Rupture in High Life

1796

[Prince and Princess of Wales]

I sigh, fair injur'd stranger! for thy fate;
But what shall sighs avail thee? thy poor heart,
'Mid all the "pomp and circumstance" of state,
Shivers in nakedness. Unbidden, start

Sad recollections of Hope's garish dream,
That shaped a seraph form, and named it Love,
Its hues gay-varying, as the orient beam
Varies the neck of Cytherea's dove.

To one soft accent of domestic joy
Poor are the shouts that shake the high-arch'd dome;
Those plaudits that thy *public* path annoy,
Alas! they tell thee — Thou'rt a wretch *at home!*

O then retire, and weep! *Their very woes*
Solace the guiltless. Drop the pearly flood
On thy sweet infant, as the full-blown rose,
Surcharg'd with dew, bends o'er its neighbouring bud.

And ah! that Truth some holy spell might lend
To lure thy Wanderer from the Syren's power;
Then bid your souls inseparably blend
Like two bright dew-drops meeting in a flower.

Sonnet: On receiving a Letter informing me of the Birth of a Son

Sept 20, 1796

When they did greet me father, sudden awe
Weigh'd down my spirit: I retired and knelt
Seeking the throne of grace, but inly felt
No heavenly visitation upwards draw
My feeble mind, nor cheering ray impart.
Ah me! before the Eternal Sire I brought
Th' unquiet silence of confuséd thought
And shapeless feelings: my o'erwhelméd heart
Trembled, and vacant tears stream'd down my face.
And now once more, O Lord! to thee I bend,
Lover of souls! and groan for future grace,
That ere my babe youth's perilous maze have trod,
Thy overshadowing Spirit may descend,
And he be born again, a child of God.

Sept. 20, 1796

Sonnet: Composed on a Journey Homeward;
the Author having received Intelligence of the Birth of a Son, Sept. 20, 1796

Sept 20, 1796

Oft o'er my brain does that strange fancy roll
Which makes the present (while the flash doth last)
Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past,
Mixed with such feelings, as perplex the soul
Self-questioned in her sleep; and some have said
We liv'd, ere yet this robe of flesh we wore.
O my sweet baby! when I reach my door,
If heavy looks should tell me thou art dead,
(As sometimes, through excess of hope, I fear)
I think that I should struggle to believe
Thou wert a spirit, to this nether sphere
Sentenc'd for some more venial crime to grieve;
Did'st scream, then spring to meet Heaven's quick reprieve,
While we wept idly o'er thy little bier!

Sonnet: To a Friend who asked, how I felt when the Nurse first presented my Infant to me

1796

Charles! my slow heart was only sad, when first
I scann'd that face of feeble infancy:
For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst
All I had been, and all my child might be!
But when I saw it on its mother's arm,
And hanging at her bosom (she the while
Bent o'er its features with a tearful smile)
Then I was thrill'd and melted, and most warm
Impress'd a father's kiss: and all beguil'd
Of dark remembrance and presageful fear,
I seem'd to see an angel-form appear —
'Twas even thine, belovéd woman mild!
So for the mother's sake the child was dear,
And dearer was the mother for the child.

Sonnet:

[To Charles Lloyd]

1796

The piteous sobs that choke the Virgin's breath
For him, the fair betrothéd Youth, who lies
Cold in the narrow dwelling, or the cries
With which a Mother wails her darling's death,
These from our nature's common impulse spring,
Unblam'd, unprais'd; but o'er the piléd earth
Which hides the sheeted corse of grey-hair'd Worth,
If droops the soaring Youth with slacken'd wing;
If he recall in saddest minstrelsy
Each tenderness bestow'd, each truth imprest,
Such grief is Reason, Virtue, Piety!
And from the Almighty Father shall descend
Comforts on his late evening, whose young breast
Mourns with no transient love the Agéd Friend.

To a Young Friend on his proposing to domesticate with the Author

1796

Composed in 1796

A mount, not wearisome and bare and steep,
 But a green mountain variously up-piled,
 Where o'er the jutting rocks soft mosses creep,
 Or colour'd lichens with slow oozing weep;
 Where cypress and the darker yew start wild;
 And, 'mid the summer torrent's gentle dash
 Dance brighten'd the red clusters of the ash;
 Beneath whose boughs, by those still sounds beguil'd,
 Calm Pensiveness might muse herself to sleep;
 Till haply startled by some fleecy dam,
 That rustling on the bushy cliff above
 With melancholy bleat of anxious love,
 Made meek enquiry for her wandering lamb:
 Such a green mountain 'twere most sweet to climb,
 E'en while the bosom ach'd with loneliness —
 How more than sweet, if some dear friend should bless
 The adventurous toil, and up the path sublime
 Now lead, now follow: the glad landscape round,
 Wide and more wide, increasing without bound!

O then 'twere loveliest sympathy, to mark
 The berries of the half-uprooted ash
 Dripping and bright; and list the torrent's dash, —
 Beneath the cypress, or the yew more dark,
 Seated at ease, on some smooth mossy rock;
 In social silence now, and now to unlock
 The treasur'd heart; arm linked in friendly arm,
 Save if the one, his muse's witching charm
 Muttering brow-bent, at unwatch'd distance lag;
 Till high o'er head his beckoning friend appears,
 And from the forehead of the topmost crag
 Shouts eagerly: for haply *there* uprears
 That shadowing Pine its old romantic limbs,
 Which latest shall detain the enamour'd sight
 Seen from below, when eve the valley dims,
 Tinged yellow with the rich departing light;
 And haply, bason'd in some unsunn'd cleft,
 A beauteous spring, the rock's collected tears,
 Sleeps shelter'd there, scarce wrinkled by the gale!
 Together thus, the world's vain turmoil left,
 Stretch'd on the crag, and shadow'd by the pine,

And bending o'er the clear delicious fount,
Ah! dearest youth! it were a lot divine
To cheat our noons in moralising mood,
While west-winds fann'd our temples toil-bedew'd:
Then downwards slope, oft pausing, from the mount,
To some lone mansion, in some woody dale,
Where smiling with blue eye, Domestic Bliss
Gives *this* the Husband's, *that* the Brother's kiss!

Thus rudely vers'd in allegoric lore,
The Hill of Knowledge I essayed to trace;
That verdurous hill with many a resting-place,
And many a stream, whose warbling waters pour
To glad, and fertilise the subject plains;
That hill with secret springs, and nooks untrod,
And many a fancy-blest and holy sod
Where Inspiration, his diviner strains
Low-murmuring, lay; and starting from the rock's
Stiff evergreens, (whose spreading foliage mocks
Want's barren soil, and the bleak frosts of age,
And Bigotry's mad fire-invoking rage!)
O meek retiring spirit! we will climb,
Cheering and cheered, this lovely hill sublime;
And from the stirring world up-lifted high
(Whose noises, faintly wafted on the wind,
To quiet musings shall attune the mind,
And oft the melancholy *theme* supply),
There, while the prospect through the gazing eye
Pours all its healthful greenness on the soul,
We'll smile at wealth, and learn to smile at fame,
Our hopes, our knowledge, and our joys the same,
As neighbouring fountains image each the whole:
Then when the mind hath drunk its fill of truth
We'll discipline the heart to pure delight,
Rekindling sober joy's domestic flame.
They whom I love shall love thee, honour'd youth!
Now may Heaven realise this vision bright!

Addressed to a Young Man of Fortune

[C. Lloyd] who abandoned Himself to an Indolent and Causeless Melancholy

1796

Hence that fantastic wantonness of woe,
O Youth to partial Fortune vainly dear!
To plunder'd Want's half-shelter'd hovel go,
Go, and some hunger-bitten infant hear
Moan haply in a dying mother's ear:
Or when the cold and dismal fog-damps brood
O'er the rank church-yard with sear elm-leaves strew'd,
Pace round some widow's grave, whose dearer part
Was slaughter'd, where o'er his uncoffin'd limbs
The flocking flesh-birds scream'd! Then, while thy heart
Groans, and thine eye a fiercer sorrow dims,
Know (and the truth shall kindle thy young mind)
What Nature makes thee mourn, she bids thee heal!
O object! if, to sickly dreams resign'd,
All effortless thou leave Life's commonweal
A prey to Tyrants, Murderers of Mankind.

To a Friend

[Charles Lamb] who had declared his intention of writing no more Poetry

1796

Dear Charles! whilst yet thou wert a babe, I ween
 That Genius plung'd thee in that wizard fount
 Hight Castalie: and (sureties of thy faith)
 That Pity and Simplicity stood by,
 And promis'd for thee, that thou shouldst renounce
 The world's low cares and lying vanities,
 Steadfast and rooted in the heavenly Muse,
 And wash'd and sanctified to Poesy.
 Yes — thou wert plung'd, but with forgetful hand
 Held, as by Thetis erst her warrior son:
 And with those recreant unbaptizéd heels
 Thou'rt flying from thy bounden ministeries —
 So sore it seems and burthensome a task
 To weave unwithering flowers! But take thou heed:
 For thou art vulnerable, wild-eyed boy,
 And I have arrows mystically dipped
 Such as may stop thy speed. Is thy Burns dead?
 And shall he die unwept, and sink to earth
 "Without the meed of one melodious tear"?
 Thy Burns, and Nature's own belovéd bard,
 Who to the "Illustrious of his native Land
 So properly did look for patronage."
 Ghost of Mæcenas! hide thy blushing face!
 They snatch'd him from the sickle and the plough —
 To gauge ale-firkins.

Oh! for shame return!

On a bleak rock, midway the Aonian mount,
 There stands a lone and melancholy tree,
 Whose agéd branches to the midnight blast
 Make solemn music: pluck its darkest bough,
 Ere yet the unwholesome night-dew be exhaled,
 And weeping wreath it round thy Poet's tomb.
 Then in the outskirts, where pollutions grow,
 Pick the rank henbane and the dusky flowers
 Of night-shade, or its red and tempting fruit,
 These with stopped nostril and glove-guarded hand
 Knit in nice intertexture, so to twine,
 The illustrious brow of Scotch Nobility!

Ode to the Departing Year

1796

Ἴου ἴου, ω ω κακα.
 Γπ' αυ με δεινός ὀρθομαντειας πόνος
 Στροβει, ταρασσων φροιμοις δυσφροιμοις.

* * * * *

Τὸ μελλον ἠζει. Και συ μ' ἔν ταχει παρων
 Ἄγαν αληθόμαντιν οικτειρας ἔρεις.

Aeschyl. *Agam.* 1173-75; 1199-1200.

ARGUMENT

The Ode commences with an address to the Divine Providence that regulates into one vast harmony all the events of time, however calamitous some of them may appear to mortals. The second Strophe calls on men to suspend their private joys and sorrows, and devote them for a while to the cause of human nature in general. The first Epode speaks of the Empress of Russia, who died of an apoplexy on the 17th of November 1796; having just concluded a subsidiary treaty with the Kings combined against France. The first and second Antistrophe describe the Image of the Departing Year, etc., as in a vision. The second Epode prophesies, in anguish of spirit, the downfall of this country.

Spirit who sweepest the wild Harp of Time!
 It is most hard, with an untroubled ear
 Thy dark inwoven harmonies to hear!
 Yet, mine eye fix'd on Heaven's unchanging clime
 Long had I listen'd, free from mortal fear,
 With inward stillness, and a bowéd mind;
 When lo! its folds far waving on the wind,
 I saw the train of the Departing Year!
 Starting from my silent sadness
 Then with no unholy madness,
 Ere yet the enter'd cloud foreclos'd my sight,
 I rais'd the impetuous song, and solemniz'd his flight.

Hither, from the recent tomb,
 From the prison's direr gloom,
 From Distemper's midnight anguish;
 And thence, where Poverty doth waste and languish;
 Or where, his two bright torches blending,
 Love illumines Manhood's maze;
 Or where o'er cradled infants bending,
 Hope has fix'd her wishful gaze;

Hither, in perplexéd dance,
 Ye Woes! ye young-eyed Joys! advance!
 By Time's wild harp, and by the hand
 Whose indefatigable sweep
 Raises its fateful strings from sleep,
 I bid you haste, a mix'd tumultuous band!
 From every private bower,
 And each domestic hearth,
 Haste for one solemn hour;
 And with a loud and yet a louder voice,
 O'er Nature struggling in portentous birth,
 Weep and rejoice!
 Still echoes the dread Name that o'er the earth
 Let slip the storm, and woke the brood of Hell:
 And now advance in saintly Jubilee
 Justice and Truth! They too have heard thy spell,
 They too obey thy name, divinest Liberty!

I mark'd Ambition in his war-array!
 I heard the mailéd Monarch's troublous cry —
 "Ah! wherefore does the Northern Conqueress stay!
 Groans not her chariot on its onward way?"
 Fly, mailéd Monarch, fly!
 Stunn'd by Death's twice mortal mace,
 No more on Murder's lurid face
 The insatiate Hag shall gloat with drunken eye!
 Manes of the unnumber'd slain!
 Ye that gasp'd on Warsaw's plain!
 Ye that erst at Ismail's tower,
 When human ruin choked the streams,
 Fell in Conquest's glutton hour,
 Mid women's shrieks and infants' screams!
 Spirits of the uncoffin'd slain,
 Sudden blasts of triumph swelling,
 Oft, at night, in misty train,
 Rush around her narrow dwelling!
 The exterminating Fiend is fled —
 (Foul her life, and dark her doom)
 Mighty armies of the dead
 Dance, like death-fires, round her tomb!
 Then with prophetic song relate,
 Each some Tyrant-Murderer's fate!

Departing Year! 'twas on no earthly shore
 My soul beheld thy Vision! Where alone,
 Voiceless and stern, before the cloudy throne,
 Aye Memory sits: thy robe inscrib'd with gore,

With many an unimaginable groan
 Thou storied'st thy sad hours! Silence ensued,
 Deep silence o'er the ethereal multitude,
 Whose locks with wreaths, whose wreaths with glories shone.
 Then, his eye wild ardours glancing,
 From the choired gods advancing,
 The Spirit of the Earth made reverence meet,
 And stood up, beautiful, before the cloudy seat.

Throughout the blissful throng,
 Hush'd were harp and song:
 Till wheeling round the throne the Lampads seven,
 (The mystic Words of Heaven)
 Permissive signal make:
 The fervent Spirit bow'd, then spread his wings and spake!
 "Thou in stormy blackness throning
 Love and uncreated Light,
 By the Earth's unsolaced groaning,
 Seize thy terrors, Arm of might!
 By Peace with proffer'd insult scared,
 Masked Hate and envying Scorn!
 By years of Havoc yet unborn!
 And Hunger's bosom to the frost-winds bared!
 But chief by Afric's wrongs,
 Strange, horrible, and foul!
 By what deep guilt belongs
 To the deaf Synod, 'full of gifts and lies!'
 By Wealth's insensate laugh! by Torture's howl!
 Avenger, rise!
 For ever shall the thankless Island scowl,
 Her quiver full, and with unbroken bow?
 Speak! from thy storm-black Heaven O speak aloud!
 And on the darkling foe
 Open thine eye of fire from some uncertain cloud!
 O dart the flash! O rise and deal the blow!
 The Past to thee, to thee the Future cries!
 Hark! how wide Nature joins her groans below!
 Rise, God of Nature! rise."

The voice had ceas'd, the Vision fled;
 Yet still I gasp'd and reel'd with dread.
 And ever, when the dream of night
 Renews the phantom to my sight,
 Cold sweat-drops gather on my limbs;
 My ears throb hot; my eye-balls start;
 My brain with horrid tumult swims;
 Wild is the tempest of my heart;

And my thick and struggling breath
 Imitates the toil of death!
 No stranger agony confounds
 The Soldier on the war-field spread,
 When all foredone with toil and wounds,
 Death-like he dozes among heaps of dead!
 (The strife is o'er, the day-light fled,
 And the night-wind clamours hoarse!
 See! the starting wretch's head
 Lies pillow'd on a brother's corse!)

Not yet enslaved, not wholly vile,
 O Albion! O my mother Isle!
 Thy valleys, fair as Eden's bowers
 Glitter green with sunny showers;
 Thy grassy uplands' gentle swells
 Echo to the bleat of flocks;
 (Those grassy hills, those glittering dells
 Proudly ramparted with rocks)
 And Ocean mid his uproar wild
 Speaks safety to his Island-child!
 Hence for many a fearless age
 Has social Quiet lov'd thy shore;
 Nor ever proud Invader's rage
 Or sack'd thy towers, or stain'd thy fields with gore.

Abandon'd of Heaven! mad Avarice thy guide,
 At cowardly distance, yet kindling with pride —
 Mid thy herds and thy corn-fields secure thou hast stood,
 And join'd the wild yelling of Famine and Blood!
 The nations curse thee! They with eager wondering
 Shall hear Destruction, like a vulture, scream!
 Strange-eyed Destruction! who with many a dream
 Of central fires through nether seas up-thundering
 Soothes her fierce solitude; yet as she lies
 By livid fount, or red volcanic stream,
 If ever to her lidless dragon-eyes,
 O Albion! thy predestin'd ruins rise,
 The fiend-hag on her perilous couch doth leap,
 Muttering distemper'd triumph in her charmed sleep.

 Away, my soul, away!
 In vain, in vain the Birds of warning sing —
 And hark! I hear the famish'd brood of prey
 Flap their lank pennons on the groaning wind!
 Away, my soul, away!
 I unpartaking of the evil thing,

With daily prayer and daily toil
Soliciting for food my scanty soil,
Have wail'd my country with a loud Lament.
Now I recentre my immortal mind
In the deep Sabbath of meek self-content;
Cleans'd from the vaporous passions that bedim
God's Image, sister of the Seraphim.

The Raven A Christmas Tale, told by a School-boy to his Little Brothers and Sisters

1797

Underneath an old oak tree
There was of swine a huge company,
That grunted as they crunched the mast:
For that was ripe, and fell full fast.
Then they trotted away, for the wind grew high:
One acorn they left, and no more might you spy.
Next came a Raven, that liked not such folly:
He belonged, they did say, to the witch Melancholy!
Blacker was he than blackest jet,
Flew low in the rain, and his feathers not wet.
He picked up the acorn and buried it straight
By the side of a river both deep and great.
Where then did the Raven go?
He went high and low,
Over hill, over dale, did the black Raven go.
Many Autumns, many Springs
Travelled he with wandering wings:
Many Summers, many Winters —
I can't tell half his adventures.

At length he came back, and with him a She,
And the acorn was grown to a tall oak tree.
They built them a nest in the topmost bough,
And young ones they had, and were happy enow.
But soon came a Woodman in leathern guise,
His brow, like a pent-house, hung over his eyes.
He'd an axe in his hand, not a word he spoke,
But with many a hem! and a sturdy stroke,
At length he brought down the poor Raven's own oak.
His young ones were killed; for they could not depart,
And their mother did die of a broken heart.

The boughs from the trunk the Woodman did sever;
And they floated it down on the course of the river.
They sawed it in planks, and its bark they did strip,
And with this tree and others they made a good ship.
The ship, it was launched; but in sight of the land
Such a storm there did rise as no ship could withstand.
It bulged on a rock, and the waves rush'd in fast:
Round and round flew the raven, and cawed to the blast.
He heard the last shriek of the perishing souls —
See! see! o'er the topmast the mad water rolls!

Right glad was the Raven, and off he went fleet,
And Death riding home on a cloud he did meet,
And he thank'd him again and again for this treat:
They had taken his all, and REVENGE IT WAS SWEET!

To an Unfortunate Woman at the Theatre

1779

Maiden, that with sullen brow
Sitt'st behind those virgins gay,
Like a scorch'd and mildew'd bough,
Leafless 'mid the blooms of May!

Him who lur'd thee and forsook,
Oft I watch'd with angry gaze,
Fearful saw his pleading look,
Anxious heard his fervid phrase.

Soft the glances of the Youth,
Soft his speech, and soft his sigh;
But no sound like simple Truth,
But no *true* love in his eye.

Loathing thy polluted lot,
Hie thee, Maiden, hie thee hence!
Seek thy weeping Mother's cot,
With a wiser innocence.

Thou hast known deceit and folly,
Thou hast *felt* that Vice is woe:
With a musing melancholy
Inly arm'd, go, Maiden! go.

Mother sage of Self-dominion,
Firm thy steps, O Melancholy!
The strongest plume in Wisdom's pinion
Is the memory of past folly.

Mute the sky-lark and forlorn,
While she moults the firstling plumes,
That had skimm'd the tender corn,
Or the beanfield's odorous blooms.

Soon with renovated wing
Shall she dare a loftier flight,
Upward to the Day-Star spring,
And embathe in heavenly light.

To an Unfortunate Woman whom the Author had known in the days of her Innocence

1797

Myrtle-leaf that, ill besped,
Pinest in the gladsome ray,
Soil'd beneath the common tread
Far from thy protecting spray!

When the Partridge o'er the sheaf
Whirr'd along the yellow vale,
Sad I saw thee, heedless leaf!
Love the dalliance of the gale.

Lightly didst thou, foolish thing!
Heave and flutter to his sighs,
While the flatterer, on his wing,
Woo'd and whisper'd thee to rise.

Gaily from thy mother-stalk
Wert thou danc'd and wafted high —
Soon on this unshelter'd walk
Flung to fade, to rot and die.

To the Rev. George Coleridge of Ottery St. Mary, Devon

With some Poems
1797

Notus in fratres animi paterni.

Carm. Hor. lib. II. 2.

A blesséd lot hath he, who having passed
His youth and early manhood in the stir
And turmoil of the world, retreats at length,
With cares that move, not agitate the heart,
To the same dwelling where his father dwelt;
And haply views his tottering little ones
Embrace those agéd knees and climb that lap,
On which first kneeling his own infancy
Lisp'd its brief prayer. Such, O my earliest Friend!
Thy lot, and such thy brothers too enjoy.
At distance did ye climb Life's upland road,
Yet cheer'd and cheering: now fraternal love
Hath drawn you to one centre. Be your days
Holy, and blest and blessing may ye live!

To me the Eternal Wisdom hath dispens'd
A different fortune and more different mind —
Me from the spot where first I sprang to light
Too soon transplanted, ere my soul had fix'd
Its first domestic loves; and hence through life
Chasing chance-started friendships. A brief while
Some have preserv'd me from life's pelting ills;
But, like a tree with leaves of feeble stem,
If the clouds lasted, and a sudden breeze
Ruffled the boughs, they on my head at once
Dropped the collected shower; and some most false,
False and fair-foliag'd as the Manchineel,
Have tempted me to slumber in their shade
E'en mid the storm; then breathing subtlest damps,
Mix'd their own venom with the rain from Heaven,
That I woke poison'd! But, all praise to Him
Who gives us all things, more have yielded me
Permanent shelter; and beside one Friend,
Beneath the impervious covert of one oak,
I've rais'd a lowly shed, and know the names
Of Husband and of Father; not unhearing
Of that divine and nightly-whispering Voice,
Which from my childhood to maturer years

Spake to me of predestinated wreaths,
Bright with no fading colours!

Yet at times

My soul is sad, that I have roamed through life
Still most a stranger, most with naked heart
At mine own home and birth-place: chiefly then,
When I remember thee, my earliest Friend!
Thee, who didst watch my boyhood and my youth;
Didst trace my wanderings with a father's eye;
And boding evil yet still hoping good,
Rebuk'd each fault, and over all my woes
Sorrow'd in silence! He who counts alone
The beatings of the solitary heart,
That Being knows, how I have lov'd thee ever,
Lov'd as a brother, as a son rever'd thee!
Oh! 'tis to me an ever new delight,
To talk of thee and thine: or when the blast
Of the shrill winter, rattling our rude sash,
Endears the cleanly hearth and social bowl;
Or when, as now, on some delicious eve,
We in our sweet sequester'd orchard-plot
Sit on the tree crook'd earth-ward; whose old boughs,
That hang above us in an arborous roof,
Stirr'd by the faint gale of departing May,
Send their loose blossoms slanting o'er our heads!

Nor dost not thou sometimes recall those hours,
When with the joy of hope thou gavest thine ear
To my wild firstling-lays. Since then my song
Hath sounded deeper notes, such as beseem
Or that sad wisdom folly leaves behind,
Or such as, tuned to these tumultuous times,
Cope with the tempest's swell!

These various strains,

Which I have fram'd in many a various mood,
Accept, my Brother! and (for some perchance
Will strike discordant on thy milder mind)
If aught of error or intemperate truth
Should meet thine ear, think thou that riper Age
Will calm it down, and let thy love forgive it!
Nether-Stowey, Somerset, *May* 26, 1797.

On the Christening of a Friend's Child

1797

This day among the faithful plac'd
And fed with fontal manna,
O with maternal title grac'd,
Dear Anna's dearest Anna!

While others wish thee wise and fair,
A maid of spotless fame,
I'll breathe this more compendious prayer —
May'st thou deserve thy name!

Thy mother's name, a potent spell,
That bids the Virtues hie
From mystic grove and living cell
Confess'd to Fancy's eye;

Meek Quietness without offence;
Content in homespun kirtle;
True Love; and True Love's Innocence,
White Blossom of the Myrtle!

Associates of thy name, sweet Child!
These Virtues may'st thou win;
With face as eloquently mild
To say, they lodge within.

So, when her tale of days all flown,
Thy mother shall be miss'd here;
When Heaven at length shall claim its own
And Angels snatch their Sister;

Some hoary-headed friend, perchance,
May gaze with stifled breath;
And oft, in momentary trance,
Forget the waste of death.

Even thus a lovely rose I've view'd
In summer-swelling pride;
Nor mark'd the bud, that green and rude
Peep'd at the rose's side.

It chanc'd I pass'd again that way
In Autumn's latest hour,
And wond'ring saw the selfsame spray

Rich with the selfsame flower.

Ah fond deceit! the rude green bud
Alike in shape, place, name,
Had bloom'd where bloom'd its parent stud,
Another and the same!

Translation of a Latin Inscription by the Rev. W. L. Bowles in Nether-Stowey Church

1797

Depart in joy from this world's noise and strife
To the deep quiet of celestial life!
Depart! — Affection's self reproves the tear
Which falls, O honour'd Parent! on thy bier; —
Yet Nature will be heard, the heart will swell,
And the voice tremble with a last Farewell!

This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison

1797

[Addressed to Charles Lamb, of the India House, London]

In the June of 1797 some long-expected friends paid a visit to the author's cottage; and on the morning of their arrival, he met with an accident, which disabled him from walking during the whole time of their stay. One evening, when they had left him for a few hours, he composed the following lines in the garden-bower.

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
 This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost
 Beauties and feelings, such as would have been
 Most sweet to my remembrance even when age
 Had dimm'd mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile,
 Friends, whom I never more may meet again,
 On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,
 Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,
 To that still roaring dell, of which I told;
 The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
 And only speckled by the mid-day sun;
 Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
 Flings arching like a bridge; — that branchless ash,
 Unsun'd and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
 Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
 Fann'd by the water-fall! and there my friends
 Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,
 That all at once (a most fantastic sight!)
 Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
 Of the blue clay-stone.

Now, my friends emerge
 Beneath the wide wide Heaven — and view again
 The many-steepled tract magnificent
 Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
 With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up
 The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles
 Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on
 In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,
 My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
 And hunger'd after Nature, many a year,
 In the great City pent, winning thy way
 With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
 And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink
 Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
 Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,

Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
 Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
 And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my friend
 Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
 Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
 On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
 Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
 As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
 Spirits perceive his presence.

A delight

Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad
 As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,
 This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd
 Much that has sooth'd me. Pale beneath the blaze
 Hung the transparent foliage; and I watch'd
 Some broad and sunny leaf, and lov'd to see
 The shadow of the leaf and stem above
 Dappling its sunshine! And that walnut-tree
 Was richly ting'd, and a deep radiance lay
 Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
 Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass
 Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
 Through the late twilight: and though now the bat
 Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,
 Yet still the solitary humble-bee
 Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know
 That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;
 No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
 No waste so vacant, but may well employ
 Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
 Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes
 'Tis well to be bereft of promis'd good,
 That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
 With lively joy the joys we cannot share.
 My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last rook
 Beat its straight path along the dusky air
 Homewards, I blest it! deeming its black wing
 (Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)
 Had cross'd the mighty Orb's dilated glory,
 While thou stood'st gazing; or, when all was still,
 Flew creaking o'er thy head, and had a charm
 For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
 No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

The Foster-mother's Tale A dramatic fragment

1797

Foster-Mother. I never saw the man whom you describe.

Maria. 'Tis strange! he spake of you familiarly
As mine and Albert's common Foster-mother.

Foster-Mother. Now blessings on the man, whoe'er he be,
That joined your names with mine! O my sweet lady,
As often as I think of those dear times
When you two little ones would stand at eve
On each side of my chair, and make me learn
All you had learnt in the day; and how to talk
In gentle phrase, then bid me sing to you —
'Tis more like heaven to come than what *has* been!

Maria. O my dear Mother! this strange man has left me
Troubled with wilder fancies, than the moon
Breeds in the love-sick maid who gazes at it,
Till lost in inward vision, with wet eye
She gazes idly! — But that entrance, Mother!

Foster-Mother. Can no one hear? It is a perilous tale!

Maria. No one.

Foster-Mother. My husband's father told it me,
Poor old Leoni! — Angels rest his soul!
He was a woodman, and could fell and saw
With lusty arm. You know that huge round beam
Which props the hanging wall of the old Chapel?
Beneath that tree, while yet it was a tree,
He found a baby wrapt in mosses, lined
With thistle-beards, and such small locks of wool
As hang on brambles. Well, he brought him home,
And rear'd him at the then Lord Velez' cost.
And so the babe grew up a pretty boy,
A pretty boy, but most unteachable —
And never learnt a prayer, nor told a bead,
But knew the names of birds, and mock'd their notes,
And whistled, as he were a bird himself:
And all the autumn 'twas his only play
To get the seeds of wild flowers, and to plant them
With earth and water, on the stumps of trees.
A Friar, who gather'd simples in the wood,
A grey-haired man — he lov'd this little boy,
The boy lov'd him — and, when the Friar taught him,
He soon could write with the pen: and from that time,
Lived chiefly at the Convent or the Castle.
So he became a very learned youth.

But Oh! poor wretch! — he read, and read, and read,
 Till his brain turn'd — and ere his twentieth year,
 He had unlawful thoughts of many things:
 And though he prayed, he never lov'd to pray
 With holy men, nor in a holy place —
 But yet his speech, it was so soft and sweet,
 The late Lord Velez ne'er was wearied with him.
 And once, as by the north side of the Chapel
 They stood together, chain'd in deep discourse,
 The earth heav'd under them with such a groan,
 That the wall totter'd, and had well-nigh fallen
 Right on their heads. My Lord was sorely frighten'd;
 A fever seiz'd him, and he made confession
 Of all the heretical and lawless talk
 Which brought this judgement: so the youth was seiz'd
 And cast into that hole. My husband's father
 Sobb'd like a child — it almost broke his heart:
 And once as he was working in the cellar,
 He heard a voice distinctly; 'twas the youth's,
 Who sung a doleful song about green fields,
 How sweet it were on lake or wild savannah,
 To hunt for food, and be a naked man,
 And wander up and down at liberty.
 He always doted on the youth, and now
 His love grew desperate; and defying death,
 He made that cunning entrance I describ'd:
 And the young man escap'd.

Maria. 'Tis a sweet tale:
 Such as would lull a listening child to sleep,
 His rosy face besoil'd with unwiped tears. —
 And what became of him?

Foster-Mother. He went on shipboard
 With those bold voyagers, who made discovery
 Of golden lands. Leoni's younger brother
 Went likewise, and when he return'd to Spain,
 He told Leoni, that the poor mad youth,
 Soon after they arriv'd in that new world,
 In spite of his dissuasion, seiz'd a boat,
 And all alone, set sail by silent moonlight
 Up a great river, great as any sea,
 And ne'er was heard of more: but 'tis suppos'd,
 He liv'd and died among the savage men.

The Dungeon

1797

And this place our forefathers made for man!
This is the process of our love and wisdom,
To each poor brother who offends against us —
Most innocent, perhaps — and what if guilty?
Is this the only cure? Merciful God!
Each pore and natural outlet shrivell'd up
By Ignorance and parching Poverty,
His energies roll back upon his heart,
And stagnate and corrupt; till chang'd to poison,
They break out on him, like a loathsome plague-spot;
Then we call in our pamper'd mountebanks —
And this is their best cure! uncomforted
And friendless solitude, groaning and tears,
And savage faces, at the clanking hour,
Seen through the steams and vapour of his dungeon,
By the lamp's dismal twilight! So he lies
Circled with evil, till his very soul
Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deform'd
By sights of ever more deformity!

With other ministrations thou, O Nature!
Healest thy wandering and distemper'd child:
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets,
Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters,
Till he relent, and can no more endure
To be a jarring and a dissonant thing,
Amid this general dance and minstrelsy;
But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
His angry spirit heal'd and harmoniz'd
By the benignant touch of Love and Beauty.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner in seven parts

1797-1798

ARGUMENT

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancient Mariner came back to his own Country.
[L.B. 1798]

PART I

*An ancient
Mariner meeteth
three Gallants
bidden to a wed-
ding feast, and
detaineth one.*

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
“By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp’st thou me?”

The Bridegroom’s doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May’st hear the merry din.”

He holds him with his skinny hand,
“There was a ship,” quoth he.
“Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!”
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

*The Wedding
Guest is spell-
bound by the eye
of the old sea-
faring man, and
constrained to
hear his tale.*

He holds him with his glittering eye —
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years’ child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

*The Mariner tells
how the ship
sailed southward
with a good wind
and fair weather,
till it reached the
line.*

“The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon — “
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

“And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o’ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white Moon-shine.'

'God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus! —
Why look'st thou so?' — With my cross-bow
I shot the ALBATROSS.

PART II

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo!

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

*But when the
fog cleared off,
they justify the
same, and thus
make themselves
accomplices in
the crime.*

*The fair breeze
continues; the ship
enters the Pacific Ocean,
and sails northward, even
till it reaches the Line.*

*The ship hath
been suddenly
becalmed.*

*And the Alba-
tross begins to be
avenged.*

*A Spirit had
followed them;
one of the in-
visible inhabi-
tants of this
planet, neither
departed souls*

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

And some in dreams assuréd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

*The shipmates,
in their sore
distress, would
fain throw the
whole guilt on*

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

PART III

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

*The ancient Mariner
beholdeth a sign
in the element afar off.*

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

*At its nearer approach,
it seemeth to be a ship;
and at a dear ransom
he freeth his speech
from the bonds of thirst.*

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:

A flash of joy;

Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

*And horror follows.
For can it be a ship
that comes onward
without wind or tide?*

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was well nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

*It seemeth him
but the skeleton
of a ship.*

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

*And its ribs
are seen as bars
on the face of
the setting Sun.*

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

*The Spectre-Woman
and her Death-mate,
and no other on board
the skeleton ship.*

Are those *her* ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a DEATH? and are there two?
Is DEATH that woman's mate?

*Like vessel,
like crew!*

Her lips were red, *her* looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

*Death and Life-in-Death
have dined for the
ship's crew, and she
(the latter) winneth
the ancient Mariner.*

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
"The game is done! I've won! I've won!"
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

*No twilight within
the courts of the Sun.*

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

*At the rising
of the Moon,*

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip —
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after another,

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

*His shipmates drop
down dead.*

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

*But Life-in-Death
begins her work
on the ancient Mariner.*

The souls did from their bodies fly, —
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!

PART IV

*The Wedding-Guest
feareth that a
Spirit is talking to him;*

“I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown.” —
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

*But the ancient Mariner
assureth him of his
bodily life, and
proceedeth to relate
his horrible penance.*

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

*He despiseth the
creatures of the calm,*

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

*And envieth that
they should live,
and so many lie dead.*

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

*But the curse liveth
for him in the eye
of the dead men.*

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

*In his loneliness
and fixedness
he yearneth towards
the journeying Moon,
and the stars
that still sojourn,*

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside —

yet still move onward; and every where the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt away
A still and awful red.

*By the light
of the Moon
he beholdeth God's
creatures of the
great calm.*

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
 I watched their rich attire:
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
 They coiled and swam; and every track
 Was a flash of golden fire.

*Their beauty
 and their happiness.*

O happy living things! no tongue
 Their beauty might declare:
 A spring of love gushed from my heart,

*He blesseth them
 in his heart.*

And I blessed them unaware:
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
 And I blessed them unaware.

*The spell begins
 to break.*

The self-same moment I could pray;
 And from my neck so free
 The Albatross fell off, and sank
 Like lead into the sea.

PART V

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
 Beloved from pole to pole!
 To Mary Queen the praise be given!
 She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
 That slid into my soul.

*By grace
 of the holy Mother,
 the ancient Mariner
 is refreshed
 with rain.*

The silly buckets on the deck,
 That had so long remained,
 I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
 And when I awoke, it rained.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
 My garments all were dank;
 Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
 And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
 I was so light — almost
 I thought that I had died in sleep,
 And was a blesséd ghost.

*He heareth sounds
 and seeth strange sights
 and commotions in the
 sky and the element.*

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
 It did not come anear;
 But with its sound it shook the sails,
 That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life!
 And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
 To and fro they were hurried about!
 And to and fro, and in and out,
 The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
 And the sails did sigh like sedge;
 And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
 The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
 The Moon was at its side:
 Like waters shot from some high crag,
 The lightning fell with never a jag,
 A river steep and wide.

*The bodies of
 the ship's crew
 are inspired and
 the ship moves on;*

The loud wind never reached the ship,
 Yet now the ship moved on!
 Beneath the lightning and the Moon
 The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
 It had been strange, even in a dream,
 To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
 Yet never a breeze up-blew;
 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
 Where they were wont to do;
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools —
 We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
 Stood by me, knee to knee:
 The body and I pulled at one rope,
 But he said nought to me.

*But not by the
 souls of the men,
 nor by dæmons
 of earth or middle air,
 but by a blessed troop
 of angelic spirits,
 sent down by the
 invocation of the
 guardian saint.*

“I fear thee, ancient Mariner!”
 Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
 Which to their corpses came again,
 But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned — they dropped their arms,
 And clustered round the mast;
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
 And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
 Then darted to the Sun;
 Slowly the sounds came back again,
 Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
 I heard the sky-lark sing;
 Sometimes all little birds that are,
 How they seemed to fill the sea and air
 With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments,
 Now like a lonely flute;
 And now it is an angel's song,
 That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
 A pleasant noise till noon,
 A noise like of a hidden brook
 In the leafy month of June,
 That to the sleeping woods all night
 Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
 Yet never a breeze did breathe:
 Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
 Moved onward from beneath.

*The lonesome Spirit
 from the south-pole
 carries on the ship
 as far as the Line,
 in obedience to
 the angelic troop,
 but still requireth
 vengeance.*

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
 From the land of mist and snow,
 The spirit slid: and it was he
 That made the ship to go.
 The sails at noon left off their tune,
 And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
 Had fixed her to the ocean:
 But in a minute she 'gan stir,
 With a short uneasy motion —
 Backwards and forwards half her length
 With a short uneasy motion.

*The Polar Spirit's
fellow-dæmons,
the invisible inhabitants
of the element,
take part in his wrong;
and two of them relate,
one to the other,
that penance long and heavy
for the ancient Mariner
hath been accorded to
the Polar Spirit,
who returneth southward.*

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

“Is it he?” quoth one, “Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.”

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, “The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.”

PART VI

FIRST VOICE

“But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing —
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?”

SECOND VOICE

“Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast —

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.”

*The Mariner hath been
cast into a trance;
for the angelic power
causeth the vessel
to drive northward
faster than human life
could endure.*

*The supernatural motion
is retarded;
the Mariner awakes,
and his
penance begins anew.*

*The curse is
finally expiated.*

FIRST VOICE

“But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?”

SECOND VOICE

“The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner’s trance is abated.”

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
’Twas night, calm night, the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen —

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

*And the ancient Mariner
beholdeth
his native country.*

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray —
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

*The angelic spirits
leave the dead bodies,*

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

*And appear
in their own
forms of light.*

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck —
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart —
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third — I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

*The Hermit of
the Wood,*

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve —
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
“Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?”

*Approacheth the
ship with
wonder.*

“Strange, by my faith!” the Hermit said —
“And they answered not our cheer!
The planks looked warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.”

“Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look —
 (The Pilot made reply)
 I am a-feared” — “Push on, push on!”
 Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,
 But I nor spake nor stirred;
 The boat came close beneath the ship,
 And straight a sound was heard.

*The ship
 suddenly sinketh.*

Under the water it rumbled on,
 Still louder and more dread:
 It reached the ship, it split the bay;
 The ship went down like lead.

*The ancient Mariner
 is saved in the
 Pilot's boat.*

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
 Which sky and ocean smote,
 Like one that hath been seven days drowned
 My body lay afloat;
 But swift as dreams, myself I found
 Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
 The boat spun round and round;
 And all was still, save that the hill
 Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips — the Pilot shrieked
 And fell down in a fit;
 The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
 And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
 Who now doth crazy go,
 Laughed loud and long, and all the while
 His eyes went to and fro.
 “Ha! ha!” quoth he, “Full plain I see,
 The Devil knows how to row.”

And now, all in my own countree,
 I stood on the firm land!
 The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
 And scarcely he could stand.

*The ancient Mariner
earnestly entreateth
the Hermit to shrieve
him; and the
penance of life
falls on him.*

*And ever and anon
throughout his future life
an agony constraineth
him to travel from
land to land;*

*And to teach
by his own example,
love and reverence
to all things that
God made and loveth.*

“O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!”
The Hermit crossed his brow.
“Say quick,” quoth he, “I bid thee say —
What manner of man art thou?”

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely ’twas, that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
’Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company! —

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends
And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

Sonnets Attempted in the Manner of Contemporary Writers

[signed "Nehemiah Higginbottom"]

1797

Pensive at eve on the *hard* world I mus'd,
 And *my poor* heart was sad: so at the Moon
 I gaz'd — and sigh'd, and sigh'd! — for, ah! how soon
 Eve darkens into night. Mine eye perus'd
 With tearful vacancy the *damp* grass
 Which wept and glitter'd in the *paly* ray;
 And *I did pause me* on my lonely way,
 And *mused me* on those *wretched ones* who pass
O'er the black heath of Sorrow. But, alas!
 Most of *Myself* I thought: when it befell
 That the *sooth* Spirit of the breezy wood
 Breath'd in mine ear — “All this is very well;
 But much of *one* thing is for *no* thing good.”
 Ah! my *poor heart's* INEXPLICABLE SWELL!

II To Simplicity

O! I do love thee, meek *Simplicity!*
 For of thy lays the lulling simpleness
 Goes to my heart and soothes each small distress,
 Distress though small, yet haply great to me!
 'Tis true on Lady Fortune's gentlest pad
 I amble on; yet, though I know not why,
So sad I am! — but should a friend and I
 Grow cool and *miff*, O! I am *very* sad!
 And then with sonnets and with sympathy
 My dreamy bosom's mystic woes I pall;
 Now of my false friend plaining plaintively,
 Now raving at mankind in general;
 But, whether sad or fierce, 'tis simple all,
 All very simple, meek Simplicity!

III On a Ruined House in a Romantic Country

And this reft house is that the which he built,
 Lamented Jack! And here his malt he pil'd,
 Cautious in vain! These rats that squeak so wild,
 Squeak, not unconscious of their father's guilt.
 Did ye not see her gleaming thro' the glade?
 Belike, 'twas she, the maiden all forlorn.
 What though she milk no cow with crumpled horn,

Yet *aye* she haunts the dale where *erst* she stray'd;
And *aye* beside her stalks her amorous knight!
Still on his thighs their wonted brogues are worn,
And thro' those brogues, still tatter'd and betorn,
His hindward charms gleam an unearthly white;
As when thro' broken clouds at night's high noon
Peeps in fair fragments forth the full-orb'd harvest-moon!

Parliamentary Oscillators

1798

Almost awake? Why, what is this, and whence,
O ye right loyal men, all undefiléd?
Sure, 'tis not possible that Common-Sense
Has hitch'd her pullies to each heavy eye-lid?

Yet wherefore else that start, which discomposes
The drowsy waters lingering in your eye?
And are you *really* able to descry
That precipice three yards beyond your noses?

Yet flatter you I cannot, that your wit
Is much improved by this long loyal dozing;
And I admire, no more than Mr. Pitt,
Your jumps and starts of patriotic prosing —

Now clattering to the Treasury Cluck, like chicken,
Now with small beaks the ravenous *Bill* opposing;
With serpent-tongue now stinging, and now licking,
Now semi-sibilant, now smoothly glozing —

Now having faith implicit that he can't err,
Hoping his hopes, alarm'd with his alarms;
And now believing him a sly inchanter,
Yet still afraid to break his brittle charms,

Lest some mad Devil suddenly unhamp'ring,
Slap-dash! the imp should fly off with the steeple,
On revolutionary broom-stick scampering. —
O ye soft-headed and soft-hearted people,

If you can stay so long from slumber free,
My muse shall make an effort to salute 'e:
For lo! a very dainty simile
Flash'd sudden through my brain, and 'twill just suit 'e!

You know that water-fowl that cries, Quack! quack!?
Full often have I seen a waggish crew
Fasten the Bird of Wisdom on its back,
The ivy-haunting bird, that cries, Tu-whoo!

Both plung'd together in the deep mill-stream,
(Mill-stream, or farm-yard pond, or mountain-lake,)
Shrill, as a *Church and Constitution* scream,

Tu-who! quoth Broad-face, and down dives the Drake!

The green-neck'd Drake once more pops up to view,
Stares round, cries Quack! and makes an angry pother;
Then shriller screams the Bird with eye-lids blue,
The broad-faced Bird! and deeper dives the other.
Ye *quacking* Statesmen! 'tis even so with you —
One Peasecod is not liker to another.

Even so on Loyalty's Decoy-pond, each
Pops up his head, as fir'd with British blood,
Hears once again the Ministerial screech,
And once more seeks the bottom's blackest mud!

Signed: Laberius.

Christabel

1801

Part 1

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock;
Tu — whit! — Tu — whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest misletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell. —
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek —
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
 What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.

I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she —
Beautiful exceedingly!

Mary mother, save me now!
(Said Christabel,) And who art thou?

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet: —
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!
Said Christabel, How camest thou here?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,

Did thus pursue her answer meet: —

My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yesternorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell —
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),
And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:
O well, bright dame! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth and friends withal
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall.

She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth,
And I beseech your courtesy,

This night, to share your couch with me.

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!
Alas, alas! said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
O softly tread, said Christabel,

My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And jealous of the listening air
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death, with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers.

And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?
Christabel answered — Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the grey-haired friar tell
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!
I would, said Geraldine, she were!

But soon with altered voice, said she —
“Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee.”
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
“Off, woman, off! this hour is mine —
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! ’tis given to me.”

Then Christabel knelt by the lady’s side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue —
Alas! said she, this ghastly ride —
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, “’tis over now!”

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes ’gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright:
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake —
“All they who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befel,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.”

Quoth Christabel, So let it be!
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
 And slowly rolled her eyes around;
 Then drawing in her breath aloud,
 Like one that shuddered, she unbound
 The cincture from beneath her breast:
 Her silken robe, and inner vest,
 Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
 Behold! her bosom and half her side —
 A sight to dream of, not to tell!
 O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
 Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
 Deep from within she seems half-way
 To lift some weight with sick assay,
 And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
 Then suddenly, as one defied,
 Collects herself in scorn and pride,
 And lay down by the Maiden's side! —
 And in her arms the maid she took,

Ah wel-a-day!

And with low voice and doleful look
 These words did say:
 "In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
 Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
 Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
 This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
 But vainly thou warrest,
 For this is alone in
 Thy power to declare,
 That in the dim forest
 Thou heard'st a low moaning,
 And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;
 And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
 To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

THE CONCLUSION TO PART I

It was a lovely sight to see
 The lady Christabel, when she
 Was praying at the old oak tree.
 Amid the jagged shadows
 Of mossy leafless boughs,
 Kneeling in the moonlight,
 To make her gentle vows;
 Her slender palms together prest,
 Heaving sometimes on her breast;

Her face resigned to bliss or bale —
Her face, oh call it fair not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is —
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine —
Thou' st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu — whoo! to — whoo!
Tu — whoo! tu — whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds —
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere,
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:

For the blue sky bends over all!

PART II

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead:
These words Sir Leoline will say
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke — a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borodale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
“Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well.”

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side —
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
“Sure I have sinn’d!” said Christabel,
“Now heaven be praised if all be well!”
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron’s presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady’s tale,
And when she told her father’s name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o’er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?
Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love

Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted — ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining —
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between; —
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side
He would proclaim it far and wide,
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they, who thus had wronged the dame,
Were base as spotted infamy!
“And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court — that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!”
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kened
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again —
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

Again she saw that bosom old,
 Again she felt that bosom cold,
 And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
 Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
 And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
 With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
 And in its stead that vision blest,
 Which comforted her after-rest
 While in the lady's arms she lay,
 Had put a rapture in her breast,
 And on her lips and o'er her eyes
 Spread smiles like light!

With new surprise,
 "What ails then my beloved child?"
 The Baron said — His daughter mild
 Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
 I ween, she had no power to tell
 Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
 Had deemed her sure a thing divine:
 Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
 As if she feared she had offended
 Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
 And with such lowly tones she prayed
 She might be sent without delay
 Home to her father's mansion.

"Nay!
 Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
 "Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
 Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
 And take two steeds with trappings proud,
 And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
 To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
 And clothe you both in solemn vest,
 And over the mountains haste along,
 Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
 Detain you on the valley road.

And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
 My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
 Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
 And reaches soon that castle good

Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free —
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me!
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array
And take thy lovely daughter home:
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfreys' foam:
And, by mine honour! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine! —
— For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine.'

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious Hail on all bestowing! —
“Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me,
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest!
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name —
Sir Leoline! I saw the same
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wonder'd what might ail the bird;
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old tree.

And in my dream methought I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck.
Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away —
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vowed this self-same day
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there.”

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
“Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!”
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine in maiden wise
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast,
And looked askance at Christabel —
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy;
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she looked askance! —
One moment — and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing, that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees — no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise,
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind:
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view —
As far as such a look could be
In eyes so innocent and blue!

And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed:
Then falling at the Baron's feet,
"By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!"
She said: and more she could not say:
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died!
O by the pangs of her dear mother

Think thou no evil of thy child!
 For her, and thee, and for no other,
 She prayed the moment ere she died:
 Prayed that the babe for whom she died,
 Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
 That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
 Sir Leoline!
 And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
 Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
 If thoughts, like these, had any share,
 They only swelled his rage and pain,
 And did but work confusion there.
 His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
 His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,
 Dishonoured thus in his old age;
 Dishonoured by his only child,
 And all his hospitality
 To the wronged daughter of his friend
 By more than woman's jealousy
 Brought thus to a disgraceful end —
 He rolled his eye with stern regard
 Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
 And said in tones abrupt, austere —
 "Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
 I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;
 And turning from his own sweet maid,
 The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
 Led forth the lady Geraldine!

THE CONCLUSION TO PART II

A little child, a limber elf,
 Singing, dancing to itself,
 A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
 That always finds, and never seeks,
 Makes such a vision to the sight
 As fills a father's eyes with light;
 And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
 Upon his heart, that he at last
 Must needs express his love's excess
 With words of unmeant bitterness.
 Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
 Thoughts so all unlike each other;
 To mutter and mock a broken charm,
 To dally with wrong that does no harm.

Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.

Lines to W. L. while he sang a Song to Purcell's Music

1797

While my young cheek retains its healthful hues,
And I have many friends who hold me dear,
L— ! methinks, I would not often hear
Such melodies as thine, lest I should lose
All memory of the wrongs and sore distress
For which my miserable brethren weep!
But should uncomforted misfortunes steep
My daily bread in tears and bitterness;
And if at Death's dread moment I should lie
With no beloved face at my bed-side,
To fix the last glance of my closing eye,
Methinks such strains, breathed by my angel-guide,
Would make me pass the cup of anguish by,
Mix with the blest, nor know that I had died!

BOTH Whisper it, sister! in our ear.

FAM A baby beat its dying mother:

I had starved the one and was starving the other!

BOTH Who bade you do't?

FAM The same! the same!

Letters four do form his name.

He let me loose, and cried, Halloo!

To him alone the praise is due.

FIRE Sisters! I from Ireland came!

Hedge and corn-fields all on flame,

I triumph'd o'er the setting sun!

And all the while the work was done,

On as I strode with my huge strides,

I flung back my head and I held my sides,

It was so rare a piece of fun

To see the sweltered cattle run

With uncouth gallop through the night,

Scared by the red and noisy light!

By the light of his own blazing cot

Was many a naked Rebel shot:

The house-stream met the flame and hissed,

While crash! fell in the roof, I wist,

On some of those old bed-rid nurses,

That deal in discontent and curses.

BOTH Who bade you do't?

FIRE The same! the same!

Letters four do form his name.

He let me loose, and cried Halloo!

To him alone the praise is due.

ALL He let us loose, and cried Halloo!

How shall we yield him honour due?

FAM Wisdom comes with lack of food.

I'll gnaw, I'll gnaw the multitude,

Till the cup of rage o'erbrim:

They shall seize him and his brood —

SLAU They shall tear him limb from limb!

FIRE O thankless beldames and untrue!

And is this all that you can do

For him, who did so much for you?

Ninety months he, by my troth!

Hath richly catered for you both;

And in an hour would you repay

An eight years' work? — Away! away!

I alone am faithful! I

Cling to him everlastingly.

For still I hoped to see the *stranger's* face,
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the intersperséd vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the night thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

France: An Ode

February 1798

Ye Clouds! that far above me float and pause,
 Whose pathless march no mortal may controul!
 Ye Ocean-Waves! that, wheresoe'er ye roll,
 Yield homage only to eternal laws!
 Ye Woods! that listen to the night-birds singing,
 Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
 Save when your own imperious branches swinging,
 Have made a solemn music of the wind!
 Where, like a man beloved of God,
 Through glooms, which never woodman trod,
 How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
 My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,
 Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
 By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound!
 O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high!
 And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!
 Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
 Yea, every thing that is and will be free!
 Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
 With what deep worship I have still adored
 The spirit of divinest Liberty.

When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared,
 And with that oath, which smote air, earth, and sea,
 Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free,
 Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared!
 With what a joy my lofty gratulation
 Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band:
 And when to whelm the disenchanting nation,
 Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,
 The Monarchs marched in evil day,
 And Britain joined the dire array;
 Though dear her shores and circling ocean,
 Though many friendships, many youthful loves
 Had swoln the patriot emotion
 And flung a magic light o'er all her hills and groves;
 Yet still my voice, unaltered, sang defeat
 To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,
 And shame too long delayed and vain retreat!
 For ne'er, O Liberty! with partial aim
 I dimmed thy light or damped thy holy flame;
 But blessed the paeans of delivered France,

And hung my head and wept at Britain's name.

“And what,” I said, “though Blasphemy's loud scream
 With that sweet music of deliverance strove!
 Though all the fierce and drunken passions wove
 A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's dream!
 Ye storms, that round the dawning East assembled,
 The Sun was rising, though ye hid his light!”
 And when, to soothe my soul, that hoped and trembled,
 The dissonance ceased, and all seemed calm and bright;
 When France her front deep-scarr'd and gory
 Concealed with clustering wreaths of glory;
 When, insupportably advancing,
 Her arm made mockery of the warrior's ramp;
 While timid looks of fury glancing,
 Domestic treason, crushed beneath her fatal stamp,
 Writhed like a wounded dragon in his gore;
 Then I reproached my fears that would not flee;
 “And soon,” I said, “shall Wisdom teach her lore
 In the low huts of them that toil and groan!
 And, conquering by her happiness alone,
 Shall France compel the nations to be free,
 Till Love and Joy look round, and call the Earth their own.”

Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!
 I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,
 From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent —
 I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained streams!
 Heroes, that for your peaceful country perished,
 And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows
 With bleeding wounds; forgive me, that I cherished
 One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes!
 To scatter rage, and traitorous guilt,
 Where Peace her jealous home had built;
 A patriot-race to disinherit
 Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear;
 And with inexpiable spirit
 To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer —
 O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind,
 And patriot only in pernicious toils!
 Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind?
 To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,
 Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey;
 To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
 From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray?

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game
They burst their manacles and wear the name
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!
O Liberty! with profitless endeavour
Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour;
But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever
Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power.
Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee,
(Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee)
Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions,
And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,
Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves!
And there I felt thee! — on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea, and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there.

The Old Man of the Alps

March 8 1798

Stranger! whose eyes a look of pity shew,
Say, will you listen to a tale of woe?
A tale in no unwonted horrors drest;
But sweet is pity to an agéd breast.
This voice did falter with old age before;
Sad recollections make it falter more.
Beside the torrent and beneath a wood,
High in these Alps my summer cottage stood;
One daughter still remain'd to cheer my way,
The evening-star of life's declining day:
Duly she hied to fill her milking-pail,
Ere shout of herdsmen rang from cliff or vale;
When she return'd, before the summer shiel,
On the fresh grass she spread the dairy meal;
Just as the snowy peaks began to lose
In glittering silver lights their rosy hues.
Singing in woods or bounding o'er the lawn,
No blither creature hail'd the early dawn;
And if I spoke of hearts by pain oppress'd,
When every friend is gone to them that rest;
Or of old men that leave, when they expire,
Daughters, that should have perish'd with their sire —
Leave them to toil all day through paths unknown,
And house at night behind some sheltering stone;
Impatient of the thought, with lively cheer
She broke half-closed the tasteless tale severe.
She play'd with fancies of a gayer hue,
Enamour'd of the scenes her *wishes* drew;
And oft she prattled with an eager tongue
Of promised joys that would not loiter long,
Till with her tearless eyes so bright and fair,
She seem'd to see them realis'd in air!
In fancy oft, within some sunny dell,
Where never wolf should howl or tempest yell,
She built a little home of joy and rest,
And fill'd it with the friends whom she lov'd best:
She named the inmates of her fancied cot,
And gave to each his own peculiar lot;
Which with our little herd abroad should roam,
And which should tend the dairy's toil at home,
And now the hour approach'd which should restore
Her lover from the wars, to part no more.

Her whole frame fluttered with uneasy joy;
I long'd myself to clasp the valiant boy;
And though I strove to calm *her* eager mood,
It was my own sole thought in solitude.
I told it to the Saints amid my hymns —
For O! you know not, on an old man's limbs
How thrillingly the pleasant sun-beams play,
That shine upon his daughter's wedding-day.
I hoped, that those fierce tempests, soon to rave
Unheard, unfelt, around *my* mountain grave,
Not undelightfully would break *her* rest,
While she lay pillow'd on her lover's breast;
Or join'd his pious prayer for pilgrims driven
Out to the mercy of the winds of heaven.
Yes! now the hour approach'd that should restore
Her lover from the wars to part no more.
Her thoughts were wild, her soul was in her eye,
She wept and laugh'd as if she knew not why;
And she had made a song about the wars,
And sang it to the sun and to the stars!
But while she look'd and listen'd, stood and ran,
And saw him plain in every distant man,
By treachery stabbed, on NANSY's murderous day,
A senseless corse th' expected husband lay.
A wounded man, who met us in the wood,
Heavily ask'd her where *my* cottage stood,
And told us all: she cast her eyes around
As if his words had been but empty sound.
Then look'd to Heav'n, like one that would deny
That such a thing *could be* beneath the sky.
Again he ask'd her if she knew my name,
And instantly an anguish wrench'd her frame,
And left her mind imperfect. No delight
Thenceforth she found in any cheerful sight,
Not ev'n in those time-haunted wells and groves,
Scenes of past joy, and birth-place of her loves.
If to her spirit any sound was dear,
'Twas the deep moan that spoke the tempest near;
Or sighs which chasms of icy vales outbreathe,
Sent from the dark, imprison'd floods beneath.
She wander'd up the crag and down the slope,
But not, as in her happy days of hope,
To seek the churning-plant of sovereign power,
That grew in clefts and bore a scarlet flower!
She roam'd, without a purpose, all alone,
Thro' high grey vales unknowing and unknown.

Kind-hearted stranger! patiently you hear
A tedious tale: I thank you for that tear.
May never other tears o'ercloud your eye,
Than those which gentle Pity can supply!
Did you not mark a towering convent hang,
Where the huge rocks with sounds of torrents rang?
Ev'n yet, methinks, its spiry turrets swim
Amid yon purple gloom ascending dim!
For thither oft would my poor child repair,
To ease her soul by penitence and prayer.
I knew that peace at good men's prayers returns
Home to the contrite heart of him that mourns,
And check'd her not; and often there she found
A timely pallet when the evening frown'd.
And there I trusted that my child would light
On shelter and on food, one dreadful night,
When there was uproar in the element,
And she was absent. To my rest I went:
I thought her safe, yet often did I wake
And felt my very heart within me ache.
No daughter near me, at this very door,
Next morn I listen'd to the dying roar.
Above, below, the prowling vulture wail'd,
And down the cliffs the heavy vapour sail'd.
Up by the wide-spread waves in fury torn,
Homestalls and pines along the vale were borne.
The Dalesmen in thick crowds appear'd below
Clearing the road, o'erwhelm'd with hills of snow.
At times to the proud gust's ascending swell,
A pack of blood-hounds flung their doleful yell:
For after nights of storm, that dismal train
The pious convent sends, with hope humane,
To find some out-stretch'd man — perchance to save,
Or give, at least, that last good gift, a grave!
But now a gathering crowd did I survey,
That slowly up the pasture bent their way;
Nor could I doubt but that their care had found
Some pilgrim in th' unchannel'd torrent drown'd.
And down the lawn I hasten'd to implore
That they would bring the body to my door;
But soon exclaim'd a boy, who ran before,
"Thrown by the last night's waters from their bed,
Your daughter has been found, and she is dead!"

The old man paused — May he who, sternly just,
Lays at his will his creatures in the dust;
Some ere the earliest buds of hope be blown,
And some, when every bloom of joy is flown;
May he the parent to his child restore
In that unchanging realm, where Love reigns evermore!

NICIAS ERYTHRAEUS

To a Young Lady

[Miss Lavinia Poole] on her Recovery from a Fever

March 31, 1798

Why need I say, Louisa dear!
How glad I am to see you here,
A lovely convalescent;
Risen from the bed of pain and fear,
And feverish heat incessant.

The sunny showers, the dappled sky,
The little birds that warble high,
Their vernal loves commencing,
Will better welcome you than I
With their sweet influencing.

Believe me, while in bed you lay,
Your danger taught us all to pray:
You made us grow devouter!
Each eye looked up and seemed to say,
How can we do without her?

Besides, what vexed us worse, we knew,
They have no need of such as you
In the place where you were going:
This World has angels all too few,
And Heaven is overflowing!

Lewti, or the Circassian Love-chaunt

1798

At midnight by the stream I roved,
 To forget the form I loved.
 Image of Lewti! from my mind
 Depart; for Lewti is not kind.
 The Moon was high, the moonlight gleam
 And the shadow of a star
 Heaved upon Tamaha's stream;
 But the rock shone brighter far,
 The rock half sheltered from my view
 By pendent boughs of tressy yew. —
 So shines my Lewti's forehead fair,
 Gleaming through her sable hair.
 Image of Lewti! from my mind
 Depart; for Lewti is not kind.

I saw a cloud of palest hue,
 Onward to the moon it passed;
 Still brighter and more bright it grew,
 With floating colours not a few,
 Till it reached the moon at last:
 Then the cloud was wholly bright,
 With a rich and amber light!
 And so with many a hope I seek,
 And with such joy I find my Lewti;
 And even so my pale wan cheek
 Drinks in as deep a flush of beauty!
 Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind,
 If Lewti never will be kind.

The little cloud — it floats away,
 Away it goes; away so soon!
 Alas! it has no power to stay:
 Its hues are dim, its hues are grey —
 Away it passes from the moon!
 How mournfully it seems to fly,
 Ever fading more and more,
 To joyless regions of the sky —
 And now 'tis whiter than before!
 As white as my poor cheek will be,
 When, Lewti! on my couch I lie,
 A dying man for love of thee.
 Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind —

And yet, thou didst not look unkind.

I saw a vapour in the sky,
Thin, and white, and very high;
I ne'er beheld so thin a cloud:
Perhaps the breezes that can fly
Now below and now above,
Have snatched aloft the lawny shroud
Of Lady fair — that died for love.
For maids, as well as youths, have perished
From fruitless love too fondly cherished.
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind —
For Lewti never will be kind.

Hush! my heedless feet from under
Slip the crumbling banks for ever:
Like echoes to a distant thunder,
They plunge into the gentle river.
The river-swans have heard my tread,
And startle from their reedy bed.
O beauteous birds! methinks ye measure
Your movements to some heavenly tune!
O beauteous birds! 'tis such a pleasure
To see you move beneath the moon,
I would it were your true delight
To sleep by day and wake all night.

I know the place where Lewti lies,
When silent night has closed her eyes:
It is a breezy jasmine-bower,
The nightingale sings o'er her head:
Voice of the Night! had I the power
That leafy labyrinth to thread,
And creep, like thee, with soundless tread,
I then might view her bosom white
Heaving lovely to my sight,
As these two swans together heave
On the gently-swelling wave.

Oh! that she saw me in a dream,
And dreamt that I had died for care;
All pale and wasted I would seem,
Yet fair withal, as spirits are!
I'd die indeed, if I might see
Her bosom heave, and heave for me!
Soothe, gentle image! soothe my mind!
To-morrow Lewti may be kind.

Fears in Solitude Written in April 1798, during the alarm of an invasion

April 20, 1798

A green and silent spot, amid the hills,
 A small and silent dell! O'er stiller place
 No singing sky-lark ever poised himself.
 The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,
 Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,
 All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
 Which now blooms most profusely: but the dell,
 Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate
 As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,
 When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve,
 The level sunshine glimmers with green light.
 Oh! 'tis a quiet spirit-healing nook!
 Which all, methinks, would love; but chiefly he,
 The humble man, who, in his youthful years,
 Knew just so much of folly, as had made
 His early manhood more securely wise!
 Here he might lie on fern or withered heath,
 While from the singing lark (that sings unseen
 The minstrelsy that solitude loves best),
 And from the sun, and from the breezy air,
 Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame;
 And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,
 Made up a meditative joy, and found
 Religious meanings in the forms of Nature!
 And so, his senses gradually wrapt
 In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,
 And dreaming hears thee still, O singing lark,
 That singest like an angel in the clouds!

My God! it is a melancholy thing
 For such a man, who would full fain preserve
 His soul in calmness, yet perforce must feel
 For all his human brethren — O my God!
 It weighs upon the heart, that he must think
 What uproar and what strife may now be stirring
 This way or that way o'er these silent hills —
 Invasion, and the thunder and the shout,
 And all the crash of onset; fear and rage,
 And undetermined conflict — even now,
 Even now, perchance, and in his native isle:
 Carnage and groans beneath this blessed sun!
 We have offended, Oh! my countrymen!

We have offended very grievously,
And been most tyrannous. From east to west
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven!
The wretched plead against us; multitudes
Countless and vehement, the sons of God,
Our brethren! Like a cloud that travels on,
Steamed up from Cairo's swamps of pestilence,
Even so, my countrymen! have we gone forth
And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint
With slow perdition murders the whole man,
His body and his soul! Meanwhile, at home,
All individual dignity and power
Engulfed in Courts, Committees, Institutions,
Associations and Societies,
A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting Guild,
One Benefit-Club for mutual flattery,
We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,
Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth;
Contemptuous of all honourable rule,
Yet bartering freedom and the poor man's life
For gold, as at a market! The sweet words
Of Christian promise, words that even yet
Might stem destruction, were they wisely preached,
Are muttered o'er by men, whose tones proclaim
How flat and wearisome they feel their trade:
Rank scoffers some, but most too indolent
To deem them falsehoods or to know their truth.
Oh! blasphemous! the Book of Life is made
A superstitious instrument, on which
We gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break;
For all must swear — all and in every place,
College and wharf, council and justice-court;
All, all must swear, the briber and the bribed,
Merchant and lawyer, senator and priest,
The rich, the poor, the old man and the young;
All, all make up one scheme of perjury,
That faith doth reel; the very name of God
Sounds like a juggler's charm; and, bold with joy,
Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
(Portentous sight!) the owlet Atheism,
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,
And hooting at the glorious sun in Heaven,
Cries out, "Where is it?"

Thankless too for peace,
(Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous seas)
Secure from actual warfare, we have loved
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!
Alas! for ages ignorant of all
Its ghastlier workings, (famine or blue plague,
Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry snows,)
We, this whole people, have been clamorous
For war and bloodshed; animating sports,
The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,
Spectators and not combatants! No guess
Anticipative of a wrong unfelt,
No speculation on contingency,
However dim and vague, too vague and dim
To yield a justifying cause; and forth,
(Stuffed out with big preamble, holy names,
And adjurations of the God in Heaven,)
We send our mandates for the certain death
Of thousands and ten thousands! Boys and girls,
And women, that would groan to see a child
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning meal!
The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers
From curses, who knows scarcely words enough
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
And technical in victories and defeats,
And all our dainty terms for fratricide;
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which
We join no feeling and attach no form!
As if the soldier died without a wound;
As if the fibres of this godlike frame
Were gored without a pang; as if the wretch,
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
Passed off to Heaven, translated and not killed;
As though he had no wife to pine for him,
No God to judge him! Therefore, evil days
Are coming on us, O my countrymen!
And what if all-avenging Providence,
Strong and retributive, should make us know
The meaning of our words, force us to feel
The desolation and the agony
Of our fierce doings?

Spare us yet awhile,
 Father and God! O! spare us yet awhile!
 Oh! let not English women drag their flight
 Fainting beneath the burthen of their babes,
 Of the sweet infants, that but yesterday
 Laughed at the breast! Sons, brothers, husbands, all
 Who ever gazed with fondness on the forms
 Which grew up with you round the same fire-side,
 And all who ever heard the sabbath-bells
 Without the infidel's scorn, make yourselves pure!
 Stand forth! be men! repel an impious foe,
 Impious and false, a light yet cruel race,
 Who laugh away all virtue, mingling mirth
 With deeds of murder; and still promising
 Freedom, themselves too sensual to be free,
 Poison life's amities, and cheat the heart
 Of faith and quiet hope, and all that soothes,
 And all that lifts the spirit! Stand we forth;
 Render them back upon the insulted ocean,
 And let them toss as idly on its waves
 As the vile sea-weed, which some mountain-blast
 Swept from our shores! And oh! may we return
 Not with a drunken triumph, but with fear,
 Repenting of the wrongs with which we stung
 So fierce a foe to frenzy!

I have told,
 O Britons! O my brethren! I have told
 Most bitter truth, but without bitterness.
 Nor deem my zeal or factious or mistimed;
 For never can true courage dwell with them,
 Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look
 At their own vices. We have been too long
 Dupes of a deep delusion! Some, belike,
 Groaning with restless enmity, expect
 All change from change of constituted power;
 As if a Government had been a robe,
 On which our vice and wretchedness were tagged
 Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe
 Pulled off at pleasure. Fondly these attach
 A radical causation to a few
 Poor drudges of chastising Providence,
 Who borrow all their hues and qualities
 From our own folly and rank wickedness,
 Which gave them birth and nursed them. Others, meanwhile,
 Dote with a mad idolatry; and all
 Who will not fall before their images,

And yield them worship, they are enemies
Even of their country!

Such have I been deemed. —

But, O dear Britain! O my Mother Isle!
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,
A husband, and a father! who revere
All bonds of natural love, and find them all
Within the limits of thy rocky shores.
O native Britain! O my Mother Isle!
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
Have drunk in all my intellectual life,
All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
All adoration of the God in nature,
All lovely and all honourable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joy and greatness of its future being?
There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country! O divine
And beautiful island! Thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me! —

May my fears,

My filial fears, be vain! and may the vaunts
And menace of the vengeful enemy
Pass like the gust, that roared and died away
In the distant tree: which heard, and only heard
In this low dell, bowed not the delicate grass.

But now the gentle dew-fall sends abroad
The fruit-like perfume of the golden furze:
The light has left the summit of the hill,
Though still a sunny gleam lies beautiful,
Aslant the ivied beacon. Now farewell,
Farewell, awhile, O soft and silent spot!
On the green sheep-track, up the heathy hill,
Homeward I wind my way; and lo! recalled
From bodings that have well-nigh wearied me,
I find myself upon the brow, and pause
Startled! And after lonely sojourning
In such a quiet and surrounded nook,
This burst of prospect, here the shadowy main,

Dim-tinted, there the mighty majesty
Of that huge amphitheatre of rich
And elmy fields, seems like society —
Conversing with the mind, and giving it
A livelier impulse and a dance of thought!
And now, beloved Stowey! I behold
Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms
Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend;
And close behind them, hidden from my view,
Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe
And my babe's mother dwell in peace! With light
And quickened footsteps thitherward I tend,
Remembering thee, O green and silent dell!
And grateful, that by nature's quietness
And solitary musings, all my heart
Is softened, and made worthy to indulge
Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind.

The Nightingale. A Conversation Poem, April, 1798

April, 1798

No cloud, no relique of the sunken day
Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
Of sullen light, no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge!
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
But hear no murmuring: it flows silently,
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,
A balmy night! and though the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,
"Most musical, most melancholy" bird!
A melancholy bird? Oh! idle thought!
In Nature there is nothing melancholy.
But some night-wandering man whose heart was pierced
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
(And so, poor wretch! filled all things with himself,
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
Of his own sorrow) he, and such as he,
First named these notes a melancholy strain.
And many a poet echoes the conceit;
Poet who hath been building up the rhyme
When he had better far have stretched his limbs
Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
By sun or moon-light, to the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
And of his fame forgetful! so his fame
Should share in Nature's immortality,
A venerable thing! and so his song
Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself
Be loved like Nature! But 'twill not be so;
And youths and maidens most poetical,
Who lose the deepening twilights of the spring
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.

My Friend, and thou, our Sister! we have learnt
A different lore: we may not thus profane
Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
And joyance! 'Tis the merry Nightingale
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
As he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music!

And I know a grove
Of large extent, hard by a castle huge,
Which the great lord inhabits not; and so
This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
But never elsewhere in one place I knew
So many nightingales; and far and near,
In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,
They answer and provoke each other's song,
With skirmish and capricious passagings,
And murmurs musical and swift jug jug,
And one low piping sound more sweet than all —
Stirring the air with such a harmony,
That should you close your eyes, you might almost
Forget it was not day! On moonlight bushes,
Whose dewy leaflets are but half-disclosed,
You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle Maid,
Who dwelleth in her hospitable home
Hard by the castle, and at latest eve
(Even like a Lady vowed and dedicate
To something more than Nature in the grove)
Glides through the pathways; she knows all their notes,
That gentle Maid! and oft, a moment's space,
What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,
Hath heard a pause of silence; till the moon
Emerging, hath awakened earth and sky
With one sensation, and those wakeful birds
Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,
As if some sudden gale had swept at once
A hundred airy harps! And she hath watched

Many a nightingale perch giddily
On blossomy twig still swinging from the breeze,
And to that motion tune his wanton song
Like tipsy Joy that reels with tossing head.

Farewell, O Warbler! till to-morrow eve,
And you, my friends! farewell, a short farewell!
We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
And now for our dear homes. — That strain again!
Full fain it would delay me! My dear babe,
Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen! And I deem it wise
To make him Nature's play-mate. He knows well
The evening-star; and once, when he awoke
In most distressful mood (some inward pain
Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream —)
I hurried with him to our orchard-plot,
And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped tears,
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam! Well! —
It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the night
He may associate joy. — Once more, farewell,
Sweet Nightingale! once more, my friends! farewell.

The Three Graves. A fragment of a sexton's tale

1797-1809

[PART I — From MS.]

PART I

Beneath this thorn when I was young,
This thorn that blooms so sweet,
We loved to stretch our lazy limbs
In summer's noon-tide heat.

And hither too the old man came,
The maiden and her feer,
“Then tell me, Sexton, tell me why
The toad has harbour here.

The Thorn is neither dry nor dead,
But still it blossoms sweet;
Then tell me why all round its roots
The dock and nettle meet.

Why here the hemlock, &c. [*sic in MS.*]

Why these three graves all side by side,
Beneath the flow'ry thorn,
Stretch out so green and dark a length,
By any foot unworn.”

There, there a ruthless mother lies
Beneath the flowery thorn;
And there a barren wife is laid,
And there a maid forlorn.

The barren wife and maid forlorn
Did love each other dear;
The ruthless mother wrought the woe,
And cost them many a tear.

Fair Ellen was of serious mind,
Her temper mild and even,
And Mary, graceful as the fir
That points the spire to heaven.

Young Edward he to Mary said,
 "I would you were my bride,"
 And she was scarlet as he spoke,
 And turned her face to hide.

"You know my mother she is rich,
 And you have little gear;
 And go and if she say not Nay,
 Then I will be your fere."

Young Edward to the mother went,
 To him the mother said:
 "In truth you are a comely man;
 You shall my daughter wed."

[In Mary's joy fair Eleanor
 Did bear a sister's part;
 For why, though not akin in blood,
 They sisters were in heart.]¹

Small need to tell to any man
 That ever shed a tear
 What passed within the lover's heart
 The happy day so near.

The mother, more than mothers use,
 Rejoiced when they were by;
 And all the "course of wooing" passed
 Beneath the mother's eye.

And here within the flowering thorn
 How deep they drank of joy:
 The mother fed upon the sight,
 Nor . . . [*sic in MS.*]

¹ It is uncertain whether this stanza is erased or merely blotted in the MS
 [PART II — From MS.]

PART II

And now the wedding day was fix'd,
 The wedding-ring was bought;
 The wedding-cake with her own hand
 The ruthless mother brought.

"And when to-morrow's sun shines forth
 The maid shall be a bride";
 Thus Edward to the mother spake

While she sate by his side.

Alone they sate within the bower:
The mother's colour fled,
For Mary's foot was heard above —
She decked the bridal bed.

And when her foot was on the stairs
To meet her at the door,
With steady step the mother rose,
And silent left the bower.

She stood, her back against the door,
And when her child drew near —
“Away! away!” the mother cried,
“Ye shall not enter here.

Would ye come here, ye maiden vile.
And rob me of my mate?”
And on her child the mother scowled
A deadly leer of hate.

Fast rooted to the spot, you guess,
The wretched maiden stood,
As pale as any ghost of night
That wanteth flesh and blood.

She did not groan, she did not fall,
She did not shed a tear,
Nor did she cry, “Oh! mother, why
May I not enter here?”

But wildly up the stairs she ran,
As if her sense was fled,
And then her trembling limbs she threw
Upon the bridal bed.

The mother she to Edward went
Where he sate in the bower,
And said, “That woman is not fit
To be your paramour.

She is my child — it makes my heart
With grief and trouble swell;
I rue the hour that gave her birth,
For never worse befel.

For she is fierce and she is proud,
And of an envious mind;
A wily hypocrite she is,
And giddy as the wind.

And if you go to church with her,
You'll rue the bitter smart;
For she will wrong your marriage-bed,
And she will break your heart.

Oh God, to think that I have shared
Her deadly sin so long;
She is my child, and therefore I
As mother held my tongue.

She is my child, I've risked for her
My living soul's estate:
I cannot say my daily prayers,
The burthen is so great.

And she would scatter gold about
Until her back was bare;
And should you swing for lust of hers
In truth she'd little care."

Then in a softer tone she said,
And took him by the hand:
"Sweet Edward, for one kiss of your's
I'd give my house and land.

And if you'll go to church with me,
And take me for your bride,
I'll make you heir of all I have —
Nothing shall be denied."

Then Edward started from his seat,
And he laughed loud and long —
"In truth, good mother, you are mad,
Or drunk with liquor strong."

To him no word the mother said,
But on her knees she fell,
And fetched her breath while thrice your hand
Might toll the passing-bell.

"Thou daughter now above my head,
Whom in my womb I bore,
May every drop of thy heart's blood

Be curst for ever more.

And curséd be the hour when first
I heard thee wawl and cry;
And in the Church-yard curséd be
The grave where thou shalt lie!”

And Mary on the bridal-bed
Her mother's curse had heard;
And while the cruel mother spake
The bed beneath her stirred.

In wrath young Edward left the hall,
And turning round he sees
The mother looking up to God
And still upon her knees.

Young Edward he to Mary went
When on the bed she lay:
“Sweet love, this is a wicked house —
Sweet love, we must away.”

He raised her from the bridal-bed,
All pale and wan with fear;
“No Dog,” quoth he, “if he were mine,
No Dog would kennel here.”

He led her from the bridal-bed,
He led her from the stairs.
[Had sense been hers she had not dar'd
To venture on her prayers. *MS. erased*]

The mother still was in the bower,
And with a greedy heart
She *drank perdition* on her knees,
Which never may depart.

But when their steps were heard below
On God she did not call;
She did forget the God of Heaven,
For they were in the hall.

She started up — the servant maid
Did see her when she rose;
And she has oft declared to me
The blood within her froze.

As Edward led his bride away
And hurried to the door,
The ruthless mother springing forth
Stopped midway on the floor.

What did she mean? What did she mean?
For with a smile she cried:
“Unblest ye shall not pass my door,
The bride-groom and his bride.

Be blithe as lambs in April are,
As flies when fruits are red;
May God forbid that thought of me
Should haunt your marriage-bed.

And let the night be given to bliss,
The day be given to glee:
I am a woman weak and old,
Why turn a thought on me?

What can an aged mother do,
And what have ye to dread?
A curse is wind, it hath no shape
To haunt your marriage-bed.’’

When they were gone and out of sight
She rent her hoary hair,
And foamed like any Dog of June
When sultry sun-beams glare.

Now ask you why the barren wife,
And why the maid forlorn,
And why the ruthless mother lies
Beneath the flowery thorn?

Three times, three times this spade of mine,
In spite of bolt or bar,
Did from beneath the belfry come,
When spirits wandering are.

And when the mother's soul to Hell
By howling fiends was borne,
This spade was seen to mark her grave
Beneath the flowery thorn.

And when the death-knock at the door
Called home the maid forlorn,
This spade was seen to mark her grave

Beneath the flowery thorn.

And 'tis a fearful, fearful tree;
The ghosts that round it meet,
'Tis they that cut the rind at night,
Yet still it blossoms sweet.

[End of MS.]

PART III

The grapes upon the Vicar's wall
Were ripe as ripe could be;
And yellow leaves in sun and wind
Were falling from the tree.

On the hedge-elms in the narrow lane
Still swung the spikes of corn:
Dear Lord! it seems but yesterday —
Young Edward's marriage-morn.

Up through that wood behind the church,
There leads from Edward's door
A mossy track, all over boughed,
For half a mile or more.

And from their house-door by that track
The bride and bridegroom went;
Sweet Mary, though she was not gay,
Seemed cheerful and content.

But when they to the church-yard came,
I've heard poor Mary say,
As soon as she stepped into the sun,
Her heart it died away.

And when the Vicar join'd their hands,
Her limbs did creep and freeze:
But when they prayed, she thought she saw
Her mother on her knees.

And o'er the church-path they returned —
I saw poor Mary's back,
Just as she stepped beneath the boughs
Into the mossy track.

Her feet upon the mossy track
The married maiden set:
That moment — I have heard her say —
She wished she could forget.

The shade o'er-flushed her limbs with heat —
Then came a chill like death:
And when the merry bells rang out,
They seemed to stop her breath.

Beneath the foulest mother's curse
No child could ever thrive:
A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive.

So five months passed: the mother still
Would never heal the strife;
But Edward was a loving man
And Mary a fond wife.

“My sister may not visit us,
My mother says her nay:
O Edward! you are all to me,
I wish for your sake I could be
More lifesome and more gay.

I'm dull and sad! indeed, indeed
I know I have no reason!
Perhaps I am not well in health,
And 'tis a gloomy season.”

'Twas a drizzly time — no ice, no snow!
And on the few fine days
She stirred not out, lest she might meet
Her mother in the ways.

But Ellen, spite of miry ways
And weather dark and dreary,
Trudged every day to Edward's house,
And made them all more cheery.

Oh! Ellen was a faithful friend,
More dear than any sister!
As cheerful too as singing lark;
And she ne'er left them till 'twas dark,
And then they always missed her.

And now Ash-Wednesday came — that day
But few to church repair:
For on that day you know we read
The Commination prayer.

Our late old Vicar, a kind man,
Once, Sir, he said to me,
He wished that service was clean out
Of our good Liturgy.

The mother walked into the church —
To Ellen's seat she went:
Though Ellen always kept her church
All church-days during Lent.

And gentle Ellen welcomed her
With courteous looks and mild:
Thought she, "What if her heart should melt,
And all be reconciled!"

The day was scarcely like a day —
The clouds were black outright:
And many a night, with half a moon,
I've seen the church more light.

The wind was wild; against the glass
The rain did beat and bicker;
The church-tower swinging over head,
You scarce could hear the Vicar!

And then and there the mother knelt,
And audibly she cried —
"Oh! may a clinging curse consume
This woman by my side!

O hear me, hear me, Lord in Heaven,
Although you take my life —
O curse this woman, at whose house
Young Edward woo'd his wife.

By night and day, in bed and bower,
O let her curséd be!!!"
So having prayed, steady and slow,
She rose up from her knee!
And left the church, nor e'er again
The church-door entered she.

I saw poor Ellen kneeling still,
So pale! I guessed not why:
When she stood up, there plainly was
A trouble in her eye.

And when the prayers were done, we all
Came round and asked her why:
Giddy she seemed, and sure, there was
A trouble in her eye.

But ere she from the church-door stepped
She smiled and told us why:
“It was a wicked woman’s curse,”
Quoth she, “and what care I?”

She smiled, and smiled, and passed it off
Ere from the door she stept —
But all agree it would have been
Much better had she wept.

And if her heart was not at ease,
This was her constant cry —
“It was a wicked woman’s curse —
God’s good, and what care I?”

There was a hurry in her looks,
Her struggles she redoubled:
“It was a wicked woman’s curse,
And why should I be troubled?”

These tears will come — I dandled her
When ’twas the merest fairy —
Good creature! and she hid it all:
She told it not to Mary.

But Mary heard the tale: her arms
Round Ellen’s neck she threw;
“O Ellen, Ellen, she cursed me,
And now she hath cursed you!”

I saw young Edward by himself
Stalk fast adown the lee,
He snatched a stick from every fence,
A twig from every tree.

He snapped them still with hand or knee,
And then away they flew!
As if with his uneasy limbs

He knew not what to do!

You see, good sir! that single hill?
His farm lies underneath:
He heard it there, he heard it all,
And only gnashed his teeth.

Now Ellen was a darling love
In all his joys and cares:
And Ellen's name and Mary's name
Fast-linked they both together came,
Whene'er he said his prayers.

And in the moment of his prayers
He loved them both alike:
Yea, both sweet names with one sweet joy
Upon his heart did strike!

He reach'd his home, and by his looks
They saw his inward strife:
And they clung round him with their arms,
Both Ellen and his wife.

And Mary could not check her tears,
So on his breast she bowed;
Then frenzy melted into grief,
And Edward wept aloud.

Dear Ellen did not weep at all,
But closelier did she cling,
And turned her face and looked as if
She saw some frightful thing.

PART IV

To see a man tread over graves
I hold it no good mark;
'Tis wicked in the sun and moon,
And bad luck in the dark!

You see that grave? The Lord he gives,
The Lord, he takes away:
O Sir! the child of my old age
Lies there as cold as clay.

Except that grave, you scarce see one
That was not dug by me;
I'd rather dance upon 'em all

Than tread upon these three!

“Aye, Sexton! ’tis a touching tale.”
You, Sir! are but a lad;
This month I’m in my seventieth year,
And still it makes me sad.

And Mary’s sister told it me,
For three good hours and more;
Though I had heard it, in the main,
From Edward’s self, before.

Well! it passed off! the gentle Ellen
Did well nigh dote on Mary;
And she went oftener than before,
And Mary loved her more and more:
She managed all the dairy.

To market she on market-days,
To church on Sundays came;
All seemed the same: all seemed so, Sir!
But all was not the same!

Had Ellen lost her mirth? Oh! no!
But she was seldom cheerful;
And Edward looked as if he thought
That Ellen’s mirth was fearful.

When by herself, she to herself
Must sing some merry rhyme;
She could not now be glad for hours,
Yet silent all the time.

And when she soothed her friend, through all
Her soothing words ’twas plain
She had a sore grief of her own,
A haunting in her brain.

And oft she said, I’m not grown thin!
And then her wrist she spanned;
And once when Mary was down-cast,
She took her by the hand,
And gazed upon her, and at first
She gently pressed her hand;

Then harder, till her grasp at length
Did gripe like a convulsion!
“Alas!” said she, “we ne’er can be

Made happy by compulsion!”

And once her both arms suddenly
Round Mary's neck she flung,
And her heart panted, and she felt
The words upon her tongue.

She felt them coming, but no power
Had she the words to smother;
And with a kind of shriek she cried,
“Oh Christ! you're like your mother!”

So gentle Ellen now no more
Could make this sad house cheery;
And Mary's melancholy ways
Drove Edward wild and weary.

Lingering he raised his latch at eve,
Though tired in heart and limb:
He loved no other place, and yet
Home was no home to him.

One evening he took up a book,
And nothing in it read;
Then flung it down, and groaning cried,
“O! Heaven! that I were dead.”

Mary looked up into his face,
And nothing to him said;
She tried to smile, and on his arm
Mournfully leaned her head.

And he burst into tears, and fell
Upon his knees in prayer:
“Her heart is broke! O God! my grief,
It is too great to bear!”

'Twas such a foggy time as makes
Old sextons, Sir! like me,
Rest on their spades to cough; the spring
Was late uncommonly.

And then the hot days, all at once,
They came, we knew not how:
You looked about for shade, when scarce
A leaf was on a bough.

It happened then ('twas in the bower,
A furlong up the wood:
Perhaps you know the place, and yet
I scarce know how you should,)

No path leads thither, 'tis not nigh
To any pasture-plot;
But clustered near the chattering brook,
Lone hollies marked the spot.

Those hollies of themselves a shape
As of an arbour took,
A close, round arbour; and it stands
Not three strides from a brook.

Within this arbour, which was still
With scarlet berries hung,
Were these three friends, one Sunday morn,
Just as the first bell rung.

'Tis sweet to hear a brook, 'tis sweet
To hear the Sabbath-bell,
'Tis sweet to hear them both at once,
Deep in a woody dell.

His limbs along the moss, his head
Upon a mossy heap,
With shut-up senses, Edward lay:
That brook e'en on a working day
Might chatter one to sleep.

And he had passed a restless night,
And was not well in health;
The women sat down by his side,
And talked as 'twere by stealth.

“The Sun peeps through the close thick leaves,
See, dearest Ellen! see!
'Tis in the leaves, a little sun,
No bigger than your ee;

A tiny sun, and it has got
A perfect glory too;
Ten thousand threads and hairs of light,
Make up a glory gay and bright
Round that small orb, so blue.”

And then they argued of those rays,
What colour they might be;
Says this, "They're mostly green"; says that,
"They're amber-like to me."

So they sat chatting, while bad thoughts
Were troubling Edward's rest;
But soon they heard his hard quick pants,
And the thumping in his breast.

"A mother too!" these self-same words
Did Edward mutter plain;
His face was drawn back on itself,
With horror and huge pain.

Both groaned at once, for both knew well
What thoughts were in his mind;
When he waked up, and stared like one
That hath been just struck blind.

He sat upright; and ere the dream
Had had time to depart,
"O God, forgive me!" (he exclaimed)
"I have torn out her heart."

Then Ellen shrieked, and forthwith burst
Into ungentle laughter;
And Mary shivered, where she sat,
And never she smiled after.

The Wanderings of Cain Canto 2

1798

“A little further, O my father, yet a little further, and we shall come into the open moonlight.” Their road was through a forest of fir-trees; at its entrance the trees stood at distances from each other, and the path was broad, and the moonlight and the moonlight shadows reposed upon it, and appeared quietly to inhabit that solitude. But soon the path winded and became narrow; the sun at high noon sometimes speckled, but never illumined it, and now it was dark as a cavern.

“It is dark, O my father!” said Enos, “but the path under our feet is smooth and soft, and we shall soon come out into the open moonlight.”

“Lead on, my child!” said Cain; “guide me, little child!” And the innocent little child clasped a finger of the hand which had murdered the righteous Abel, and he guided his father. “The fir branches drip upon thee, my son.” “Yea, pleasantly, father, for I ran fast and eagerly to bring thee the pitcher and the cake, and my body is not yet cool. How happy the squirrels are that feed on these fir-trees! they leap from bough to bough, and the old squirrels play round their young ones in the nest. I clomb a tree yesterday at noon, O my father, that I might play with them, but they leaped away from the branches, even to the slender twigs did they leap, and in a moment I beheld them on another tree. Why, O my father, would they not play with me? I would be good to them as thou art good to me: and I groaned to them even as thou groanest when you givest me to eat, and when thou coverest me at evening, and as often as I stand at thy knee and thine eyes look at me?” Then Cain stopped, and stifling his groans he sank to the earth, and the child Enos stood in the darkness beside him.

And Cain lifted up his voice and cried bitterly, and said, “The Mighty One that persecuteth me is on this side and on that; he pursueth my soul like the wind, like the sand-blast he passeth though me; he is around me even as the air! O that I might be utterly no more! I desire to die — yea, the things that never had life, neither move they upon the earth — behold! they seem precious to mine eyes. O that a man might live without the breath of his nostrils. So I might abide in darkness, and blackness, and an empty space! Yea, I would lie down, I would not rise, neither would I stir my limbs till I became as the rock in the den of the lion, on which the young lion resteth his head whilst he sleepeth. For the torrent that roareth far off hath a voice: and the clouds in heaven look terribly on me; the Mighty One who is against me speaketh in the wind of the cedar grove; and in silence am I dried up.” Then Enos spake to his father, “Arise, my father, arise, we are but a little way from the place where I found the cake and the pitcher.” And Cain said, “How knowest thou!” and the child answered — “Behold the bare rocks are a few of thy strides distant from the forest; and while even now thou wert lifting up thy voice, I heard the echo.” Then the child took hold of his father, as if he would raise him: and Cain being faint and feeble rose slowly on his knees and pressed himself against the trunk of a fir, and stood upright and followed the child.

The path was dark till within three strides’ length of its termination, when it turned suddenly; the thick black trees formed a low arch, and the moonlight appeared for a moment like a dazzling portal. Enos ran before and stood in the open air; and when Cain, his father, emerged from the darkness, the child was affrighted. For the mighty limbs of Cain were wasted as by fire; his hair was as the matted curls on the bison’s forehead, and so glared his fierce and sullen eye beneath: and the black abundant locks on either side, a rank and tangled mass, were stained and scorched, as though the grasp of a burning iron hand had

striven to rend them; and his countenance told in a strange and terrible language of agonies that had been, and were, and were still to continue to be.

The scene around was desolate; as far as the eye could reach it was desolate: the bare rocks faced each other, and left a long and wide interval of thin white sand. You might wander on and look round and round, and peep into the crevices of the rocks and discover nothing that acknowledged the influence of the seasons. There was no spring, no summer, no autumn: and the winter's snow, that would have been lovely, fell not on these hot rocks and scorching sands. Never morning lark had poised himself over this desert; but the huge serpent often hissed there beneath the talons of the vulture, and the vulture screamed, his wings imprisoned within the coils of the serpent. The pointed and shattered summits of the ridges of the rocks made a rude mimicry of human concerns, and seemed to prophecy mutely of things that then were not; steeples, and battlements, and ships with naked masts. As far from the wood as a boy might sling a pebble of the brook, there was one rock by itself at a small distance from the main ridge. It had been precipitated there perhaps by the groan which the Earth uttered when our first father fell. Before you approached, it appeared to lie flat on the ground, but its base slanted from its point, and between its point and the sands a tall man might stand upright. It was here that Enos had found the pitcher and cake, and to this place he led his father. But ere they had reached the rock they beheld a human shape: his back was towards them, and they were advancing unperceived, when they heard him smite his breast and cry aloud, "Woe is me! woe is me! I must never die again, and yet I am perishing with thirst and hunger."

Pallid, as the reflection of the sheeted lightning on the heavy-sailing night-cloud, became the face of Cain; but the child Enos took hold of the shaggy skin, his father's robe, and raised his eyes to his father, and listening whispered, "Ere yet I could speak, I am sure, O my father, that I heard that voice. Have not I often said that I remembered a sweet voice? O my father! this is it": and Cain trembled exceedingly. The voice was sweet indeed, but it was thin and querulous, like that of a feeble slave in misery, who despairs altogether, yet can not refrain himself from weeping and lamentation. And, behold! Enos glided forward, and creeping softly round the base of the rock, stood before the stranger, and looked up into his face. And the Shape shrieked, and turned round, and Cain beheld him, that his limbs and his face were those of his brother Abel whom he had killed! And Cain stood like one who struggles in his sleep because of the exceeding terribleness of a dream.

Thus as he stood in silence and darkness of soul, the Shape fell at his feet, and embraced his knees, and cried out with a bitter outcry, "Thou eldest born of Adam, whom Eve, my mother, brought forth, cease to torment me! I was feeding my flocks in green pastures by the side of quiet rivers, and thou killedst me; and now I am in misery." Then Cain closed his eyes, and hid them with his hands; and again he opened his eyes, and looked around him, and said to Enos, "What beholdest thou? Didst thou hear a voice, my son?" "Yes, my father, I beheld a man in unclean garments, and he uttered a sweet voice, full of lamentation." Then Cain raised up the Shape that was like Abel, and said: — "The Creator of our father, who had respect unto thee, and unto thy offering, wherefore hath he forsaken thee?" Then the Shape shrieked a second time, and rent his garment, and his naked skin was like the white sands beneath their feet; and he shrieked yet a third time, and threw himself on his face upon the sand that was black with the shadow of the rock, and Cain and Enos sate beside him; the child by his right hand, and Cain by his left. They were all three under the rock, and within the shadow. The Shape that was like Abel raised himself up, and spake to the child, "I know where the cold waters are, but I may not drink, wherefore didst thou then take away my pitcher?" But Cain said, "Didst thou not find favour in the sight of the Lord thy God?" The Shape answered, "The Lord is God of the living only, the dead have another God." Then the child Enos lifted up his eyes and prayed; but Cain rejoiced secretly in his heart. "Wretched shall they be

all the days of their mortal life,” exclaimed the Shape, “who sacrifice worthy and acceptable sacrifices to the God of the dead; but after death their toil ceaseth. Woe is me, for I was well beloved by the God of the living, and cruel wert thou, O my brother, who didst snatch me away from his power and his dominion.” Having uttered these words, he rose suddenly, and fled over the sands: and Cain said in his heart, “The curse of the Lord is on me; but who is the God of the dead?” and he ran after the Shape, and the Shape fled shrieking over the sands, and the sands rose like white mists behind the steps of Cain, but the feet of him that was like Abel disturbed not the sands. He greatly outrun Cain, and turning short, he wheeled round, and came again to the rock where they had been sitting, and where Enos still stood; and the child caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and he fell upon the ground. And Cain stopped, and beholding him not, said, “he has passed into the dark woods,” and he walked slowly back to the rocks; and when he reached it the child told him that he had caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and that the man had fallen upon the ground: and Cain once more sate beside him, and said, “Abel, my brother, I would lament for thee, but that the spirit within me is withered, and burnt up with extreme agony. Now, I pray thee, by thy flocks, and by thy pastures, and by the quiet rivers which thou lovedst, that thou tell me all that thou knowest. Who is the God of the dead? where doth he make his dwelling? what sacrifices are acceptable unto him? for I have offered, but have not been received; I have prayed, and have not been heard; and how can I be afflicted more than I already am?” The Shape arose and answered, “O that thou hadst had pity on me as I will have pity on thee. Follow me, Son of Adam! and bring thy child with thee!”

And they three passed over the white sands between the rocks, silent as the shadows.

To —

?1798

I mix in life, and labour to seem free,
With common persons pleas'd and common things,
While every thought and action tends to thee,
And every impulse from thy influence springs.

The Ballad of the Dark Ladié A Fragment

1798

Beneath yon birch with silver bark,
And boughs so pendulous and fair,
The brook falls scatter'd down the rock:
And all is mossy there!

And there upon the moss she sits,
The Dark Ladié in silent pain;
The heavy tear is in her eye,
And drops and swells again.

Three times she sends her little page
Up the castled mountain's breast,
If he might find the Knight that wears
The Griffin for his crest.

The sun was sloping down the sky
And she had linger'd there all day,
Counting moments, dreaming fears —
Oh wherefore can he stay?

She hears a rustling o'er the brook,
She sees far off a swinging bough!
" 'Tis He! 'Tis my betrothéd Knight!
Lord Falkland, it is Thou!"

She springs, she clasps him round the neck,
She sobs a thousand hopes and fears,
Her kisses glowing on his cheeks
She quenches with her tears.

"My friends with rude ungentle words
They scoff and bid me fly to thee!
O give me shelter in thy breast!
O shield and shelter me!

My Henry, I have given thee much,
I gave what I can ne'er recall,
I gave my heart, I gave my peace,
O Heaven! I gave thee all."

The Knight made answer to the Maid,
While to his heart he held her hand,
"Nine castles hath my noble sire,

None statelier in the land.

The fairest one shall be my love's,
The fairest castle of the nine!
Wait only till the stars peep out,
The fairest shall be thine:

Wait only till the hand of eve
Hath wholly closed yon western bars,
And through the dark we two will steal
Beneath the twinkling stars!" —

"The dark? the dark? No! not the dark?
The twinkling stars? How, Henry? How?"
O God! 'twas in the eye of noon
He pledged his sacred vow!

And in the eye of noon my love
Shall lead me from my mother's door,
Sweet boys and girls all clothed in white
Strewing flowers before:

But first the nodding minstrels go
With music meet for lordly bowers,
The children next in snow-white vests,
Strewing buds and flowers!

And then my love and I shall pace,
My jet black hair in pearly braids,
Between our comely bachelors
And blushing bridal maids.

Kubla Khan Or, a Vision in a Dream. A Fragment

The following fragment is here published at the request of a poet of great and deserved celebrity [Lord Byron], and, as far as the Author's own opinions are concerned, rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed *poetic* merits.

In the summer of the year 1797, the Author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in "Purchas's Pilgrimage": "Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall." The Author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awakening he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter!

Then all the charm
Is broken — all that phantom-world so fair
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
And each mis-shape[']s the other. Stay awhile,
Poor youth! who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes —
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
The visions will return! And lo, he stays,
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
The pool becomes a mirror.

From *The Picture; or, the Lover's Resolution*, ll. 91-100.

Yet from the still surviving recollections in his mind, the Author has frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him. *Αυριον αδιον ασω*: but the to-morrow is yet to come.

As a contrast to this vision, I have annexed a fragment of a very different character, describing with equal fidelity the dream of pain and disease.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!
The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,

And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Recantation: Illustrated in the Story of the Mad Ox

1798

An Ox, long fed with musty hay,
 And work'd with yoke and chain,
 Was turn'd out on an April day,
 When fields are in their best array,
 And growing grasses sparkle gay
 At once with Sun and rain.

The grass was fine, the Sun was bright —
 With truth I may aver it;
 The ox was glad, as well he might,
 Thought a green meadow no bad sight,
 And frisk'd, — to shew his huge delight,
 Much like a beast of spirit.

“*Stop, neighbours, stop, why these alarms?
 The ox is only glad!*”

But still they pour from cots and farms —
 “Halloo!” the parish is up in arms,
 (A *hoaxing*-hunt has always charms)
 “Halloo! the ox is mad.”

The frightened beast scamper'd about —
 Plunge! through the hedge he drove:
 The mob pursue with hideous rout,
 A bull-dog fastens on his snout;
 “He gores the dog! his tongue hangs out!
 He's mad, he's mad, by Jove!”

“STOP, NEIGHBOURS, STOP!” aloud did call
 A sage of sober hue.
 But all at once, on him they fall,
 And women squeak and children squall,
 “What? would you have him toss us all?
 And dam'me, who are you?”

Oh! hapless sage! his ears they stun,
 And curse him o'er and o'er!
 “You bloody-minded dog! (cries one,
 To slit your windpipe were good fun,
 'Od blast you for an *impious* son
 Of a Presbyterian wh-re!”

“You’d have him gore the Parish-priest,
 And run against the altar!
 You fiend!” the sage his warnings ceas’d,
 And north and south, and west and east,
 Halloo! they follow the poor beast,
 Mat, Dick, Tom, Bob and Walter.

Old Lewis (’twas his evil day),
 Stood trembling in his shoes;
 The ox was his — what cou’d he say?
 His legs were stiffen’d with dismay,
 The ox ran o’er him mid the fray,
 And gave him his death’s bruise.

The frightened beast ran on — (but here,
 No tale, (tho’ in print, more true is)
 My Muse stops short in mid career —
 Nay, gentle Reader, do not sneer!
 I cannot chuse but drop a tear,
 A tear for good old Lewis!)

The frightened beast ran through the town,
 All follow’d, boy and dad,
 Bull-dog, parson, shopman, clown:
 The publicans rush’d from the Crown,
 “Halloo! hamstring him! cut him down!”
 THEY DROVE THE POOR OX MAD.

Should you a Rat to madness tease
 Why ev’n a Rat may plague you:
 There’s no Philosopher but sees
 That Rage and Fear are one disease —
 Though that may burn, and this may freeze,
 They’re both alike the Ague.

And so this Ox, in frantic mood,
 Fac’d round like any Bull!
 The mob turn’d tail, and he pursued,
 Till they with heat and fright were stew’d,
 And not a chick of all this brood
 But had his belly full!

Old Nick’s astride the beast, ’tis clear!
 Old Nicholas, to a tittle!
 But all agree he’d disappear,
 Would but the Parson venture near,
 And through his teeth, right o’er the steer,

Squirt out some fasting-spittle.

Achilles was a warrior fleet,
The Trojans he could worry:
Our Parson too was swift of feet,
But shew'd it chiefly in retreat:
The victor Ox scour'd down the street,
The mob fled hurry-scurry.

Through gardens, lanes and fields new-plough'd,
Through *his* hedge, and through *her* hedge,
He plung'd and toss'd and bellow'd loud —
Till in his madness he grew proud
To see this helter-skelter crowd
That had more wrath than courage!

Alas! to mend the breaches wide
He made for these poor ninnies,
They all must work, whate'er betide,
Both days and months, and pay beside
(Sad news for Av'rice and for Pride),
A *sight* of golden guineas!

But here once more to view did pop
The man that kept his senses —
And now he cried, — “Stop, neighbours, stop!
The Ox is mad! I would not swop,
No! not a school-boy's farthing top
For all the parish-fences.”

“The Ox is mad! Ho! Dick, Bob, Mat!
What means this coward fuss?
Ho! stretch this rope across the plat —
'Twill trip him up — or if not that,
Why, dam'me! we must lay him flat —
See! here's my blunderbuss.”

“*A lying dog! just now he said
The Ox was only glad —
Let's break his Presbyterian head!*”
“Hush!” quoth the sage, “you've been misled;
No quarrels now! let's all make head,
YOU DROVE THE POOR OX MAD.”

As thus I sat, in careless chat,
With the morning's wet newspaper,
In eager haste, without his hat,
As blind and blund'ring as a bat,

In came that fierce Aristocrat,
Our pursy woollen-draper.

And so my Muse per force drew bit;
And in he rush'd and panted!
“Well, have you heard?” No, not a whit.
“What, *ha'nt* you heard?” Come, out with it!
“That Tierney votes for Mister PITT,
And Sheridan's *recanted!*”

Hexameters

1799

William, my teacher, my friend! dear William and dear Dorothea!
 Smooth out the folds of my letter, and place it on desk or on table;
 Place it on table or desk; and your right hands loosely half-closing,
 Gently sustain them in air, and extending the digit didactic,
 Rest it a moment on each of the forks of the five-forkéd left hand,
 Twice on the breadth of the thumb, and once on the tip of each finger;
 Read with a nod of the head in a humouring recitativo;
 And, as I live, you will see my hexameters hopping before you.
 This is a galloping measure; a hop, and a trot, and a gallop!

All my hexameters fly, like stags pursued by the stag-hounds,
 Breathless and panting, and ready to drop, yet flying still onwards,
 I would full fain pull in my hard-mouthed runaway hunter;
 But our English Spondeans are clumsy yet impotent curb-reins;
 And so to make him go slowly, no way left have I but to lame him.

William, my head and my heart! dear Poet that feelest and thinkest!
 Dorothy, eager of soul, my most affectionate sister!
 Many a mile, O! many a wearisome mile are ye distant,
 Long, long comfortless roads, with no one eye that doth know us.

O! it is all too far to send you mockeries idle:
 Yea, and I feel it not right! But O! my friends, my beloved!
 Feverish and wakeful I lie, — I am weary of feeling and thinking.
 Every thought is worn *down*, I am weary yet cannot be vacant.
 Five long hours have I tossed, rheumatic heats, dry and flushing,
 Gnawing behind in my head, and wandering and throbbing about me,
 Busy and tiresome, my friends, as the beat of the boding night-spider.

[I forget the beginning of the line:

. . .] my eyes are a burthen,
 Now unwillingly closed, now open and aching with darkness.
 O! what a life is the eye! what a strange and inscrutable essence!
 Him that is utterly blind, nor glimpses the fire that warms him;
 Him that never beheld the swelling breast of his mother;
 Him that smiled in his gladness as a babe that smiles in its slumber;
 Even for him it exists, it moves and it stirs in its prison;
 Lives with a separate life, and “Is it a Spirit?” he murmurs:
 “Sure it has thoughts of its own, and to see is only a language.”

[There was a great deal more, which I have forgotten . . . The last line which I wrote, I remember, and write it for the truth of the sentiment, scarcely less true in company than in pain and solitude:—]

William, my head and my heart! dear William and dear Dorothea!
You have all in each other; but I am lonely, and want you!

Translation of a Passage in Ottfried's Metrical Paraphrase of the Gospel

?1799

She gave with joy her virgin breast;
She hid it not, she bared the breast
Which suckled that divinest babe!
Blessed, blessed were the breasts
Which the Saviour infant kiss'd;
And blessed, blessed was the mother
Who wrapp'd his limbs in swaddling clothes,
Singing placed him on her lap,
Hung o'er him with her looks of love,
And soothed him with a lulling motion.
Blessed! for she shelter'd him
From the damp and chilling air;
Blessed, blessed! for she lay
With such a babe in one blest bed,
Close as babes and mothers lie!
Blessed, blessed evermore,
With her virgin lips she kiss'd,
With her arms, and to her breast,
She embraced the babe divine,
Her babe divine the virgin mother!
There lives not on this ring of earth
A mortal that can sing her praise.
Mighty mother, virgin pure,
In the darkness and the night
For us she *bore* the heavenly Lord!

Catullian Hendecasyllables

?1799

Hear, my beloved, an old Milesian story! —
High, and embosom'd in congregated laurels,
Glimmer'd a temple upon a breezy headland;
In the dim distance amid the skiey billows
Rose a fair island; the god of flocks had blest it.
From the far shores of the bleat-resounding island
Oft by the moonlight a little boat came floating,
Came to the sea-cave beneath the breezy headland,
Where amid myrtles a pathway stole in mazes
Up to the groves of the high embosom'd temple.
There in a thicket of dedicated roses,
Oft did a priestess, as lovely as a vision,
Pouring her soul to the son of Cytherea,
Pray him to hover around the slight canoe-boat,
And with invisible pilotage to guide it
Over the dusk wave, until the nightly sailor
Shivering with ecstasy sank upon her bosom.

The Homeric Hexameter described and exemplified

?1799

Strongly it bears us along in swelling and limitless billows,
Nothing before and nothing behind but the sky and the ocean.

The Ovidian Elegiac Metre described and exemplified

1799

In the hexameter rises the fountain's silvery column;
In the pentameter aye falling in melody back.

On a Cataract. From a cavern near the summit of a mountain precipice

?1799

Strophe

Unperishing youth!
Thou leapest from forth
The cell of thy hidden nativity;
Never mortal saw
The cradle of the strong one;
Never mortal heard
The gathering of his voices;
The deep-murmured charm of the son of the rock,
That is lisp'd evermore at his slumberless fountain.
There's a cloud at the portal, a spray-woven veil
At the shrine of his ceaseless renewing;
It embosoms the roses of dawn,
It entangles the shafts of the noon,
And into the bed of its stillness
The moonshine sinks down as in slumber,
That the son of the rock, that the nursling of heaven
May be born in a holy twilight!

Antistrophe

The wild goat in awe
Looks up and beholds
Above thee the cliff inaccessible; —
Thou at once full-born
Madd'nest in thy joyance,
Whirlest, shatter'st, splitt'st,
Life invulnerable.

Tell's Birth-Place. Imitated from Stolberg

?1799

Mark this holy chapel well!
The birth-place, this, of William Tell.
Here, where stands God's altar dread,
Stood his parents' marriage-bed.

Here, first, an infant to her breast,
Him his loving mother prest;
And kissed the babe, and blessed the day,
And prayed as mothers use to pray.

“Vouchsafe him health, O God! and give
The child thy servant still to live!”
But God had destined to do more
Through him, than through an armed power.

God gave him reverence of laws,
Yet stirring blood in Freedom's cause —
A spirit to his rocks akin,
The eye of the hawk, and the fire therein!

To Nature and to Holy Writ
Alone did God the boy commit:
Where flashed and roared the torrent, oft
His soul found wings, and soared aloft!

The straining oar and chamois chase
Had formed his limbs to strength and grace:
On wave and wind the boy would toss,
Was great, nor knew how great he was!

He knew not that his chosen hand,
Made strong by God, his native land
Would rescue from the shameful yoke
Of Slavery — the which he broke!

The Visit of the Gods. Imitated from Schiller

?1799

Never, believe me,
 Appear the Immortals,
 Never alone:
 Scarce had I welcomed the Sorrow-beguiler,
 Iacchus! but in came Boy Cupid the Smiler;
 Lo! Phoebus the Glorious descends from his throne!
 They advance, they float in, the Olympians all!
 With Divinities fills my
 Terrestrial hall!

How shall I yield you
 Due entertainment,
 Celestial quire?
 Me rather, bright guests! with your wings of upbuoyance
 Bear aloft to your homes, to your banquets of joyance,
 That the roofs of Olympus may echo my lyre!
 Hah! we mount! on their pinions they waft up my soul!
 O give me the nectar!
 O fill me the bowl!

Give him the nectar!
 Pour out for the poet,
 Hebe! pour free!
 Quicken his eyes with celestial dew,
 That Styx the detested no more he may view,
 And like one of us Gods may conceit him to be!
 Thanks, Hebe! I quaff it! Io Paeon, I cry!
 The wine of the Immortals
 Forbids me to die!

From the German

?1799

Know'st thou the land where the pale citrons grow,
The golden fruits in darker foliage glow?
Soft blows the wind that breathes from that blue sky!
Still stands the myrtle and the laurel high!
Know'st thou it well, that land, beloved Friend?
Thither with thee, O, thither would I wend!

Water Ballad.

[From the French]

?1799

“Come hither, gently rowing,
Come, bear me quickly o’er
This stream so brightly flowing
To yonder woodland shore.
But vain were my endeavour
To pay thee, courteous guide;
Row on, row on, for ever
I’d have thee by my side.

“Good boatman, prithee haste thee,
I seek my father-land.” —
“Say, when I there have placed thee,
Dare I demand thy hand?”
“A maiden’s head can never
So hard a point decide;
Row on, row on, for ever
I’d have thee by my side.”

The happy bridal over
The wanderer ceased to roam
For, seated by her lover,
The boat became her home.
And still they sang together
As steering o’er the tide:
“Row on through wind and weather
For ever by my side.”

On an Infant which died before Baptism

April 8, 1799

“Be, rather than be called, a child of God,”
Death whispered! With assenting nod,
Its head upon its mother’s breast,
The Baby bowed, without demur —
Of the kingdom of the Blest
Possessor, not Inheritor.

Something Childish, but very Natural. Written in Germany

April 23, 1799

If I had but two little wings
And were a little feathery bird,
To you I'd fly, my dear!
But thoughts like these are idle things,
And I stay here.

But in my sleep to you I fly:
I'm always with you in my sleep!
The world is all one's own.
But then one wakes, and where am I?
All, all alone.

Sleep stays not, though a monarch bids:
So I love to wake ere break of day:
For though my sleep be gone,
Yet while 'tis dark, one shuts one's lids,
And still dreams on.

Home-Sick. Written in Germany

May 6, 1799

'Tis sweet to him who all the week
Through city-crowds must push his way,
To stroll alone through fields and woods,
And hallow thus the Sabbath-day.

And sweet it is, in summer bower,
Sincere, affectionate and gay,
Ones' own dear children feasting round,
To celebrate one's marriage-day.

But what is all to his delight,
Who having long been doomed to roam,
Throws off the bundle from his back,
Before the door of his own home?

Home-sickness is a wasting pang;
This feel I hourly more and more:
There's healing only in thy wings,
Thou breeze that play'st on Albion's shore!

Lines written in the Album at Elbingerode, in the Hartz Forest

May 17, 1799

I stood on Brocken's sovran height, and saw
 Woods crowding upon woods, hills over hills,
 A surging scene, and only limited
 By the blue distance. Heavily my way
 Downward I dragged through fir groves evermore,
 Where bright green moss heaves in sepulchral forms
 Speckled with sunshine; and, but seldom heard,
 The sweet bird's song became a hollow sound;
 And the breeze, murmuring indivisibly,
 Preserved its solemn murmur most distinct
 From many a note of many a waterfall,
 And the brook's chatter; 'mid whose islet-stones
 The dingy kidling with its tinkling bell
 Leaped frolicsome, or old romantic goat
 Sat, his white beard slow waving. I moved on
 In low and languid mood: for I had found
 That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive
 Their finer influence from the Life within; —
 Fair cyphers else: fair, but of import vague
 Or unconcerning, where the heart not finds
 History or prophecy of friend, or child,
 Or gentle maid, our first and early love,
 Or father, or the venerable name
 Of our adoréd country! O thou Queen,
 Thou delegated Deity of Earth,
 O dear, dear England! how my longing eye
 Turned westward, shaping in the steady clouds
 Thy sands and high white cliffs!

My native Land!

Filled with the thought of thee this heart was proud,
 Yea, mine eye swam with tears: that all the view
 From sovran Brocken, woods and woody hills,
 Floated away, like a departing dream,
 Feeble and dim! Stranger, these impulses
 Blame thou not lightly; nor will I profane,
 With hasty judgment or injurious doubt,
 That man's sublimer spirit, who can feel
 That God is everywhere! the God who framed
 Mankind to be one mighty family,
 Himself our Father, and the World our Home.

The British Stripling's War-Song. Imitated from Stolberg

?1799

Yes, noble old Warrior! this heart has beat high,
Since you told of the deeds which our countrymen wrought;
O lend me the sabre that hung by thy thigh,
And I too will fight as my forefathers fought.

Despise not my youth, for my spirit is steel'd,
And I know there is strength in the grasp of my hand;
Yea, as firm as thyself would I march to the field,
And as proudly would die for my dear native land.

In the sports of my childhood I mimick'd the fight,
The sound of a trumpet suspended my breath;
And my fancy still wander'd by day and by night,
Amid battle and tumult, 'mid conquest and death.

My own shout of onset, when the Armies advance,
How oft it awakes me from visions of glory;
When I meant to have leapt on the Hero of France,
And have dash'd him to earth, pale and breathless and gory.

As late thro' the city with banners all streaming
To the music of trumpets the Warriors flew by,
With helmet and scimitars naked and gleaming,
On their proud-trampling, thunder-hoof'd steeds did they fly;

I sped to yon heath that is lonely and bare,
For each nerve was unquiet, each pulse in alarm;
And I hurl'd the mock-lance thro' the objectless air,
And in open-eyed dream proved the strength of my arm.

Yes, noble old Warrior! this heart has beat high,
Since you told of the deeds that our countrymen wrought;
O lend me the sabre that hung by thy thigh,
And I too will fight as my forefathers fought!

Names

[From Lessing]

1799

I ask'd my fair one happy day,
What I should call her in my lay;
By what sweet name from Rome or Greece;
Lalage, Neaera, Chloris,
Sappho, Lesbia, or Doris
Arethusa or Lucrece.

“Ah!” replied my gentle fair,
“Belovéd, what are names but air?
Choose thou whatever suits the line;
Call me Sappho, call me Chloris,
Call me Lalage or Doris,
Only, only call me Thine.”

The Devil's Thoughts

1799

From his brimstone bed at break of day
A walking the Devil is gone,
To visit his snug little farm the earth,
And see how his stock goes on.

Over the hill and over the dale,
And he went over the plain,
And backward and forward he switched his long tail
As a gentleman switches his cane.

And how then was the Devil drest?
Oh! he was in his Sunday's best:
His jacket was red and his breeches were blue,
And there was a hole where the tail came through.

He saw a Lawyer killing a Viper
On a dunghill hard by his own stable;
And the Devil smiled, for it put him in mind
Of Cain and his brother, Abel.

He saw an Apothecary on a white horse
Ride by on his vocations,
And the Devil thought of his old Friend
Death in the Revelations.

He saw a cottage with a double coach-house,
A cottage of gentility;
And the Devil did grin, for his darling sin
Is pride that apes humility.

He peep'd into a rich bookseller's shop,
Quoth he! we are both of one college!
For I sate myself, like a cormorant, once
Hard by the tree of knowledge.

Down the river did glide, with wind and tide,
A pig with vast celerity;
And the Devil look'd wise as he saw how the while,
It cut its own throat. "There!" quoth he with a smile,
"Goes 'England's commercial prosperity.'"

As he went through Cold-Bath Fields he saw
A solitary cell;
And the Devil was pleased, for it gave him a hint
For improving his prisons in Hell.

He saw a Turnkey in a trice
Fetter a troublesome blade;
“Nimbly,” quoth he, “do the fingers move
If a man be but used to his trade.”

He saw the same Turnkey unfetter a man,
With but little expedition,
Which put him in mind of the long debate
On the Slave-trade abolition.

He saw an old acquaintance
As he passed by a Methodist meeting; —
She holds a consecrated key,
And the devil nods her a greeting.

She turned up her nose, and said,
“Avaunt! my name’s Religion,”
And she looked to Mr. —
And leered like a love-sick pigeon.

He saw a certain minister
(A minister to his mind)
Go up into a certain House
With a majority behind.

The Devil quoted Genesis
Like a very learned clerk,
How “Noah and his creeping things
Went up into the Ark.”

He took from the poor,
And he gave to the rich,
And he shook hands with a Scotchman,
For he was not afraid of the —

General — burning face
He saw with consternation,
And back to hell his way did he take,
For the Devil thought by a slight mistake
It was general conflagration.

Lines Composed in a Concert-room

1799

Nor cold, nor stern, my soul! yet I detest
 These scented Rooms, where, to a gaudy throng,
 Heaves the proud Harlot her distended breast,
 In intricacies of laborious song.

These feel not Music's genuine power, nor deign
 To melt at Nature's passion-warbled plaint;
 But when the long-breathed singer's uptrilled strain
 Bursts in a squall — they gape for wonderment.

Hark! the deep buzz of Vanity and Hate!
 Scornful, yet envious, with self-torturing sneer
 My lady eyes some maid of humbler state,
 While the pert Captain, or the primmer Priest,
 Prattles accordant scandal in her ear.

O give me, from this heartless scene released,
 To hear our old Musician, blind and grey,
 (Whom stretching from my nurse's arms I kissed,)
 His Scottish tunes and warlike marches play,
 By moonshine, on the balmy summer-night,
 The while I dance amid the tedded hay
 With merry maids, whose ringlets toss in light.

Or lies the purple evening on the bay
 Of the calm glossy lake, O let me hide
 Unheard, unseen, behind the alder-trees,
 For round their roots the fisher's boat is tied,
 On whose trim seat doth Edmund stretch at ease,
 And while the lazy boat sways to and fro,
 Breathes in his flute sad airs, so wild and slow,
 That his own cheek is wet with quiet tears.

But O, dear Anne! when midnight wind careers,
 And the gust pelting on the out-house shed
 Makes the cock shrilly in the rainstorm crow,
 To hear thee sing some ballad full of woe,
 Ballad of ship-wreck'd sailor floating dead,
 Whom his own true-love buried in the sands!
 Thee, gentle woman, for thy voice remeasures
 Whatever tones and melancholy pleasures
 The things of Nature utter; birds or trees,

Or moan of ocean-gale in weedy caves,
Or where the stiff grass mid the heath-plant waves,
Murmur and music thin of sudden breeze.

Westphalian Song

?1799

[The following is an almost literal translation of a very old and very favourite song among the Westphalian Boors. The turn at the end is the same with one of Mr. Dibdin's excellent songs, and the air to which it is sung by the Boors is remarkably sweet and lively.]

When thou to my true-love com'st
Greet her from me kindly;
When she asks thee how I fare?
Say, folks in Heaven fare finely.

When she asks, "What! Is he sick?"
Say, dead! — and when for sorrow
She begins to sob and cry,
Say, I come to-morrow.

Hexameters: Paraphrase of Psalm xlvi

1799

God is our Strength and our Refuge: therefore will we not tremble,
Tho' the Earth be removed and tho' the perpetual Mountains
Sink in the Swell of the Ocean! God is our Strength and our Refuge.
There is a River the Flowing whereof shall gladden the City,
Hallelujah! City of God! Jehova shall help her.
The Idolaters raged, the kingdoms were moving in fury;
But he uttered his Voice: Earth melted away from beneath them.
Hallelujah! th' Eternal is with us, Almighty Jehova!
Fearful the works of the Lord, yea fearful his Desolations;
But He maketh the Battle to cease, he burneth the Spear and the Chariot.
Hallelujah! th' Eternal is with us, the God of our Fathers!

Hymn to the Earth

[Imitated from Stolberg's *Hymne an die Erde*] Hexameters

1799

Earth! thou mother of numberless children, the nurse and the mother,
Hail! O Goddess, thrice hail! Blest be thou! and, blessing, I hymn thee!
Forth, ye sweet sounds! from my harp, and my voice shall float on your surges —
Soar thou aloft, O my soul! and bear up my song on thy pinions.

Travelling the vale with mine eyes — green meadows and lake with green island,
Dark in its basin of rock, and the bare stream flowing in brightness,
Thrilled with thy beauty and love in the wooded slope of the mountain,
Here, great mother, I lie, thy child, with his head on thy bosom!
Playful the spirits of noon, that rushing soft through thy tresses,
Green-haired goddess! refresh me; and hark! as they hurry or
linger,
Fill the pause of my harp, or sustain it with musical murmurs.
Into my being thou murmurest joy, and tenderest sadness
Shedd'st thou, like dew, on my heart, till the joy and the heavenly sadness
Pour themselves forth from my heart in tears, and the hymn of thanksgiving.

Earth! thou mother of numberless children, the nurse and the mother,
Sister thou of the stars, and beloved by the Sun, the rejoicer!
Guardian and friend of the moon, O Earth, whom the comets forget not,
Yea, in the measureless distance wheel round and again they behold thee!
Fadeless and young (and what if the latest birth of creation?)
Bride and consort of Heaven, that looks down upon the enamoured!
Say, mysterious Earth! O say, great mother and goddess,
Was it not well with thee then, when first thy lap was ungirdled,
Thy lap to the genial Heaven, the day that he wooed thee and won thee!
Fair was thy blush, the fairest and first of the blushes of morning!
Deep was the shudder, O Earth! the throe of thy self-retention:
Inly thou strovest to flee, and didst seek thyself at thy centre!
Mightier far was the joy of thy sudden resilience; and forthwith
Myriad myriads of lives teemed forth from the mighty embracement.
Thousand-fold tribes of dwellers, impelled by thousand-fold instincts,
Filled, as a dream, the wide waters; the rivers sang on their channels;
Laughed on their shores the hoarse seas; the yearning ocean swelled upward;
Young life lowed through the meadows, the woods, and the echoing mountains,
Wandered bleating in valleys, and warbled on blossoming branches.

Mahomet

?1799

Utter the song, O my soul! the flight and return of Mohammed,
Prophet and priest, who scatter'd abroad both evil and blessing,
Huge wasteful empires founded and hallow'd slow persecution,
Soul-withering, but crush'd the blasphemous rites of the Pagan
And idolatrous Christians. — For veiling the Gospel of Jesus,
They, the best corrupting, had made it worse than the vilest.
Wherefore Heaven decreed th' enthusiast warrior of Mecca,
Choosing good from iniquity rather than evil from goodness.
Loud the tumult in Mecca surrounding the fane of the idol; —
Naked and prostrate the priesthood were laid — the people with mad shouts
Thundering now, and now with saddest ululation
Flew, as over the channel of rock-stone the ruinous river
Shatters its waters abreast, and in mazy uproar bewilder'd,
Rushes dividuous all — all rushing impetuous onward.

Love

1799

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leant against the arméd man,
The statue of the arméd knight;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story —
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew, I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,

Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face!

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade, —

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

And that unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land!

And how she wept, and clasped his knees;
And how she tended him in vain —
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain; —

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest-leaves
A dying man he lay; —

His dying words — but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love, and virgin-shame;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved — she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stepped —
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace;
And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

**Ode to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire,
on the Twenty-fourth Stanza in her “Passage over Mount Gothard”**

1799

And hail the Chapel! hail the Platform wild!
Where Tell directed the avenging dart,
With well-strung arm, that first preservst his child,
Then aim'd the arrow at the tyrant's heart.

Splendour's fondly-fostered child!
And did you hail the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Whence learn'd you that heroic measure?
Light as a dream your days their circlets ran,
From all that teaches brotherhood to Man
Far, far removed! from want, from hope, from fear!
Enchanting music lulled your infant ear,
Obeisance, praises soothed your infant heart:
Emblazonments and old ancestral crests,
With many a bright obtrusive form of art,
Detained your eye from Nature: stately vests,
That veiling strove to deck your charms divine,
Rich viands, and the pleasurable wine,
Were yours unearned by toil; nor could you see
The unenjoying toiler's misery.
And yet, free Nature's uncorrupted child,
You hailed the Chapel and the Platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Whence learn'd you that heroic measure?

There crowd your finely-fibred frame
All living faculties of bliss;
And Genius to your cradle came,
His forehead wreathed with lambent flame,
And bending low, with godlike kiss
Breath'd in a more celestial life;
But boasts not many a fair compeer
A heart as sensitive to joy and fear?
And some, perchance, might wage an equal strife,
Some few, to nobler being wrought,

Corrivals in the nobler gift of thought.
 Yet these delight to celebrate
 Laurell'd War and plummy State;
 Or in verse and music dress
 Tales of rustic happiness —
 Pernicious tales! insidious strains!
 That steel the rich man's breast,
 And mock the lot unblest,
 The sordid vices and the abject pains,
 Which evermore must be
 The doom of ignorance and penury!
 But you, free Nature's uncorrupted child,
 You hailed the Chapel and the Platform wild,
 Where once the Austrian fell
 Beneath the shaft of Tell!
 O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
 Whence learn'd you that heroic measure?

You were a Mother! That most holy name,
 Which Heaven and Nature bless,
 I may not vilely prostitute to those
 Whose infants owe them less
 Than the poor caterpillar owes
 Its gaudy parent fly.
 You were a mother! at your bosom fed
 The babes that loved you. You, with laughing eye,
 Each twilight-thought, each nascent feeling read,
 Which you yourself created. Oh! delight!
 A second time to be a mother,
 Without the mother's bitter groans:
 Another thought, and yet another,
 By touch, or taste, by looks or tones,
 O'er the growing sense to roll,
 The mother of your infant's soul!
 The Angel of the Earth, who, while he guides
 His chariot-planet round the goal of day,
 All trembling gazes on the eye of God
 A moment turned his awful face away;
 And as he viewed you, from his aspect sweet
 New influences in your being rose,
 Blest intuitions and communions fleet
 With living Nature, in her joys and woes!
 Thenceforth your soul rejoiced to see
 The shrine of social Liberty!
 O beautiful! O Nature's child!
 'Twas thence you hailed the Platform wild,
 Where once the Austrian fell

Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Thence learn'd you that heroic measure.

A Christmas Carol

1799

The shepherds went their hasty way,
And found the lowly stable-shed
Where the Virgin-Mother lay:
And now they checked their eager tread,
For to the Babe, that at her bosom clung,
A Mother's song the Virgin-Mother sung.

They told her how a glorious light,
Streaming from a heavenly throng,
Around them shone, suspending night!
While sweeter than a mother's song,
Blest Angels heralded the Saviour's birth,
Glory to God on high! and Peace on Earth.

She listened to the tale divine,
And closer still the Babe she pressed;
And while she cried, the Babe is mine!
The milk rushed faster to her breast:
Joy rose within her, like a summer's morn;
Peace, Peace on Earth! the Prince of Peace is born.

Thou Mother of the Prince of Peace,
Poor, simple, and of low estate!
That strife should vanish, battle cease,
O why should this thy soul elate?
Sweet Music's loudest note, the Poet's story, —
Didst thou ne'er love to hear of fame and glory?

And is not War a youthful king,
A stately Hero clad in mail?
Beneath his footsteps laurels spring;
Him Earth's majestic monarchs hail
Their friend, their playmate! and his bold bright eye
Compels the maiden's love-confessing sigh.

“Tell this in some more courtly scene,
To maids and youths in robes of state!
I am a woman poor and mean,
And therefore is my soul elate.
War is a ruffian, all with guilt defiled,
That from the aged father tears his child!

A murderous fiend, by fiends adored,
He kills the sire and starves the son;
The husband kills, and from her board
Steals all his widow's toil had won;
Plunders God's world of beauty; rends away
All safety from the night, all comfort from the day.

Then wisely is my soul elate,
That strife should vanish, battle cease:
I'm poor and of a low estate,
The Mother of the Prince of Peace.
Joy rises in me, like a summer's morn:
Peace, Peace on Earth! the Prince of Peace is born.''

Talleyrand to Lord Grenville. A Metrical Epistle

Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs at Paris, to Lord Grenville, Secretary of State in Great Britain for foreign affairs, Auditor of the Exchequer, a lord of trade, an elder brother of Trinity House, etc.

1800

[As printed in *Morning Post* for January 10, 1800.]

To the Editor of *The Morning Post*. MR EDITOR

—An unmetrical letter from Talleyrand to Lord Grenville has already appeared, and from an authority too high to be questioned: otherwise I could adduce some arguments for the exclusive authenticity of the following metrical epistle. The very epithet which the wise ancients used,

aurea carmina,

might have been supposed likely to have determined the choice of the French Minister in favour of verse; and the rather when we recollect that this phrase of *golden verses* is applied emphatically to the works of that philosopher who imposed *silence* on all with whom he had to deal. Besides is it not somewhat improbable that Talleyrand should have preferred prose to rhyme, when the latter alone *has got the chink*? Is it not likewise curious that in our official answer no notice whatever is taken of the Chief Consul, Bonaparte, as if there had been no such person existing; notwithstanding that his existence is pretty generally admitted, nay that some have been so rash as to believe that he has created as great a sensation in the world as Lord Grenville, or even the Duke of Portland? But the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Talleyrand, *is* acknowledged, which, in our opinion, could not have happened had he written that insignificant prose-letter, which seems to precede Bonaparte's, as in old romances a dwarf always ran before to proclaim the advent or arrival of knight or giant. That Talleyrand's character and practices more resemble those of some *regular* Governments than Bonaparte's I admit; but this of itself does not appear a satisfactory explanation. However, let the letter speak for itself. The second line is supererogative in syllables, whether from the oscitancy of the transcriber, or from the trepidation which might have overpowered the modest Frenchman, on finding himself in the act of writing to so *great* a man, I shall not dare to determine. A few notes are added by Your servant, Gnome P.S— as mottoes are now fashionable, especially if taken from out of the way books, you may prefix, if you please, the following lines from Sionius Apollinaris:

Saxa, et robora, corneasque fibras
Mollit dulciloquæ canorus arte!

My Lord! though your Lordship repel deviation
From forms long establish'd, yet with high consideration,
I plead for the honour to hope that no blame
Will attach, should this letter *begin* with my name.
I dar'd not presume on your Lordship to bounce,
But thought it more *exquisite* first to *announce*!

My Lord! I've the honour to be Talleyrand,
 And the letter's from *me!* you'll not draw back your hand
 Nor yet take it up by the rim in dismay,
 As boys pick up ha'pence on April fool-day.
 I'm no Jacobin foul, or red-hot Cordelier
 That your Lordship's *ungauntleted* fingers need fear
 An infection or burn! Believe me, 'tis true,
 With a scorn like another I look down on the crew
 That bawl and hold up to the mob's detestation
 The most delicate wish for a *silent persuasion*.
 A *form long-establish'd* these Terrorists call
 Bribes, perjury, theft, and the devil and all!
 And yet spite of all that the Moralist prates,
 'Tis the keystone and cement of *civilized States*.
 Those *American Reps!* And i' faith, they were serious!
 It shock'd us at Paris, like something mysterious,
 That men who've a Congress — But no more of 't! I'm proud
 To have stood so distinct from the Jacobin crowd.

My Lord! though the vulgar in wonder be lost at
 My transfigurations, and name me *Apostate*,
 Such a meaningless nickname, which never incens'd me,
Cannot prejudice you or your Cousin against me:
 I'm Ex-bishop. What then? Burke himself would agree
 That I left not the Church — 'twas the Church that left me.
 My titles prelatiic I lov'd and retain'd,
 As long as what *I* meant by Prelate remain'd:
 And tho' Mitres no longer will *pass* in our mart,
 I'm *episcopal* still to the core of my heart.
 No time from my name this my motto shall sever:
 'Twill be *Non sine pulvere palma* for ever!

Your goodness, my Lord, I conceive as excessive,
 Or I dar'd not present you a scroll so digressive;
 And in truth with my pen thro' and thro' I should strike it;
 But I hear that your Lordship's own style is just like it.
 Dear my Lord, we are right: for what charms can be shew'd
 In a thing that goes straight like an old Roman road?
 The tortoise crawls straight, the hare doubles about;
 And the true line of beauty still winds in and out.
 It argues, my Lord! of fine thoughts such a brood in us
 To split and divide into heads multitudinous,
 While charms that surprise (it can ne'er be denied us)
 Sprout forth from each head, like the ears from King Midas.
 Were a genius of rank, like a commonplace dunce,
 Compell'd to drive on to the main point at once,
 What a plentiful vintage of initiations

Would Noble Lords lose in your Lordship's orations.
 My fancy transports me! As mute as a mouse,
 And as fleet as a pigeon, I'm borne to the house
 Where all those who *are* Lords, from father to son,
 Discuss the affairs of all those who are none.
 I behold you, my Lord! of your feelings quite full,
 'Fore the woolsack arise, like a sack full of wool!
 You rise on each Anti-Grenvillian Member,
 Short, thick and blustrous, like a day in November!
 Short in person, I mean: for the length of your speeches
 Fame herself, that most famous reporter, ne'er reaches.
 Lo! Patience beholds you condemn her brief reign,
 And Time, that all-panting toil'd after in vain,
 (Like the Beldam who raced for a smock with her grand-child)
 Drops and cries: "Were such lungs e'er assign'd to a man-child?"
 Your strokes at her vitals pale Truth has confess'd,
 And Zeal unresisted entempests your breast!
 Though some noble Lords may be wishing to sup,
 Your merit self-conscious, my Lord, *keeps you up*,
 Unextinguish'd and swoln, as a balloon of paper
 Keeps aloft by the smoke of its own farthing taper.
 Ye SIXTEENS of Scotland, your snuffs ye must trim;
 Your Geminies, fix'd stars of England! grow dim,
 And but for *a form long-establish'd*, no doubt
 Twinkling faster and faster, ye all would *go out*.

Apropos, my dear Lord! a ridiculous blunder
 Of some of our Journalists caused us some wonder:
 It was said that in aspect malignant and sinister
 In the Isle of Great Britain a great Foreign Minister
 Turn'd as pale as a journeyman miller's frock coat is
 On observing a star that appear'd in BOOTES!
 When the whole truth was this (O those ignorant brutes!)
 Your Lordship had made his appearance in boots.
 You, my Lord, with your star, sat in boots, and the Spanish
 Ambassador thereupon thought fit to vanish.

But perhaps, dear my Lord, among other worse crimes,
 The whole was no more than a lie of *The Times*.
 It is monstrous, my Lord! in a civilis'd state
 That such Newspaper rogues should have license to prate.
 Indeed printing in general — but for the taxes,
 Is in theory false and pernicious in praxis!
 You and I, and your Cousin, and Abbé Sieyes,
 And all the great Statesmen that live in these days,
 Are agreed that no nation secure is from vi'lence
 Unless all who must think are maintain'd all in silence.

This printing, my Lord — but 'tis useless to mention
What we both of us think — 'twas a curséd invention,
And Germany might have been honestly prouder
Had she left it alone, and found out only powder.
My Lord! when I think of our labours and cares
Who rule the Department of foreign affairs,
And how with their libels these journalists bore us,
Though Rage I acknowledge than Scorn less decorous;
Yet their presses and types I could shiver in splinters,
Those Printer's black Devils! those Devils of Printers!
In case of a peace — but perhaps it were better
To proceed to the absolute point of my letter:
For the deep wounds of France, Bonaparte, my master,
Has found out a new sort of *basilicon* plaister.
But your time, my dear Lord! is your nation's best treasure,
I've intruded already too long on your leisure;
If so, I entreat you with penitent sorrow
To pause, and resume the remainder to-morrow.

Apologia pro Vita sua

1800

The poet in his lone yet genial hour
Gives to his eyes a magnifying power:
Or rather he emancipates his eyes
From the black shapeless accidents of size —
In unctuous cones of kindling coal,
Or smoke upwreathing from the pipe's trim bole,
His gifted ken can see
Phantoms of sublimity.

The Keepsake

?1800

The tedded hay, the first fruits of the soil,
The tedded hay and corn-sheaves in one field,
Show summer gone, ere come. The foxglove tall
Sheds its loose purple bells, or in the gust,
Or when it bends beneath the up-springing lark,
Or mountain-finch alighting. And the rose
(In vain the darling of successful love)
Stands, like some boasted beauty of past years,
The thorns remaining, and the flowers all gone.
Nor can I find, amid my lonely walk
By rivulet, or spring, or wet roadside,
That blue and bright-eyed floweret of the brook,
Hope's gentle gem, the sweet Forget-me-not!
So will not fade the flowers which Emmeline
With delicate fingers on the snow-white silk
Has worked (the flowers which most she knew I loved),
And, more beloved than they, her auburn hair.

In the cool morning twilight, early waked
By her full bosom's joyous restlessness,
Softly she rose, and lightly stole along,
Down the slope coppice to the woodbine bower,
Whose rich flowers, swinging in the morning breeze,
Over their dim fast-moving shadows hung,
Making a quiet image of disquiet
In the smooth, scarcely moving river-pool.
There, in that bower where first she owned her love,
And let me kiss my own warm tear of joy
From off her glowing cheek, she sate and stretched
The silk upon the frame, and worked her name
Between the Moss-Rose and Forget-me-not —
Her own dear name, with her own auburn hair!
That forced to wander till sweet spring return,
I yet might ne'er forget her smile, her look,
Her voice, (that even in her mirthful mood
Has made me wish to steal away and weep,)
Nor yet the entrancement of that maiden kiss
With which she promised, that when spring returned,
She would resign one half of that dear name,
And own thenceforth no other name but mine!

A Thought Suggested by a View of Saddleback in Cumberland

1800

On stern Blencartha's perilous height
The winds are tyrannous and strong;
And flashing forth unsteady light
From stern Blencartha's skiey height,
As loud the torrents throng!
Beneath the moon, in gentle weather,
They bind the earth and sky together.
But oh! the sky and all its forms, how quiet!
The things that seek the earth, how full of noise and riot!

The Mad Monk

1800

I heard a voice from Etna's side;
 Where o'er a cavern's mouth
 That fronted to the south
 A chesnut spread its umbrage wide:
 A hermit or a monk the man might be;
 But him I could not see:
 And thus the music flow'd along,
 In melody most like to old Sicilian song:

“There was a time when earth, and sea, and skies,
 The bright green vale, and forest's dark recess,
 With all things, lay before mine eyes
 In steady loveliness:
 But now I feel, on earth's uneasy scene,
 Such sorrows as will never cease; —
 I only ask for peace;
 If I must live to know that such a time has been!”
 A silence then ensued:
 Till from the cavern came
 A voice; — it was the same!
 And thus, in mournful tone, its dreary plaint renew'd:

“Last night, as o'er the sloping turf I trod,
 The smooth green turf, to me a vision gave
 Beneath mine eyes, the sod —
 The roof of Rosa's grave!

My heart has need with dreams like these to strive,
 For, when I woke, beneath mine eyes I found
 The plot of mossy ground,
 On which we oft have sat when Rósa was alive. —
 Why must the rock, and margin of the flood,
 Why must the hills so many flow'rets bear,
 Whose colours to a *murder'd* maiden's blood,
 Such sad resemblance wear? —

I struck the wound, — this hand of mine!
 For Oh, thou maid divine,
 I lov'd to agony!
 The youth whom thou call'd'st thine
 Did never love like me!

Is it the stormy clouds above
That flash'd so red a gleam?
On yonder downward trickling stream? —
'Tis not the blood of her I love. —
The sun torments me from his western bed,
Oh, let him cease for ever to diffuse
Those crimson spectre hues!
Oh, let me lie in peace, and be for ever dead!''

Here ceas'd the voice. In deep dismay,
Down thro' the forest I pursu'd my way.

Inscription for a Seat by the Road Side half-way up a Steep Hill facing South

1800

Thou who in youthful vigour rich, and light
With youthful thoughts dost need no rest! O thou,
To whom alike the valley and the hill
Present a path of ease! Should e'er thine eye
Glance on this sod, and this rude tablet, stop!
'Tis a rude spot, yet here, with thankful hearts,
The foot-worn soldier and his family
Have rested, wife and babe, and boy, perchance
Some eight years old or less, and scantily fed,
Garbed like his father, and already bound
To his poor father's trade. Or think of him
Who, laden with his implements of toil,
Returns at night to some far distant home,
And having plodded on through rain and mire
With limbs o'erlaboured, weak from feverish heat,
And chafed and fretted by December blasts,
Here pauses, thankful he hath reached so far,
And 'mid the sheltering warmth of these bleak trees
Finds restoration — or reflect on those
Who in the spring to meet the warmer sun
Crawl up this steep hill-side, that needlessly
Bends double their weak frames, already bowed
By age or malady, and when, at last,
They gain this wished-for turf, this seat of sods,
Repose — and, well-admonished, ponder here
On final rest. And if a serious thought
Should come uncalled — how soon *thy* motions high,
Thy balmy spirits and thy fervid blood
Must change to feeble, withered, cold and dry,
Cherish the wholesome sadness! And where'er
The tide of Life impel thee, O be prompt
To make thy present strength the staff of all,
Their staff and resting-place — so shalt thou give
To Youth the sweetest joy that Youth can know;
And for thy future self thou shalt provide
Through every change of various life, a seat,
Not built by hands, on which thy inner part,
Imperishable, many a grievous hour,
Or bleak or sultry may repose — yea, sleep
The sleep of Death, and dream of blissful worlds,
Then wake in Heaven, and find the dream all true.

A Stranger Minstrel. Written

[To Mrs. Robinson,] a few weeks before her death.

November, 1800

As late on Skiddaw's mount I lay supine,
Midway th' ascent, in that repose divine
When the soul centred in the heart's recess
Hath quaff'd its fill of Nature's loveliness,
Yet still beside the fountain's marge will stay
And fain would thirst again, again to quaff;
Then when the tear, slow travelling on its way,
Fills up the wrinkles of a silent laugh —
In that sweet mood of sad and humorous thought
A form within me rose, within me wrought
With such strong magic, that I cried aloud,
“Thou ancient Skiddaw by thy helm of cloud,
And by thy many-colour'd chasms deep,
And by their shadows that for ever sleep,
By yon small flaky mists that love to creep
Along the edges of those spots of light,
Those sunny islands on thy smooth green height,
And by yon shepherds with their sheep,
And dogs and boys, a gladsome crowd,
That rush e'en now with clamour loud
Sudden from forth thy topmost cloud,
And by this laugh, and by this tear,
I would, old Skiddaw, she were here!
A lady of sweet song is she,
Her soft blue eye was made for thee!
O ancient Skiddaw, by this tear,
I would, I would that she were here!”

Then ancient Skiddaw, stern and proud,
In sullen majesty replying,
Thus spake from out his helm of cloud
(His voice was like an echo dying!): —
“She dwells belike in scenes more fair,
And scorns a mount so bleak and bare.”

I only sigh'd when this I heard,
Such mournful thoughts within me stirr'd
That all my heart was faint and weak,
So sorely was I troubled!
No laughter wrinkled on my cheek,

But O the tears were doubled!
But ancient Skiddaw green and high
Heard and understood my sigh;
And now, in tones less stern and rude,
As if he wish'd to end the feud,
Spake he, the proud response renewing
(His voice was like a monarch wooing): —
“Nay, but thou dost not know her might,
The pinions of her soul how strong!
But many a stranger in my height
Hath sung to me her magic song,
Sending forth his ecstasy
In her divinest melody,
And hence I know her soul is free,
She is where'er she wills to be,
Unfetter'd by mortality!
Now to the ‘haunted beach’ can fly,
Beside the threshold scourged with waves,
Now where the maniac wildly raves,
‘Pale moon, thou spectre of the sky!’”
No wind that hurries o'er my height
Can travel with so swift a flight.
I too, methinks, might merit
The presence of her spirit!
To me too might belong
The honour of her song and witching melody,
Which most resembles me,
Soft, various, and sublime,
Exempt from wrongs of Time!”

Thus spake the mighty Mount, and I
Made answer, with a deep-drawn sigh: —
“Thou ancient Skiddaw, by this tear,
I would, I would that she were here!”

Alcaeus to Sappho

1800

How sweet, when crimson colours dart
Across a breast of snow,
To see that you are in the heart
That beats and throbs below.

All Heaven is in a maiden's blush,
In which the soul doth speak,
That it was you who sent the flush
Into the maiden's cheek.

Large steadfast eyes! eyes gently rolled
In shades of changing blue,
How sweet are they, if they behold
No dearer sight than you.

And, can a lip more richly glow,
Or be more fair than this?
The world will surely answer, No!
I, SAPPHO, answer, Yes!

Then grant one smile, tho' it should mean
A thing of doubtful birth;
That I may say these eyes have seen
The fairest face on earth!

The Two Round Spaces on the Tombstone

1800

The Devil believes that the Lord will come,
Stealing a march without beat of drum,
About the same time that he came last,
On an Old Christmas-day in a snowy blast:
Till he bids the trump sound neither body nor soul stirs,
For the dead men's heads have slipt under their bolsters.

Oh! ho! brother Bard, in our churchyard,
Both beds and bolsters are soft and green;
Save one alone, and that's of stone,
And under it lies a Counsellor keen.
'Twould be a square tomb, if it were not too long;
And 'tis fenced round with irons sharp, spear-like, and strong.

This fellow from Aberdeen hither did skip
With a waxy face and a blubber lip,
And a black tooth in front, to show in part
What was the colour of his whole heart.
This Counsellor sweet,
This Scotchman complete,
(The Devil scotch him for a snake!)
I trust he lies in his grave awake.
On the sixth of January,
When all around is white with snow,
As a Cheshire yeoman's dairy,
Brother Bard, ho! ho! believe it, or no,
On that stone tomb to you I'll show
Two round spaces void of snow.
I swear by our Knight, and his forefathers' souls,
That in size and shape they are just like the holes
In the house of privy
Of that ancient family.
On those two places void of snow,
There have sat in the night for an hour or so,
Before sunrise, and after cock-crow,
He kicking his heels, she cursing her corns,
All to the tune of the wind in their horns,
The Devil and his Grannam,
With a snow-blast to fan 'em;
Expecting and hoping the trumpet to blow,
For they are cock-sure of the fellow below!

The Snow-drop

1800

Fear no more, thou timid Flower!
 Fear thou no more the winter's might,
 The whelming thaw, the ponderous shower,
 The silence of the freezing night!
 Since Laura murmur'd o'er thy leaves
 The potent sorceries of song,
 To thee, meek Flowret! gentler gales
 And cloudless skies belong.

Her eye with tearful meanings fraught,
 She gaz'd till all the body mov'd
 Interpreting the Spirit's thought —
 The Spirit's eager sympathy
 Now trembled with thy trembling stem,
 And while thou droopedst o'er thy bed,
 With sweet unconscious sympathy
 Inclined the drooping head.

She droop'd her head, she stretch'd her arm,
 She whisper'd low her witching rhymes,
 Fame unreluctant heard the charm,
 And bore thee to Pierian climes!
 Fear thou no more the Matin Frost
 That sparkled on thy bed of snow;
 For there, mid laurels ever green,
 Immortal thou shalt blow.

Thy petals boast a white more soft,
 The spell hath so perfuméd thee,
 That careless Love shall deem thee oft
 A blossom from his Myrtle tree.
 Then, laughing at the fair deceit,
 Shall race with some Etesian wind
 To seek the woven arboret
 Where Laura lies reclin'd.

All them whom Love and Fancy grace,
 When grosser eyes are clos'd in sleep,
 The gentle spirits of the place
 Waft up the insuperable steep,
 On whose vast summit broad and smooth
 Her nest the Phoenix Bird conceals,

And where by cypresses o'erhung
The heavenly Lethe steals.

A sea-like sound the branches breathe,
Stirr'd by the Breeze that loiters there;
And all that stretch their limbs beneath,
Forget the coil of mortal care.
Strange mists along the margins rise,
To heal the guests who thither come,
And fit the soul to re-endure
Its earthly martyrdom.

The margin dear to moonlight elves
Where Zephyr-trembling Lilies grow,
And bend to kiss their softer selves
That tremble in the stream below: —
There nightly borne does Laura lie
A magic Slumber heaves her breast:
Her arm, white wanderer of the Harp,
Beneath her cheek is prest.

The Harp uphung by golden chains
Of that low wind which whispers round,
With coy reproachfulness complains,
In snatches of reluctant sound:
The music hovers half-perceived,
And only moulds the slumberer's dreams;
Remember'd LOVES relume her cheek
With Youth's returning gleams.

On Revisiting the Sea-shore.

After long absence, under strong medical recommendation not to bathe

August, 1801

God be with thee, gladsome Ocean!
How gladly greet I thee once more!
Ships and waves, and ceaseless motion,
And men rejoicing on thy shore.

Dissuading spake the mild Physician,
“Those briny waves for thee are Death!”
But my soul fulfilled her mission,
And lo! I breathe untroubled breath!

Fashion’s pining sons and daughters,
That seek the crowd they seem to fly,
Trembling they approach thy waters;
And what cares Nature, if they die?

Me a thousand hopes and pleasures,
A thousand recollections bland,
Thoughts sublime, and stately measures,
Revisit on thy echoing strand:

Dreams (the Soul herself forsaking),
Tearful raptures, boyish mirth;
Silent adorations, making
A blessed shadow of this Earth!

O ye hopes, that stir within me,
Health comes with you from above!
God is with me, God is in me!
I cannot die, if Life be Love.

Ode to Tranquillity

1801

Tranquillity! thou better name
Than all the family of Fame!
Thou ne'er wilt leave my riper age
To low intrigue, or factious rage;
For oh! dear child of thoughtful Truth,
To thee I gave my early youth,
And left the bark, and blest the steadfast shore,
Ere yet the tempest rose and scared me with its roar.

Who late and lingering seeks thy shrine,
On him but seldom, Power divine,
Thy spirit rests! Satiety
And Sloth, poor counterfeits of thee,
Mock the tired worldling. Idle Hope
And dire Remembrance interlope,
To vex the feverish slumbers of the mind:
The bubble floats before, the spectre stalks behind.

But me thy gentle hand will lead
At morning through the accustomed mead;
And in the sultry summer's heat
Will build me up a mossy seat;
And when the gust of Autumn crowds,
And breaks the busy moonlight clouds,
Thou best the thought canst raise, the heart attune,
Light as the busy clouds, calm as the gliding moon.

The feeling heart, the searching soul,
To thee I dedicate the whole!
And while within myself I trace
The greatness of some future race,
Aloof with hermit-eye I scan
The present works of present man —
A wild and dream-like trade of blood and guile,
Too foolish for a tear, too wicked for a smile!

To Asra

1801

Are there two things, of all which men possess,
That are so like each other and so near,
As mutual Love seems like to Happiness?
Dear Asra, woman beyond utterance dear!
This Love which ever welling at my heart,
Now in its living fount doth heave and fall,
Now overflowing pours thro' every part
Of all my frame, and fills and changes all,
Like vernal waters springing up through snow,
This Love that seeming great beyond the power
Of growth, yet seemeth ever more to grow,
Could I transmute the whole to one rich Dower
Of Happy Life, and give it all to Thee,
Thy lot, methinks, were Heaven, thy age, Eternity!

The Second Birth

There are two births, the one when Light
First strikes the new-awaken'd sense —
The other when two souls unite,
And we must count our life from then.
When you lov'd me, and I lov'd you,
The both of us were born anew.

Love's Sanctuary

?1801

This yearning heart (Love! witness what I say)
Enshrines thy form as purely as it may,
Round which, as to some spirit uttering bliss,
My thoughts all stand ministrant night and day
Like saintly Priests, that dare not think amiss.

Dejection: An Ode

1802

[written April 4, 1802]

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
 With the old Moon in her arms;
 And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
 We shall have a deadly storm.

Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence.

Well! if the Bard was weather-wise, who made
 The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
 This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
 Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade
 Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,
 Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
 Upon the strings of this æolian lute,
 Which better far were mute.
 For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!
 And overspread with phantom light,
 (With swimming phantom light o'erspread
 But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
 I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
 The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
 And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
 And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
 Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
 And sent my soul abroad,
 Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
 Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
 A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
 Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
 In word, or sigh, or tear —
 O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
 To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,
 All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
 Have I been gazing on the western sky,
 And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
 And still I gaze — and with how blank an eye!
 And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
 That give away their motion to the stars;
 Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
 Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:

Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
 In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
 I see them all so excellently fair,
 I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

My genial spirits fail;
 And what can these avail
 To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
 It were a vain endeavour,
 Though I should gaze for ever
 On that green light that lingers in the west:
 I may not hope from outward forms to win
 The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
 And in our life alone does Nature live:
 Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!
 And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
 Than that inanimate cold world allowed
 To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
 Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
 A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
 Enveloping the Earth —
 And from the soul itself must there be sent
 A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
 Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
 What this strong music in the soul may be!
 What, and wherein it doth exist,
 This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
 This beautiful and beauty-making power.
 Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,
 Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
 Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,
 Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
 Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower
 A new Earth and new Heaven,
 Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud —
 Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud —
 We in ourselves rejoice!
 And thence flows all that charms our ear or sight,
 All melodies the echoes of that voice,
 All colours a suffusion from that light.

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
 This joy within me dallied with distress,
 And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
 Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:
 For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
 And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
 But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
 Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
 But oh! each visitation
 Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
 My shaping spirit of Imagination.
 For not to think of what I needs must feel,
 But to be still and patient, all I can;
 And haply by abstruse research to steal
 From my own nature all the natural man —
 This was my sole resource, my only plan:
 Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
 And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
 Reality's dark dream!
 I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
 Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream
 Of agony by torture lengthened out
 That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,
 Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,
 Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
 Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
 Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
 Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
 Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
 Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
 The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
 Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
 Thou mighty Poet, e'en to frenzy bold!
 What tell'st thou now about?
 'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,
 With groans, of trampled men, with smarting wounds —
 At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold!
 But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!
 And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
 With groans, and tremulous shudderings — all is over —
 It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!
 A tale of less affright,
 And tempered with delight,
 As Otway's self had framed the tender lay, —
 'Tis of a little child

Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep:
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!
Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,
And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,
May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,
Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth!
With light heart may she rise,
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,
Their life the eddying of her living soul!
O simple spirit, guided from above,
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

The Picture, or the Lover's Resolutionh

1802

Through weeds and thorns, and matted underwood
 I force my way; now climb, and now descend
 O'er rocks, or bare or mossy, with wild foot
 Crushing the purple whorts; while oft unseen,
 Hurrying along the drifted forest-leaves,
 The scared snake rustles. Onward still I toil,
 I know not, ask not whither! A new joy,
 Lovely as light, sudden as summer gust,
 And gladsome as the first-born of the spring,
 Beckons me on, or follows from behind,
 Playmate, or guide! The master-passion quelled,
 I feel that I am free. With dun-red bark
 The fir-trees, and the unfrequent slender oak,
 Forth from this tangle wild of bush and brake
 Soar up, and form a melancholy vault
 High o'er me, murmuring like a distant sea.

Here Wisdom might resort, and here Remorse;
 Here too the love-lorn man, who, sick in soul,
 And of this busy human heart aweary,
 Worships the spirit of unconscious life
 In tree or wild-flower. — Gentle lunatic!
 If so he might not wholly cease to be,
 He would far rather not be that he is;
 But would be something that he knows not of,
 In winds or waters, or among the rocks!

But hence, fond wretch! breathe not contagion here!
 No myrtle-walks are these: these are no groves
 Where Love dare loiter! If in sullen mood
 He should stray hither, the low stumps shall gore
 His dainty feet, the briar and the thorn
 Make his plumes haggard. Like a wounded bird
 Easily caught, ensnare him, O ye Nymphs,
 Ye Oreads chaste, ye dusky Dryades!
 And you, ye Earth-winds! you that make at morn
 The dew-drops quiver on the spiders' webs!
 You, O ye wingless Airs! that creep between
 The rigid stems of heath and bitten furze,
 Within whose scanty shade, at summer-noon,
 The mother-sheep hath worn a hollow bed —
 Ye, that now cool her fleece with droplless damp,

Now pant and murmur with her feeding lamb.
Chase, chase him, all ye Fays, and elfin Gnomes!
With prickles sharper than his darts bemock
His little Godship, making him perforce
Creep through a thorn-bush on yon hedgehog's back.

This is my hour of triumph! I can now
With my own fancies play the merry fool,
And laugh away worse folly, being free.
Here will I seat myself, beside this old,
Hollow, and weedy oak, which ivy-twine
Clothes as with net-work: here will I couch my limbs,
Close by this river, in this silent shade,
As safe and sacred from the step of man
As an invisible world — unheard, unseen,
And listening only to the pebbly brook
That murmurs with a dead, yet tinkling sound;
Or to the bees, that in the neighbouring trunk
Make honey-hoards. The breeze, that visits me,
Was never Love's accomplice, never raised
The tendril ringlets from the maiden's brow,
And the blue, delicate veins above her cheek;
Ne'er played the wanton — never half disclosed
The maiden's snowy bosom, scattering thence
Eye-poisons for some love-distempered youth,
Who ne'er henceforth may see an aspen-grove
Shiver in sunshine, but his feeble heart
Shall flow away like a dissolving thing.

Sweet breeze! thou only, if I guess aright,
Liftest the feathers of the robin's breast,
That swells its little breast, so full of song,
Singing above me, on the mountain-ash.
And thou too, desert stream! no pool of thine,
Though clear as lake in latest summer-eve,
Did e'er reflect the stately virgin's robe,
The face, the form divine, the downcast look
Contemplative! Behold! her open palm
Presses her cheek and brow! her elbow rests
On the bare branch of half-uprooted tree,
That leans towards its mirror! Who erewhile
Had from her countenance turned, or looked by stealth,
(For Fear is true-love's cruel nurse), he now
With steadfast gaze and unoffending eye,
Worships the watery idol, dreaming hopes
Delicious to the soul, but fleeting, vain,
E'en as that phantom-world on which he gazed,

But not unheeded gazed: for see, ah! see,
 The sportive tyrant with her left hand plucks
 The heads of tall flowers that behind her grow,
 Lychnis, and willow-herb, and fox-glove bells:
 And suddenly, as one that toys with time,
 Scatters them on the pool! Then all the charm
 Is broken — all that phantom world so fair
 Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
 And each mis-shape the other. Stay awhile,
 Poor youth, who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes!
 The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
 The visions will return! And lo! he stays:
 And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
 Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
 The pool becomes a mirror; and behold
 Each wildflower on the marge inverted there,
 And there the half-uprooted tree — but where,
 O where the virgin's snowy arm, that leaned
 On its bare branch? He turns, and she is gone!
 Homeward she steals through many a woodland maze
 Which he shall seek in vain. Ill-fated youth!
 Go, day by day, and waste thy manly prime
 In mad love-yearning by the vacant brook,
 Till sickly thoughts bewitch thine eyes, and thou
 Behold'st her shadow still abiding there,
 The Naiad of the mirror!

Not to thee,

O wild and desert stream! belongs this tale:
 Gloomy and dark art thou — the crowded firs
 Spire from thy shores, and stretch across thy bed,
 Making thee doleful as a cavern-well:
 Save when the shy king-fishers build their nest
 On thy steep banks, no loves hast thou, wild stream!

This be my chosen haunt — emancipate
 From Passion's dreams, a freeman, and alone,
 I rise and trace its devious course. O lead,
 Lead me to deeper shades and lonelier glooms.
 Lo! stealing through the canopy of firs,
 How fair the sunshine spots that mossy rock,
 Isle of the river, whose disparted waves
 Dart off asunder with an angry sound,
 How soon to re-unite! And see! they meet,
 Each in the other lost and found: and see
 Placeless, as spirits, one soft water-sun
 Throbbing within them, heart at once and eye!

With its soft neighbourhood of filmy clouds,
The stains and shadings of forgotten tears,
Dimness o'erswum with lustre! Such the hour
Of deep enjoyment, following love's brief feuds
And hark, the noise of a near waterfall!
I pass forth into light — I find myself
Beneath a weeping birch (most beautiful
Of forest trees, the Lady of the Woods),
Hard by the brink of a tall weedy rock
That overbrows the cataract. How bursts
The landscape on my sight! Two crescent hills
Fold in behind each other, and so make
A circular vale, and land-locked, as might seem,
With brook and bridge, and grey stone cottages,
Half hid by rocks and fruit-trees. At my feet,
The whortle-berries are bedewed with spray,
Dashed upwards by the furious waterfall.
How solemnly the pendent ivy-mass
Swings in its winnow: All the air is calm.
The smoke from cottage-chimneys, tinged with light,
Rises in columns; from this house alone,
Close by the water-fall, the column slants,
And feels its ceaseless breeze. But what is this?
That cottage, with its slanting chimney-smoke,
And close beside its porch a sleeping child,
His dear head pillowed on a sleeping dog —
One arm between its fore-legs, and the hand
Holds loosely its small handful of wild-flowers
Unfilleted, and of unequal lengths.
A curious picture, with a master's haste
Sketched on a strip of pinky-silver skin,
Peeled from the birchen bark! Divinest maid!
Yon bark her canvas, and those purple berries
Her pencil! See, the juice is scarcely dried
On the fine skin! She has been newly here;
And lo! yon patch of heath has been her couch —
The pressure still remains! O blesséd couch!
For this may'st thou flower early, and the sun,
Slanting at eve, rest bright, and linger long
Upon thy purple bells! O Isabel!
Daughter of genius! stateliest of our maids!
More beautiful than whom Alcaeus wooed,
The Lesbian woman of immortal song!
O child of genius! stately, beautiful,
And full of love to all, save only me,
And not ungentle e'en to me! My heart,

Why beats it thus? Through yonder coppice-wood
Needs must the pathway turn, that leads straightway
On to her father's house. She is alone!
The night draws on — such ways are hard to hit —
And fit it is I should restore this sketch,
Dropt unawares, no doubt. Why should I yearn
To keep the relique? 'twill but idly feed
The passion that consumes me. Let me haste!
The picture in my hand which she has left;
She cannot blame me that I followed her:
And I may be her guide the long wood through.

To Matilda Betham from a Stranger

1802

Matilda! I have heard a sweet tune played
 On a sweet instrument — thy Poesie —
 Sent to my soul by Boughton's pleading voice,
 Where friendship's zealous wish inspirited,
 Deepened and filled the subtle tones of *taste*:
 (So have I heard a Nightingale's fine notes
 Blend with the murmur of a hidden stream!)
 And now the fair, wild offspring of thy genius,
 Those wanderers whom thy fancy had sent forth
 To seek their fortune in this motley world,
 Have found a little home within *my* heart,
 And brought me, as the quit-rent of their lodging,
 Rose-buds, and fruit-blossoms, and pretty weeds,
 And timorous laurel leaflets half-disclosed,
 Engarlanded with gadding woodbine tendrils!
 A coronal, which, with undoubting hand,
 I twine around the brows of patriot HOPE!

The Almighty, having first composed a Man,
 Set him to music, framing Woman for him,
 And fitted each to each, and made them one!
 And 'tis my faith, that there's a natural bond
 Between the female mind and measured sounds,
 Nor do I know a sweeter Hope than this,
 Than this sweet Hope, by judgment unreprieved,
 That our own Britain, our dear mother Isle,
 May boast one Maid, a poetess *indeed*,
 Great as th' impassioned Lesbian, in sweet song,
 And O! of holier mind, and happier fate.

Matilda! I dare twine *thy* vernal wreath
 Around the brows of patriot Hope! But thou
 Be wise! be bold! fulfil my auspices!
 Tho' sweet thy measures, stern must be thy thought,
 Patient thy study, watchful thy mild eye!
 Poetic feelings, like the stretching boughs
 Of mighty oaks, pay homage to the gales,
 Toss in the strong winds, drive before the gust,
 Themselves one giddy storm of fluttering leaves;
 Yet, all the while self-limited, remain
 Equally near the fixed and solid trunk
 Of Truth and Nature in the howling storm,

As in the calm that stills the aspen grove.
Be bold, meek Woman! but be wisely bold!
Fly, ostrich-like, firm land beneath thy feet,
Yet hurried onward by thy wings of fancy
Swift as the whirlwind, singing in their quills.
Look round thee! look within thee! think and feel!
What nobler meed, Matilda! canst thou win,
Than tears of gladness in a BOUGHTON'S eyes,
And exultation even in strangers' hearts?

Hymn Before Sunrise, in the Vale of Chamouni

1802

Besides the Rivers, Arve and Arveiron, which have their sources in the foot of Mont Blanc, five conspicuous torrents rush down its sides; and within a few paces of the Glaciers, the Gentiana Major grows in immense numbers, with its “flowers of loveliest blue.”

Hast thou a charm to stay the morning-star
 In his steep course? So long he seems to pause
 On thy bald awful head, O sovran BLANC,
 The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
 Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful Form!
 Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,
 How silently! Around thee and above
 Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,
 An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it,
 As with a wedge! But when I look again,
 It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
 Thy habitation from eternity!
 O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
 Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
 Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
 I worshipped the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
 So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
 Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my Thought,
 Yea, with my Life and Life's own secret joy:
 Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
 Into the mighty vision passing — there
 As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven!

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
 Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
 Mute thanks and secret ecstasy! Awake,
 Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake!
 Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my Hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovereign of the Vale!
 O struggling with the darkness all the night,
 And visited all night by troops of stars,
 Or when they climb the sky or when they sink:
 Companion of the morning-star at dawn,
 Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
 Co-herald: wake, O wake, and utter praise!
 Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth?

Who filled thy countenance with rosy light?
 Who made thee parent of perpetual streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!
 Who called you forth from night and utter death,
 From dark and icy caverns called you forth,
 Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
 For ever shattered and the same for ever?
 Who gave you your invulnerable life,
 Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
 Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
 And who commanded (and the silence came),
 Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

Ye Ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
 Adown enormous ravines slope amain —
 Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
 And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!
 Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
 Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven
 Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
 Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
 Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet? —
 GOD! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
 Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, GOD!
 GOD! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
 Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
 And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
 And in their perilous fall shall thunder, GOD!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!
 Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!
 Ye eagles, play-mates of the mountain-storm!
 Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
 Ye signs and wonders of the element!
 Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
 Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
 Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene
 Into the depth of clouds, that veil thy breast —
 Thou too again, stupendous Mountain! thou
 That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
 In adoration, upward from thy base
 Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
 Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,
 To rise before me — Rise, O ever rise,

Rise like a cloud of incense from the Earth!
Thou kingly Spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises GOD.

The Good, Great Man

1802

“How seldom, friend! a good great man inherits
Honour or wealth with all his worth and pains!
It sounds like stories from the land of spirits
If any man obtain that which he merits
Or any merit that which he obtains.”

Reply to the above

For shame, dear friend, renounce this canting strain!
What would'st thou have a good great man obtain?
Place? titles? salary? a gilded chain?
Or throne of corses which his sword had slain?
Greatness and goodness are not *means*, but *ends*!
Hath he not always treasures, always friends,
The good great man? *three* treasures, LOVE, and LIGHT,
And CALM THOUGHTS, regular as infant's breath:
And three firm friends, more sure than day and night,
HIMSELF, his MAKER, and the ANGEL DEATH!

Inscription for a Fountain on a Heath

1802

This Sycamore, oft musical with bees, —
Such tents the Patriarchs loved! O long unharmed
May all its aged boughs o'er-canopy
The small round basin, which this jutting stone
Keeps pure from falling leaves! Long may the Spring,
Quietly as a sleeping infant's breath,
Send up cold waters to the traveller
With soft and even pulse! Nor ever cease
Yon tiny cone of sand its soundless dance,
Which at the bottom, like a Fairy's Page,
As merry and no taller, dances still,
Nor wrinkles the smooth surface of the Fount.
Here Twilight is and Coolness: here is moss,
A soft seat, and a deep and ample shade.
Thou may'st toil far and find no second tree.
Drink, Pilgrim, here; Here rest! and if thy heart
Be innocent, here too shalt thou refresh
Thy spirit, listening to some gentle sound,
Or passing gale or hum of murmuring bees!

An Ode to the Rain.

Composed before daylight, on the morning appointed for the departure of a very worthy, but not very pleasant visitor, whom it was feared the rain might detain.

1802

I know it is dark; and though I have lain,
Awake, as I guess, an hour or twain,
I have not once opened the lids of my eyes,
But I lie in the dark, as a blind man lies.
O Rain! that I lie listening to,
You're but a doleful sound at best:
I owe you little thanks, 'tis true,
For breaking thus my needful rest!
Yet if, as soon as it is light,
O Rain! you will but take your flight,
I'll neither rail, nor malice keep,
Though sick and sore for want of sleep.
But only now, for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain! do go away!

O Rain! with your dull two-fold sound,
The clash hard by, and the murmur all round!
You know, if you know aught, that we,
Both night and day, but ill agree:
For days and months, and almost years,
Have limped on through this vale of tears,
Since body of mine, and rainy weather,
Have lived on easy terms together.
Yet if, as soon as it is light,
O Rain! you will but take your flight,
Though you should come again to-morrow,
And bring with you both pain and sorrow;
Though stomach should sicken and knees should swell —
I'll nothing speak of you but well.
But only now for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain! do go away!

Dear Rain! I ne'er refused to say
You're a good creature in your way;
Nay, I could write a book myself,
Would fit a parson's lower shelf,
Showing how very good you are. —
What then? sometimes it must be fair
And if sometimes, why not to-day?

Do go, dear Rain! do go away!

Dear Rain! if I've been cold and shy,
Take no offence! I'll tell you why.
A dear old Friend e'en now is here,
And with him came my sister dear;
After long absence now first met,
Long months by pain and grief beset —
We three dear friends! in truth, we groan
Impatiently to be alone.
We three, you mark! and not one more!
The strong wish makes my spirit sore.
We have so much to talk about,
So many sad things to let out;
So many tears in our eye-corners,
Sitting like little Jacky Horners —
In short, as soon as it is day,
Do go, dear Rain! do go away.

And this I'll swear to you, dear Rain!
Whenever you shall come again,
Be you as dull as e'er you could
(And by the bye 'tis understood,
You're not so pleasant as you're good),
Yet, knowing well your worth and place,
I'll welcome you with cheerful face;
And though you stayed a week or more,
Were ten times duller than before;
Yet with kind heart, and right good will,
I'll sit and listen to you still;
Nor should you go away, dear Rain!
Uninvited to remain.
But only now, for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain! do go away.

A Day-dream

1801-2

My eyes make pictures, when they are shut:
I see a fountain, large and fair,
A willow and a ruined hut,
And thee, and me and Mary there.
O Mary! make thy gentle lap our pillow!
Bend o'er us, like a bower, my beautiful green willow!

A wild-rose roofs the ruined shed,
And that and summer well agree:
And lo! where Mary leans her head,
Two dear names carved upon the tree!
And Mary's tears, they are not tears of sorrow:
Our sister and our friend will both be here to-morrow.

'Twas day! but now few, large, and bright,
The stars are round the crescent moon!
And now it is a dark warm night,
The balmiest of the month of June!
A glow-worm fall'n, and on the marge remounting
Shines, and its shadow shines, fit stars for our sweet fountain.

O ever — ever be thou blest!
For dearly, Asra! love I thee!
This brooding warmth across my breast,
This depth of tranquil bliss — ah me!
Fount, tree and shed are gone, I know not whither,
But in one quiet room we three are still together.

The shadows dance upon the wall,
By the still dancing fire-flames made;
And now they slumber, moveless all!
And now they melt to one deep shade!
But not from me shall this mild darkness steal thee:
I dream thee with mine eyes, and at my heart I feel thee!

Thine eyelash on my cheek doth play —
'Tis Mary's hand upon my brow!
But let me check this tender lay
Which none may hear but she and thou!
Like the still hive at quiet midnight humming,
Murmur it to yourselves, ye two beloved women!

Answer to a Child's Question

1802

Do you ask what the birds say? The Sparrow, the Dove,
The Linnet and Thrush say, "I love and I love!"
In the winter they're silent — the wind is so strong;
What it says, I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm weather,
And singing, and loving — all come back together.
But the Lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings; and for ever sings he —
"I love my Love, and my Love loves me!"

The Day-dream. From an Emigrant to his Absent Wife

1801-2

If thou wert here, these tears were tears of light!
But from as sweet a vision did I start
As ever made these eyes grow idly bright!
And though I weep, yet still around my heart
A sweet and playful tenderness doth linger,
Touching my heart as with an infant's finger.

My mouth half open, like a witless man,
I saw our couch, I saw our quiet room,
Its shadows heaving by the fire-light gloom;
And o'er my lips a subtle feeling ran,
All o'er my lips a soft and breeze-like feeling —
I know not what — but had the same been stealing

Upon a sleeping mother's lips, I guess
It would have made the loving mother dream
That she was softly bending down to kiss
Her babe, that something more than babe did seem,
A floating presence of its darling father,
And yet its own dear baby self far rather!

Across my chest there lay a weight, so warm!
As if some bird had taken shelter there;
And lo! I seemed to see a woman's form —
Thine, Sara, thine? O joy, if thine it were!
I gazed with stifled breath, and feared to stir it,
No deeper trance e'er wrapt a yearning spirit!

And now, when I seemed sure thy face to see,
Thy own dear self in our own quiet home;
There came an elfish laugh, and wakened me:
'Twas Frederic, who behind my chair had clomb,
And with his bright eyes at my face was peeping.
I blessed him, tried to laugh, and fell a-weeping!

The Happy Husband. A Fragment

?1802

Oft, oft methinks, the while with thee,
I breathe, as from the heart, thy dear
And dedicated name, I hear
A promise and a mystery,
A pledge of more than passing life,
Yea, in that very name of Wife!

A pulse of love, that ne'er can sleep!
A feeling that upbraids the heart
With happiness beyond desert,
That gladness half requests to weep!
Nor bless I not the keener sense
And unalarming turbulence

Of transient joys, that ask no sting
From jealous fears, or coy denying;
But born beneath Love's brooding wing,
And into tenderness soon dying,
Wheel out their giddy moment, then
Resign the soul to love again; —

A more precipitated vein
Of notes, that eddy in the flow
Of smoothest song, they come, they go,
And leave their sweeter understrain,
Its own sweet self — a love of Thee
That seems, yet cannot greater be!

The Pains of Sleep

1803

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
It hath not been my use to pray
With moving lips or bended knees;
But silently, by slow degrees,
My spirit I to Love compose,
In humble trust mine eye-lids close,
With reverential resignation,
No wish conceived, no thought exprest,
Only a sense of supplication;
A sense o'er all my soul imprest
That I am weak, yet not unblest,
Since in me, round me, every where
Eternal Strength and Wisdom are.

But yester-night I prayed aloud
In anguish and in agony,
Up-starting from the fiendish crowd
Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me:
A lurid light, a trampling throng,
Sense of intolerable wrong,
And whom I scorned, those only strong!
Thirst of revenge, the powerless will
Still baffled, and yet burning still!
Desire with loathing strangely mixed
On wild or hateful objects fixed.
Fantastic passions! maddening brawl!
And shame and terror over all!
Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
Which all confused I could not know
Whether I suffered, or I did:
For all seemed guilt, remorse or woe,
My own or others still the same
Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame.

So two nights passed: the night's dismay
Saddened and stunned the coming day.
Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me
Distemper's worst calamity.
The third night, when my own loud scream
Had waked me from the fiendish dream,
O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,
I wept as I had been a child;

And having thus by tears subdued
My anguish to a milder mood,
Such punishments, I said, were due
To natures deepliest stained with sin, —
For aye entempesting anew
The unfathomable hell within,
The horror of their deeds to view,
To know and loathe, yet wish and do!
Such griefs with such men well agree,
But wherefore, wherefore fall on me?
To be beloved is all I need,
And whom I love, I love indeed.

The Exchange

1804

We pledged our hearts, my love and I, —
I in my arms the maiden clasping;
I could not guess the reason why,
But, oh! I trembled like an aspen.

Her father's love she bade me gain;
I went, but shook like any reed!
I strove to act the man — in vain!
We had exchanged our hearts indeed.

Ad Vilmum Axiologum.

[To William Wordsworth.]

?1805

This be the meed, that thy song creates a thousand-fold echo!
Sweet as the warble of woods, that awakes at the gale of the morning!
List! the Hearts of the Pure, like caves in the ancient mountains
Deep, deep *in* the Bosom, and *from* the Bosom resound it,
Each with a different tone, complete or in musical fragments —
All have welcomed thy Voice, and receive and retain and prolong it!

This is the word of the Lord! it is spoken, and Beings Eternal
Live and are borne as an Infant; the Eternal begets the Immortal:
Love is the Spirit of Life, and Music the Life of the Spirit!

An Exile

1805

Friend, Lover, Husband, Sister, Brother!
Dear names close in upon each other!
Alas! poor Fancy's bitter-sweet —
Our names, and but our names can meet.

Sonnet.

?1805

[Translated from Marini.]

Lady, to Death we're doom'd, our crime the same!
Thou, that in me thou kindled'st such fierce heat;
I, that my heart did of a Sun so sweet
The rays concentre to so hot a flame.
I, fascinated by an Adder's eye —
Deaf as an Adder thou to all my pain;
Thou obstinate in Scorn, in Passion I —
I lov'd too much, too much didst thou disdain.
Hear then our doom in Hell as just as stern,
Our sentence equal as our crimes conspire —
Who living bask'd at Beauty's earthly fire,
In living flames eternal these must burn —
Hell for us both fit places too supplies —
In my heart *thou* wilt burn, I *roast* before thine eyes.

Phantom

1805

All look and likeness caught from earth
All accident of kin and birth,
Had pass'd away. There was no trace
Of aught on that illumined face,
Uprais'd beneath the rifted stone
But of one spirit all her own; —
She, she herself, and only she,
Shone through her body visibly.

A Sunset

1805

Upon the mountain's edge with light touch resting,
There a brief while the globe of splendour sits
And seems a creature of the earth; but soon
More changeful than the Moon,
To wane fantastic his great orb submits,
Or cone or mow of fire: till sinking slowly
Even to a star at length he lessens wholly.

Abrupt, as Spirits vanish, he is sunk!
A soul-like breeze possesses all the wood.
The boughs, the sprays have stood
As motionless as stands the ancient trunk!
But every leaf through all the forest flutters,
And deep the cavern of the fountain mutters.

What is Life?

1805

Resembles life what once was deem'd of light,
Too ample in itself for human sight?
An absolute self — an element ungrounded —
All that we see, all colours of all shade
By encroach of darkness made? —
Is very life by consciousness unbounded?
And all the thoughts, pains, joys of mortal breath,
A war-embrace of wrestling life and death?

The Blossoming of the Solitary Date-tree. A Lament

1805

Beneath the blaze of a tropical sun the mountain peaks are
the Thrones of Frost, through the absence of objects to reflect
the rays. "What no one with us shares, seems scarce our own."
The presence of a ONE,

The best belov'd, who loveth me the best,

is for the heart, what the supporting air from within is for the
hollow globe with its suspended car. Deprive it of this, and
all without, that would have buoyed it aloft even to the seat
of the gods, becomes a burthen and crushes it into flatness.

The finer the sense for the beautiful and the lovely, and the
fairer and lovelier the object presented to the sense; the more
exquisite the individual's capacity of joy, and the more ample
his means and opportunities of enjoyment, the more heavily
will he feel the ache of solitariness, the more unsubstantial
becomes the feast spread around him. What matters it,
whether in fact the viands and the ministering graces are
shadowy or real, to him who has not hand to grasp nor arms
to embrace them?

Imagination; honourable aims;
Free commune with the choir that cannot die;
Science and song; delight in little things,
The buoyant child surviving in the man;
Fields, forests, ancient mountains, ocean, sky,
With all their voices — O dare I accuse
My earthly lot as guilty of my spleen,
Or call my destiny niggard! O no! no!
It is her largeness, and her overflow,
Which being incomplete, disquieteth me so!

For never touch of gladness stirs my heart,
But tim'rously beginning to rejoice
Like a blind Arab, that from sleep doth start
In lonesome tent, I listen for thy voice.
Belovéd! 'tis not thine; thou art not there!
Then melts the bubble into idle air,
And wishing without hope I restlessly despair.

The mother with anticipated glee
Smiles o'er the child, that, standing by her chair
And flatt'ning its round cheek upon her knee,
Looks up, and doth its rosy lips prepare
To mock the coming sounds. At that sweet sight
She hears her own voice with a new delight;
And if the babe perchance should lisp the notes aright,

Then is she tenfold gladder than before!
But should disease or chance the darling take,
What then avail those songs, which sweet of yore
Were only sweet for their sweet echo's sake?
Dear maid! no prattler at a mother's knee
Was e'er so dearly prized as I prize thee:
Why was I made for Love and Love denied to me?

Separation

?1805

A sworded man whose trade is blood,
In grief, in anger, and in fear,
Thro' jungle, swamp, and torrent flood,
I seek the wealth you hold so dear!

The dazzling charm of outward form,
The power of gold, the pride of birth,
Have taken Woman's heart by storm —
Usurp'd the place of inward worth.

Is not true Love of higher price
Than outward Form, though fair to see,
Wealth's glittering fairy-dome of ice,
Or echo of proud ancestry? —

O! Asra, Asra! couldst thou see
Into the bottom of my heart,
There's such a mine of Love for thee,
As almost might supply desert!

(This separation is, alas!
Too great a punishment to bear;
O! take my life, or let me pass
That life, that happy life, with her!)

The perils, erst with steadfast eye
Encounter'd, now I shrink to see —
Oh! I have heart enough to die —
Not half enough to part from Thee!

The Rash Conjuror

?1805, ?1814

Strong spirit-bidding sounds!
 With deep and hollow voice,
 Twixt Hope and Dread,
 Seven Times I said
 Iohva Mitzoveh
 Vohoeen!
 And up came an imp in the shape of a
 Pea-hen!
 I saw, I doubted,
 And seven times spouted
 Johva Mitzoveh
 Yahóevohaen!
 When Anti-Christ starting up, butting
 and baing,
 In the shape of a mischievous curly
 black Lamb —
 With a vast flock of Devils behind
 and beside,
 And before 'em their Shepherdess
 Lucifer's Dam,
 Riding astride
 On an old black Ram,
 With Tartary stirrups, knees up to her chin,
 And a sleek chrysom imp to her Dugs muzzled in, —
 "Gee-up, my old Belzy! (she cried,
 As she sung to her suckling cub)
 Trit-a-trot, trot! we'll go far and wide
 Trot, Ram-Devil! Trot! Belzebub!"
 Her petticoat fine was of scarlet Brocade,
 And soft in her lap her Baby she lay'd
 With his pretty Nubs of Horns a-
 sprouting,
 And his pretty little Tail all curly-twirly —
 St. Dunstan! and this comes of spouting —
 Of Devils what a Hurly-Burly!
 "Behold we are up! what want'st thou then?"
 "Sirs! only that" — "Say when and what" —
 "You'd be so good" — "Say what and when"
 "This moment to get down again!"
 "We do it! we do it! we all get down!
 But we take you with us to swim
 or drown!

Down a down to the grim Engulpher!’
 ‘‘O me! I am floundering in Fire and Sulphur!
 That the Dragon had scrouched you, squeal
 and squall —
 Cabbalists! Conjurers! great and small,
 Johva Mitzoveh Evohaen and all!
 Had *I* never uttered your jaw-breaking words,
 I might now have been sloshing down Junket and Curds,
 Like a Devonshire Christian:
 But now a Philistine!

Ye Earthmen! be warned by a judgement so tragic,
 And wipe yourselves cleanly with all books of magic —
 Hark! hark! it is Dives! ‘‘Hold your Bother, you Booby!
 I am burnt ashy white, and you yet are but ruby.’’

Epilogue

We ask and urge (here ends the story)
 All Christian Papishes to pray
 That this unhappy Conjuror may
 Instead of Hell, be but in Purgatory —
 For then there’s Hope, —
 Long live the Pope!
 Catholicus.

A Child's Evening Prayer

1806

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
God grant me grace my prayers to say:
O God! preserve my mother dear
In strength and health for many a year;
And, O! preserve my father too,
And may I pay him reverence due;
And may I my best thoughts employ
To be my parents' hope and joy;
And O! preserve my brothers both
From evil doings and from sloth,
And may we always love each other
Our friends, our father, and our mother:
And still, O Lord, to me impart
An innocent and grateful heart,
That after my great sleep I may
Awake to thy eternal day! *Amen.*

Metrical Feet. Lesson for a Boy

1806

Trochee trips from long to short;
From long to long in solemn sort
Slow Spondee stalks; strong foot! yet ill able
Ever to come up with Dactyl trisyllable.
Iambics march from short to long; —
With a leap and a bound the swift Anapæsts throng;
One syllable long, with one short at each side,
Amphibrachys hastes with a stately stride; —
First and last being long, middle short, Amphimacer
Strikes his thundering hoofs like a proud high-bred Racer.
If Derwent be innocent, steady, and wise,
And delight in the things of earth, water, and skies;
Tender warmth at his heart, with these metres to show it,
With sound sense in his brains, may make Derwent a poet, —
May crown him with fame, and must win him the love
Of his father on earth and his Father above.
My dear, dear child!
Could you stand upon Skiddaw, you would not from its whole ridge
See a man who so loves you as your fond S. T. COLERIDGE.

Farewell to Love

1806

Farewell, sweet Love! yet blame you not my truth;
More fondly ne'er did mother eye her child
Than I your form: *yours* were my hopes of youth,
And as *you* shaped my thoughts I sighed or smiled.

While most were wooing wealth, or gaily swerving
To pleasure's secret haunts, and some apart
Stood strong in pride, self-conscious of deserving,
To you I gave my whole weak wishing heart.

And when I met the maid that realised
Your fair creations, and had won her kindness,
Say, but for her if aught on earth I prized!
Your dreams alone I dreamt, and caught your blindness.

O grief! — but farewell, Love! I will go play me
With thoughts that please me less, and less betray me.

To William Wordsworth.**Composed on the night after his recitation of a poem on the growth of an individual mind**

January, 1807

Friend of the wise! and Teacher of the Good!
 Into my heart have I received that Lay
 More than historic, that prophetic Lay
 Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)
 Of the foundations and the building up
 Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell
 What may be told, to the understanding mind
 Revealable; and what within the mind
 By vital breathings secret as the soul
 Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
 Thoughts all too deep for words! —

Theme hard as high!

Of smiles spontaneous, and mysterious fears
 (The first-born they of Reason and twin-birth),
 Of tides obedient to external force,
 And currents self-determined, as might seem,
 Or by some inner Power; of moments awful,
 Now in thy inner life, and now abroad,
 When power streamed from thee, and thy soul received
 The light reflected, as a light bestowed —
 Of fancies fair, and milder hours of youth,
 Hyblean murmurs of poetic thought
 Industrious in its joy, in vales and glens
 Native or outland, lakes and famous hills!
 Or on the lonely high-road, when the stars
 Were rising; or by secret mountain-streams,
 The guides and the companions of thy way!

Of more than Fancy, of the Social Sense
 Distending wide, and man beloved as man,
 Where France in all her towns lay vibrating
 Like some becalméd bark beneath the burst
 Of Heaven's immediate thunder, when no cloud
 Is visible, or shadow on the main.
 For thou wert there, thine own brows garlanded,
 Amid the tremor of a realm aglow,
 Amid a mighty nation jubilant,
 When from the general heart of human kind
 Hope sprang forth like a full-born Deity!

— Of that dear Hope afflicted and struck down,
 So summoned homeward, thenceforth calm and sure
 From the dread watch-tower of man's absolute self,
 With light unwaning on her eyes, to look
 Far on — herself a glory to behold,
 The Angel of the vision! Then (last strain)
 Of Duty, chosen Laws controlling choice,
 Action and joy! — An Orphic song indeed,
 A song divine of high and passionate thoughts
 To their own music chaunted!

O great Bard!

Ere yet that last strain dying awed the air,
 With stedfast eye I viewed thee in the choir
 Of ever-enduring men. The truly great
 Have all one age, and from one visible space
 Shed influence! They, both in power and act,
 Are permanent, and Time is not with them,
 Save as it worketh for them, they in it.
 Nor less a sacred Roll, than those of old,
 And to be placed, as they, with gradual fame
 Among the archives of mankind, thy work
 Makes audible a linked lay of Truth,
 Of Truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
 Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes!
 Ah! as I listened with a heart forlorn,
 The pulses of my being beat anew:
 And even as Life returns upon the drowned,
 Life's joy rekindling roused a throng of pains —
 Keen pangs of Love, awakening as a babe
 Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart;
 And fears self-willed, that shunned the eye of Hope;
 And Hope that scarce would know itself from Fear;
 Sense of past Youth, and Manhood come in vain,
 And Genius given, and Knowledge won in vain;
 And all which I had culled in wood-walks wild,
 And all which patient toil had reared, and all,
 Commune with thee had opened out — but flowers
 Strewed on my corse, and borne upon my bier
 In the same coffin, for the self-same grave!

That way no more! and ill beseems it me,
 Who came a welcomer in herald's guise,
 Singing of Glory, and Futurity,
 To wander back on such unhealthful road,
 Plucking the poisons of self-harm! And ill
 Such intertwine beseems triumphal wreaths

Strew'd before thy advancing!

Nor do thou,
Sage Bard! impair the memory of that hour
Of thy communion with my nobler mind
By pity or grief, already felt too long!
Nor let my words import more blame than needs.
The tumult rose and ceased: for Peace is nigh
Where Wisdom's voice has found a listening heart.
Amid the howl of more than wintry storms,
The Halcyon hears the voice of vernal hours
Already on the wing.

Eve following eve,
Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of Home
Is sweetest! moments for their own sake hailed
And more desired, more precious, for thy song,
In silence listening, like a devout child,
My soul lay passive, by thy various strain
Driven as in surges now beneath the stars,
With momentary stars of my own birth,
Fair constellated foam, still darting off
Into the darkness; now a tranquil sea,
Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon.

And when — O Friend! my comforter and guide!
Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength! —
Thy long sustained Song finally closed,
And thy deep voice had ceased — yet thou thyself
Wert still before my eyes, and round us both
That happy vision of beloved faces —
Scarce conscious, and yet conscious of its close
I sate, my being blended in one thought
(Thought was it? or aspiration? or resolve?)
Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound —
And when I rose, I found myself in prayer.

An Angel Visitant

?1801

Within these circling hollies woodbine-clad —
Beneath this small blue roof of vernal sky —
How warm, how still! Tho' tears should dim mine eye,
Yet will my heart for days continue glad,
For here, my love, thou art, and here am I!

Recollections of Love

1807

How warm this woodland wild Recess!
Love surely hath been breathing here;
And this sweet bed of heath, my dear!
Swells up, then sinks with faint caress,
As if to have you yet more near.

Eight springs have flown, since last I lay
On sea-ward Quantock's heathy hills,
Where quiet sounds from hidden rills
Float here and there, like things astray,
And high o'er head the sky-lark shrills.

No voice as yet had made the air
Be music with your name; yet why
That asking look? that yearning sigh?
That sense of promise every where?
Belovéd! flew your spirit by?

As when a mother doth explore
The rose-mark on her long-lost child,
I met, I loved you, maiden mild!
As whom I long had loved before —
So deeply had I been beguiled.

You stood before me like a thought,
A dream remembered in a dream.
But when those meek eyes first did seem
To tell me, Love within you wrought —
O Greta, dear domestic stream!

Has not, since then, Love's prompture deep,
Has not Love's whisper evermore
Been ceaseless, as thy gentle roar?
Sole voice, when other voices sleep,
Dear under-song in clamor's hour.

To Two Sisters

[Mary Morgan and Charlotte Brent] A Wanderer's Farewell

1807

To know, to esteem, to love, — and then to part —
 Makes up life's tale to many a feeling heart;
 Alas for some abiding-place of love,
 O'er which my spirit, like the mother dove,
 Might brood with warming wings!

O fair! O kind!

Sisters in blood, yet each with each intertwined
 More close by sisterhood of heart and mind!
 Me disinherited in form and face
 By nature, and mishap of outward grace;
 Who, soul and body, through one guiltless fault
 Waste daily with the poison of sad thought,
 Me did you soothe, when solace hoped I none!
 And as on unthaw'd ice the winter sun,
 Though stern the frost, though brief the genial day,
 You bless my heart with many a cheerful ray;
 For gratitude suspends the heart's despair,
 Reflecting bright though cold your image there.
 Nay more! its music by some sweeter strain
 Makes us live o'er our happiest hours again,
 Hope re-appearing dim in memory's guise —
 Even thus did you call up before mine eyes
 Two dear, dear Sisters, prized all price above,
 Sisters, like you, with more than sisters' love;
So like you *they*, and so in *you* were seen
 Their relative statures, tempers, looks, and mien,
 That oft, dear ladies! you have been to me
 At once a vision and reality.
 Sight seem'd a sort of memory, and amaze
 Mingled a trouble with affection's gaze.

Oft to my eager soul I whisper blame,
 A Stranger bid it feel the Stranger's shame —
 My eager soul, impatient of the name,
 No strangeness owns, no Stranger's form descries:
 The chidden heart spreads trembling on the eyes.
 First-seen I gazed, as I would look you thro'!
 My best-beloved regain'd their youth in you, —
 And still I ask, though now familiar grown,

Are you for *their* sakes dear, or for your own?
O doubly dear! may Quiet with you dwell!

In Grief I love you, yet I love you well!
Hope long is dead to me! an orphan's tear
Love wept despairing o'er his nurse's bier.
Yet still she flutters o'er her grave's green slope:
For Love's despair is but the ghost of Hope!

Sweet Sisters! were you placed around one hearth
With those, your other selves in shape and worth,
Far rather would I sit in solitude,
Fond recollections all my fond heart's food,
And dream of *you*, sweet Sisters! (ah! not mine!)
And only *dream* of you (ah! dream and pine!)
Than boast the presence and partake the pride,
And shine in the eye, of all the world beside.

Psyche

1808

The butterfly the ancient Grecians made
The soul's fair emblem, and its only name —
But of the soul, escaped the slavish trade
Of mortal life! — For in this earthly frame
Ours is the reptile's lot, much toil, much blame,
Manifold motions making little speed,
And to deform and kill the things whereon we feed.

A Tombless Epitaph

?1809

'Tis true, Idoloclastes Satyrane!
(So call him, for so mingling blame with praise,
And smiles with anxious looks, his earliest friends,
Masking his birth-name, wont to character
His wild-wood fancy and impetuous zeal.)
'Tis true that, passionate for ancient truths,
And honouring with religious love the Great
Of elder times, he hated to excess,
With an unquiet and intolerant scorn,
The hollow Puppets of a hollow Age,
Ever idolatrous, and changing ever
Its worthless Idols! Learning, Power, and Time,
(Too much of all) thus wasting in vain war
Of fervid colloquy. Sickness, 'tis true,
Whole years of weary days, besieged him close,
Even to the gates and inlets of his life!
But it is true, no less, that strenuous, firm,
And with a natural gladness, he maintained
The citadel unconquered, and in joy
Was strong to follow the delightful Muse.
For not a hidden path, that to the shades
Of the beloved Parnassian forest leads,
Lurked undiscovered by him; not a rill
There issues from the fount of Hippocrene,
But he had traced it upward to its source,
Through open glade, dark glen, and secret dell,
Knew the gay wild flowers on its banks, and culled
Its med'cinable herbs. Yea, oft alone,
Piercing the long-neglected holy cave,
The haunt obscure of old Philosophy,
He bade with lifted torch its starry walls
Sparkle, as erst they sparkled to the flame
Of odorous lamps tended by Saint and Sage.
O framed for calmer times and nobler hearts!
O studious Poet, eloquent for truth!
Philosopher! contemning wealth and death,
Yet docile, childlike, full of Life and Love!
Here, rather than on monumental stone,
This record of thy worth thy Friend inscribes,
Thoughtful, with quiet tears upon his cheek.

For a Market-Clock (Impromptu)

1809

What now, O Man! thou dost or mean'st to do
Will help to give thee peace, or make thee rue,
When hovering o'er the Dot this hand shall tell
The moment that secures thee Heaven or Hell!

The Madman and the Lethargist. An Example

?1809

Quoth Dick to me, as once at College
 We argued on the use of knowledge; —
 “In old King Olim’s reign, I’ve read,
 There lay two patients in one bed.
 The one in fat lethargic trance,
 Lay wan and motionless as lead:
 The other, (like the Folks in France),
 Possess’d a different disposition —
 In short, the plain truth to confess,
 The man was madder than Mad Bess!
 But both diseases, none disputed,
 Were unmedicinably rooted;
 Yet, so it chanc’d, by Heaven’s permission,
 Each prov’d the other’s true physician.

Fighting with a ghostly stare
 Troops of Despots in the air,
 Obstreperously Jacobinical,
 The madman froth’d, and foam’d, and roar’d:
 The other, snoring octaves cynical,
 Like good John Bull, in posture clinical,
 Seem’d living only when he snor’d.
 The *Citizen* enraged to see
 This fat Insensibility,
 Or, tir’d with solitary labour,
 Determin’d to convert his neighbour;
 So up he sprang and to’t he fell,
 Like devil piping hot from hell,
 With indefatigable fist
 Belabr’ing the poor Lethargist;
 Till his own limbs were stiff and sore,
 And sweat-drops roll’d from every pore: —
 Yet, still, with flying fingers fleet,
 Duly accompanied by feet,
 With some short intervals of biting,
 He executes the self-same strain,
 Till the Slumberer woke for pain,
 And half-prepared himself for fighting —
 That moment that his mad Colleague
 Sunk down and slept thro’ pure fatigue.
 So both were cur’d — and this example
 Gives demonstration full and ample —

That *Chance* may bring a thing to bear,
Where *Art* sits down in blank despair.’

‘That’s true enough, Dick’, answer’d I.
‘But as for the *Example*, ’tis a lie.’

The Visionary Hope

?1810

Sad lot, to have no Hope! Though lowly kneeling
He fain would frame a prayer within his breast,
Would fain entreat for some sweet breath of healing,
That his sick body might have ease and rest;
He strove in vain! the dull sighs from his chest
Against his will the stifling load revealing,
Though Nature forced; though like some captive guest,
Some royal prisoner at his conqueror's feast,
An alien's restless mood but half concealing,
The sternness on his gentle brow confessed,
Sickness within and miserable feeling:
Though obscure pangs made curses of his dreams,
And dreaded sleep, each night repelled in vain,
Each night was scattered by its own loud screams:
Yet never could his heart command, though fain,
One deep full wish to be no more in pain.

That Hope, which was his inward bliss and boast,
Which waned and died, yet ever near him stood,
Though changed in nature, wander where he would —
For Love's Despair is but Hope's pining Ghost!
For this one hope he makes his hourly moan,
He wishes and can wish for this alone!
Pierced, as with light from Heaven, before its gleams
(So the love-stricken visionary deems)
Disease would vanish, like a summer shower,
Whose dews fling sunshine from the noon-tide bower!
Or let it stay! yet this one Hope should give
Such strength that he would bless his pains and live.

Epitaph on an Infant

1811

Its balmy lips the infant blest
Relaxing from its Mother's breast,
How sweet it heaves the happy sigh
Of innocent satiety!

And such my Infant's latest sigh!
Oh tell, rude stone! the passer by,
That here the pretty babe doth lie,
Death sang to sleep with Lullaby.

The Virgin's Cradle-hymn.

Copied from a print of the Virgin in a Roman Catholic village in Germany

1811

Dormi, Jesu! Mater ridet
Quae tam dulcem somnum videt,
Dormi, Jesu! blandule!
Si non dormis, Mater plorat,
Inter fila cantans orat,
Blande, veni, somnule.

English

Sleep, sweet babe! my cares beguiling:
Mother sits beside thee smiling;
Sleep, my darling, tenderly!
If thou sleep not, mother mourneth,
Singing as her wheel she turneth:
Come, soft slumber, balmily!

To a Lady offended by a Sportive Observation that Women have no Souls

?1811

Nay, dearest Anna! why so grave?
I said, you had no soul, 'tis true!
For what you are, you cannot have:
'Tis I, that have one since I first had you!

Reason for Love's Blindness

?1811

I have heard of reasons manifold
Why Love must needs be blind,
But this the best of all I hold —
His eyes are in his mind.

What outward form and feature are
He guesseth but in part;
But that within is good and fair
He seeth with the heart.

The Suicide's Argument

1811

Ere the birth of my life, if I wished it or no,
No question was asked me — it could not be so!
If the life was the question, a thing sent to try,
And to live on be Yes; what can No be? to die.

Nature's Answer

Is't returned, as 'twas sent? Is't no worse for the wear?
Think first, what you are! Call to mind what you were!
I gave you innocence, I gave you hope,
Gave health, and genius, and an ample scope
Return you me guilt, lethargy, despair?
Make out the invent'ry; inspect, compare!
Then die — if die you dare!

Time, Real and Imaginary. An Allegory

?1812

On the wide level of mountain's head,
(I knew not where, but 'twas some faery place)
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails out-spread,
Two lovely children run an endless race,
A sister and a brother!
This far outstripp'd the other;
Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
And looks and listens for the boy behind:
For he, alas! is blind!
O'er rough and smooth with even step he passed,
And knows not whether he be first or last.

An Invocation. From *Remorse*

1812

[Act III, Scene i. ll. 69-82.]

Hear, sweet Spirit, hear the spell,
Lest a blacker charm compel!
So shall the midnight breezes swell
With thy deep long-lingering knell.

And at evening evermore,
In a chapel on the shore,
Shall the chaunter, sad and saintly,
Yellow tapers burning faintly,
Doleful masses chaunt for thee,
Miserere Domine!

Hush! the cadence dies away
On the quiet moonlight sea:
The boatmen rest their oars and say,
Miserere Domine!

The Night-scene: A Dramatic Fragment

1813

SANDOVAL You loved the daughter of Don Manrique?*EARL HENRY*

Loved?

SAND Did you not say you wooed her?*EARL H*

Once I loved

Her whom I dared not woo!

SAND

And wooed, perchance,

One whom you loved not!

EARL H

Oh! I were most base,

Not loving Oropeza. True, I wooed her,

Hoping to heal a deeper wound; but she

Met my advances with impassioned pride,

That kindled love with love. And when her sire,

Who in his dream of hope already grasped

The golden circlet in his hand, rejected

My suit with insult, and in memory

Of ancient feuds poured curses on my head,

Her blessings overtook and baffled them!

But thou art stern, and with unkindly countenance

Art inly reasoning whilst thou listenest to me.

SAND Anxiously, Henry! reasoning anxiously.

But Oropeza —

EARL H Blessings gather round her!

Within this wood there winds a secret passage,

Beneath the walls, which opens out at length

Into the gloomiest covert of the garden. —

The night ere my departure to the army,

She, nothing trembling, led me through that gloom,

And to that covert by a silent stream,

Which, with one star reflected near its marge,

Was the sole object visible around me.

No leaflet stirred; the air was almost sultry;

So deep, so dark, so close, the umbrage o'er us!

No leaflet stirred; — yet pleasure hung upon

The gloom and stillness of the balmy night-air.

A little further on an arbour stood,

Fragrant with flowering trees — I well remember

What an uncertain glimmer in the darkness

Their snow-white blossoms made — thither she led me,

To that sweet bower! Then Oropeza trembled —

I heard her heart beat — if 'twere not my own.

SAND A rude and scaring note, my friend!*EARL H*

Oh! no!

I have small memory of aught but pleasure.
 The inquietudes of fear, like lesser streams
 Still flowing, still were lost in those of love:
 So love grew mightier from the fear, and Nature,
 Fleeing from Pain, sheltered herself in Joy.
 The stars above our heads were dim and steady,
 Like eyes suffused with rapture. Life was in us:
 We were all life, each atom of our frames
 A living soul — I vowed to die for her:
 With the faint voice of one who, having spoken,
 Relapses into blessedness, I vowed it:
 That solemn vow, a whisper scarcely heard,
 A murmur breathed against a lady's ear.
 Oh! there is joy above the name of pleasure,
 Deep self-possession, an intense repose.

SAND

[*(with a sarcastic smile)*] No other than as eastern sages paint,
 The God, who floats upon a Lotos leaf,
 Dreams for a thousand ages; then awaking,
 Creates a world, and smiling at the bubble,
 Relapses into bliss.

EARL H

Ah! was that bliss

Feared as an alien, and too vast for man?
 For suddenly, impatient of its silence,
 Did Oropeza, starting, grasp my forehead.
 I caught her arms; the veins were swelling on them.
 Through the dark bower she sent a hollow voice; —
 “Oh! what if all betray me? what if thou?”
 I swore, and with an inward thought that seemed
 The purpose and the substance of my being,
 I swore to her, that were she red with guilt,
 I would exchange my unblenched state with hers. —
 Friend! by that winding passage, to that bower
 I now will go — all objects there will teach me
 Unwavering love, and singleness of heart.
 Go Sandoval! I am prepared to meet her —
 Say nothing of me — I myself will seek her —
 Nay, leave me, friend! I cannot bear the torment
 And keen inquiry of that scanning eye. —

[*Earl Henry retires into the wood.*]

SAND

[*alone.*] O Henry! always striv'st thou to be great
 By thine own act — yet art thou never great
 But by the inspiration of great passion.
 The whirl-blast comes, the desert-sands rise up
 And shape themselves; from Earth to Heaven they stand,

As though they were the pillars of a temple,
Built by Omnipotence in its own honour!
But the blast pauses, and their shaping spirit
Is fled: the mighty columns were but sand,
And lazy snakes trail o'er the level ruins!

A Hymn

1814

My Maker! of thy power the trace
In every creature's form and face
The wond'ring soul surveys:
Thy wisdom, infinite above
Seraphic thought, a Father's love
As infinite displays!

From all that meets or eye or ear,
There falls a genial holy fear
Which, like the heavy dew of morn,
Refreshes while it bows the heart forlorn!

Great God! thy works how wondrous fair!
Yet sinful man didst thou declare
The whole Earth's voice and mind!
Lord, ev'n as Thou all-present art,
O may we still with heedful heart
Thy presence know and find!
Then, come what will, of weal or woe,
Joy's bosom-spring shall steady flow;
For though 'tis Heaven THYSELF to see,
Where but thy *Shadow* falls, Grief cannot be! —

To a Lady, with Falconer's *Shipwreck*

?1814

Ah! not by Cam or Isis, famous streams,
In archéd groves, the youthful poet's choice;
Nor while half-listening, 'mid delicious dreams,
To harp and song from lady's hand and voice;

Not yet while gazing in sublimer mood
On cliff, or cataract, in Alpine dell;
Nor in dim cave with bladdery sea-weed strewed,
Framing wild fancies to the ocean's swell;

Our sea-bard sang this song! which still he sings,
And sings for thee, sweet friend! Hark, Pity, hark!
Now mounts, now totters on the tempest's wings,
Now groans, and shivers, the replunging bark!

“Cling to the shrouds!” In vain! The breakers roar —
Death shrieks! With two alone of all his clan
Forlorn the poet paced the Grecian shore,
No classic roamer, but a shipwrecked man!

Say then, what muse inspired these genial strains,
And lit his spirit to so bright a flame?
The elevating thought of suffered pains,
Which gentle hearts shall mourn; but chief, the name

Of gratitude! remembrances of friend,
Or absent or no more! shades of the Past,
Which Love makes substance! Hence to thee I send,
O dear as long as life and memory last!

I send with deep regards of heart and head,
Sweet maid, for friendship formed! this work to thee:
And thou, the while thou canst not choose but shed
A tear for Falconer, wilt remember me.

Human Life. On the Denial of Immortality

?1815

If dead, we cease to be; if total gloom
Swallow up life's brief flash for aye, we fare
As summer-gusts, of sudden birth and doom,
Whose sound and motion not alone declare,
But are their whole of being! If the breath
Be Life itself, and not its task and tent,
If even a soul like Milton's can know death;
O Man! thou vessel purposeless, unmeant,
Yet drone-hive strange of phantom purposes!
Surplus of Nature's dread activity,
Which, as she gazed on some nigh-finished vase,
Retreating slow, with meditative pause,
She formed with restless hands unconsciously.
Blank accident! nothing's anomaly!
If rootless thus, thus substanceless thy state,
Go, weigh thy dreams, and be thy hopes, thy fears,
The counter-weights! — Thy laughter and thy tears
Mean but themselves, each fittest to create
And to repay the other! Why rejoices
Thy heart with hollow joy for hollow good?
Why cowl thy face beneath the mourner's hood?
Why waste thy sighs, and thy lamenting voices,
Image of Image, Ghost of Ghostly Elf,
That such a thing as thou feel'st warm or cold?
Yet what and whence thy gain, if thou withhold
These costless shadows of thy shadowy self?
Be sad! be glad! be neither! seek, or shun!
Thou hast no reason why! Thou canst have none;
Thy being's being is contradiction.

Song. From *Zapolya*

1815

A Sunny shaft did I behold,
From sky to earth it slanted:
And poised therein a bird so bold —
Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted!

He sank, he rose, he twinkled, he trolled
Within that shaft of sunny mist;
His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,
All else of amethyst!

And thus he sang: “Adieu! adieu!
Love’s dreams prove seldom true.
The blossoms they make no delay:
The sparkling dew-drops will not stay.
Sweet month of May,
We must away;
Far, far away!
To-day! to-day!”

Hunting Song. From *Zapolya*

1815

Up, up! ye dames, and lasses gay!
To the meadows trip away.
'Tis you must tend the flocks this morn,
And scare the small birds from the corn.
Not a soul at home may stay:
For the shepherds must go
With lance and bow
To hunt the wolf in the woods to-day.

Leave the hearth and leave the house
To the cricket and the mouse:
Find grannam out a sunny seat,
With babe and lambkin at her feet.
Not a soul at home may stay:
For the shepherds must go
With lance and bow
To hunt the wolf in the woods to-day.

Faith, Hope, and Charity. From the Italian of Guarini

1815

FAITH Let those whose low delights to Earth are given
 Chaunt forth their earthly Loves! but we
 Must make an holier minstrelsy,
 And, heavenly-born, will sing the Things of Heaven.

CHARITY But who for us the listening Heart shall gain?
 Inaudible as of the sphere
 Our music dies upon the ear,
 Enchanted with the mortal Syren's strain.

HOPE Yet let our choral songs abound!
 Th' inspiring Power, its living Source,
 May flow with them and give them force,
 If, elsewhere all unheard, in Heaven they sound.

ALL Aid thou our voice, Great Spirit! thou whose flame
 Kindled the Songster sweet of Israel,
 Who made so high to swell
 Beyond a mortal strain thy glorious Name.

CHARITY AND FAITH Though rapt to Heaven, our mission and our care
 Is still to sojourn on the Earth,
 To shape, to soothe, Man's second Birth,
 And re-ascend to Heaven, Heaven's prodigal Heir!

CHARITY What is Man's soul of Love deprived?

HOPE FAITH It like a Harp untuned is,
 That sounds, indeed, but sounds amiss.

CHARITY HOPE From holy Love all good gifts are derived.

FAITH But 'tis time that every nation
 Should hear how loftily we sing.

FAITH HOPE CHARITY See, O World, see thy salvation!
 Let the Heavens with praises ring.
 Who would have a Throne above,
 Let him hope, believe and love;
 And whoso loves no earthly song,
 But does for heavenly music long,
 Faith, Hope, and Charity for him,
 Shall sing like wingéd Cherubim.

To Nature

?1820

It may indeed be phantasy, when I
Essay to draw from all created things
Deep, heartfelt, inward joy that closely clings;
And trace in leaves and flowers that round me lie
Lessons of love and earnest piety.
So let it be; and if the wide world rings
In mock of this belief, it brings
Nor fear, nor grief, nor vain perplexity.
So will I build my altar in the fields,
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be,
And the sweet fragrance that the wild flower yields
Shall be the incense I will yield to Thee,
Thee only God! and thou shalt not despise
Even me, the priest of this poor sacrifice.

Limbo

1817

The sole true Something — This! in Limbo's Den
 It frightens Ghosts, as here Ghosts frighten men.
 Thence cross'd unseiz'd — and shall some fated hour
 Be pulveris'd by Demogorgon's power,
 And given as poison to annihilate souls —
 Even now it shrinks them — they shrink in as Moles
 (Nature's mute monks, live mandrakes of the ground)
 Creep back from Light — then listen for its sound; —
 See but to dread, and dread they know not why —
 The natural alien of their negative eye.

'Tis a strange place, this Limbo! — not a Place,
 Yet name it so; — where Time and weary Space
 Fettered from flight, with night-mare sense of fleeing,
 Strive for their last crepuscular half-being; —
 Lank Space, and scytheless Time with branny hands
 Barren and soundless as the measuring sands,
 Not mark'd by flit of Shades, — unmeaning they
 As moonlight on the dial of the day!
 But that is lovely — looks like Human Time, —
 An Old Man with a steady look sublime,
 That stops his earthly task to watch the skies;
 But he is blind — a Statue hath such eyes; —
 Yet having moonward turn'd his face by chance,
 Gazes the orb with moon-like countenance,
 With scant white hairs, with foretop bald and high,
 He gazes still, — his eyeless face all eye; —
 As 'twere an organ full of silent sight,
 His whole face seemeth to rejoice in light!
 Lip touching lip, all moveless, bust and limb —
 He seems to gaze at that which seems to gaze on him!
 No such sweet sights doth Limbo den immure,
 Walled round, and made a spirit-jail secure,
 By the mere horror of blank Naught-at-all,
 Whose circumambience doth these ghosts enthrall.
 A lurid thought is growthless, dull Privation,
 Yet that is but a Purgatory curse;
 Hell knows a fear far worse,
 A fear — a future state; — 'tis positive Negation!

Ne Plus Ultra

?1826

Sole Positive of Night!
Antipathist of Light!
Fate's only essence! primal scorpion rod —
The one permitted opposite of God! —
Condenséd blackness and abysmal storm
Compacted to one sceptre
Arms the Grasp enorm —
The Interceptor —
The Substance that still casts the shadow Death! —
The Dragon foul and fell —
The unrevealable,
And hidden one, whose breath
Gives wind and fuel to the fires of Hell!
Ah! sole despair
Of both th' eternities in Heaven!
Sole interdict of all-bedewing prayer,
The all-compassionate!
Save to the Lampads Seven
Reveal'd to none of all th' Angelic State,
Save to the Lampads Seven,
That watch the throne of Heaven!

The Knight's Tomb

?1817

Where is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kellyn?
Where may the grave of that good man be? —
By the side of a spring, on the breast of Helvellyn,
Under the twigs of a young birch tree!
The oak that in summer was sweet to hear,
And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,
And whistled and roared in the winter alone,
Is gone, — and the birch in its stead is grown. —
The Knight's bones are dust,
And his good sword rust; —
His soul is with the saints, I trust.

On Donne's Poetry

?1818

With Donne, whose muse on dromedary trots,
Wreathes iron pokers into true-love knots;
Rhyme's sturdy cripple, fancy's maze and clue,
Wit's forge and fire-blast, meaning's press and screw.

Israel's Lament

1817

"A Hebrew Dirge, chaunted in the Great Synagogue, St. James's Place, Aldgate, on the day of the Funeral of her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte. By Hyman Hurwitz, Master of the Hebrew Academy, Highgate: with a Translation in English Verse, by S. T. Coleridge, Esq., 1817."

Mourn, Israel! Sons of Israel, mourn!
Give utterance to the inward throe!
As wails, of her first love forlorn,
The Virgin clad in robes of woe.

Mourn the young Mother, snatch'd away
From Light and Life's ascending Sun!
Mourn for the Babe, Death's voiceless prey,
Earn'd by long pangs and lost ere won.

Mourn the bright Rose that bloom'd and went,
Ere half disclosed its vernal hue!
Mourn the green Bud, so rudely rent,
It brake the stem on which it grew.

Mourn for the universal woe
With solemn dirge and fault'ring tongue:
For England's Lady is laid low,
So dear, so lovely, and so young!

The blossoms on her Tree of Life
Shone with the dews of recent bliss:
Transplanted in that deadly strife,
She plucks its fruits in Paradise.

Mourn for the widow'd Lord in chief,
Who wails and will not solaced be!
Mourn for the childless Father's grief,
The wedded Lover's agony!

Mourn for the Prince, who rose at morn
To seek and bless the firstling bud
Of his own Rose, and found the thorn,
Its point bedew'd with tears of blood.

O press again that murmuring string!
Again bewail that princely Sire!
A destined Queen, a future King,
He mourns on one funereal pyre.

Mourn for Britannia's hopes decay'd,
Her daughters wail their dear defence;
Their fair example, prostrate laid,
Chaste Love and fervid Innocence.

While Grief in song shall seek repose,
We will take up a Mourning yearly:
To wail the blow that crush'd the Rose,
So dearly priz'd and lov'd so dearly.

Long as the fount of Song o'erflows
Will I the yearly dirge renew:
Mourn for the firstling of the Rose,
That snapt the stem on which it grew.

The proud shall pass, forgot; the chill,
Damp, trickling Vault their only mourner!
Not so the regal Rose, that still
Clung to the breast which first had worn her!

O thou, who mark'st the Mourner's path
To sad Jeshurun's Sons attend!
Amid the Light'nings of thy Wrath
The showers of Consolation send!

Jehovah frowns! the Islands bow!
And Prince and People kiss the Rod! —
Their dread chastising Judge wert thou!
Be thou their Comforter, O God!

Fancy in Nubibus, or the Poet in the Clouds

1817

O! It is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily persuaded eyes
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy; or with head bent low
And cheek aslant see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson banks; and then, a traveller, go
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land!
Or list'ning to the tide, with closéd sight,
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light,
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

The Tears of a Grateful People

1820

A Hebrew Dirge and Hymn, chaunted in the Great Synagogue, St. James' pl. Aldgate, on the Day of the Funeral of King George III. of blessed memory. By Hyman Hurwitz of Highgate, Translated by a Friend.

Dirge

Oppress'd, confused, with grief and pain,
And inly shrinking from the blow,
In vain I seek the dirgeful strain,
The wonted words refuse to flow.

A fear in every face I find,
Each voice is that of one who grieves;
And all my Soul, to grief resigned,
Reflects the sorrow it receives.

The Day-Star of our glory sets!
Our King has breathed his latest breath!
Each heart its wonted pulse forgets,
As if it own'd the pow'r of death.

Our Crown, our heart's Desire is fled!
Britannia's glory moults its wing!
Let us with ashes on our head,
Raise up a mourning for our King.

Lo! of his beams the Day-Star shorn,
Sad gleams the Moon through cloudy veil!
The Stars are dim! Our Nobles mourn;
The Matrons weep, their Children wail.

No age records a King so just,
His virtues numerous as his days;
The Lord Jehovah was his trust,
And truth with mercy ruled his ways.

His Love was bounded by no Clime;
Each diverse Race, each distant Clan
He govern'd by this truth sublime,
"God only knows the heart — not man."

His word appall'd the sons of pride,
Iniquity far wing'd her way;
Deceit and fraud were scatter'd wide,
And truth resum'd her sacred sway.

He sooth'd the wretched, and the prey
From impious tyranny he tore;
He stay'd th' Usurper's iron sway,
And bade the Spoiler waste no more.

Thou too, Jeshurun's Daughter! thou,
Th' oppress'd of nations and the scorn!
Didst hail on his benignant brow
A safety dawning like the morn.

The scoff of each unfeeling mind,
Thy doom was hard, and keen thy grief;
Beneath his throne, peace thou didst find,
And blest the hand that gave relief.

E'en when a fatal cloud o'erspread
The moonlight splendour of his sway,
Yet still the light remain'd, and shed
Mild radiance on the traveller's way.

But he is gone — the Just! the Good!
Nor could a Nation's pray'r delay
The heavenly meed, that long had stood
His portion in the realms of day.

Beyond the mighty Isle's extent
The mightier Nation mourns her Chief:
Him Judah's Daughter shall lament,
In tears of fervour, love and grief.

Britannia mourns in silent grief;
Her heart a prey to inward woe.
In vain she strives to find relief,
Her pang so great, so great the blow.

Britannia! Sister! woe is me!
Full fain would I console thy woe.
But, ah! how shall I comfort thee,
Who need the balm I would bestow?

United then let us repair,
As round our common Parent's grave;
And pouring out our heart in prayer,
Our heav'nly Father's mercy crave.

Until Jehovah from his throne
Shall heed his suffering people's fears;
Shall turn to song the Mourner's groan,

To smiles of joy the Nation's tears.

Praise to the Lord! Loud praises sing!
 And bless Jehovah's righteous hand!
 Again he bids a George, our King,
 Dispense his blessings to the Land.

Hymn

O thron'd in Heav'n! Sole King of kings,
 Jehovah! hear thy Children's prayers and sighs!
 Thou Binder of the broken heart! with wings
 Of healing on thy people rise!
 Thy mercies, Lord, are sweet;
 And Peace and Mercy meet,
 Before thy Judgment seat:
 Lord, hear us! we entreat!

When angry clouds thy throne surround,
 E'en from the cloud thou bid'st thy mercy shine:
 And ere thy righteous vengeance strikes the wound,
 Thy grace prepares the balm divine!
 Thy mercies, Lord, are sweet;
 etc.

The Parent tree thy hand did spare —
 It fell not till the ripen'd fruit was won:
 Beneath its shade the Scion flourish'd fair,
 And for the Sire thou gav'st the Son.
 etc.

This thy own Vine, which thou didst rear,
 And train up for us from the royal root,
 Protect, O Lord! and to the Nations near
 Long let it shelter yield, and fruit.
 etc.

Lord, comfort thou the royal line:
 Let Peace and Joy watch round us hand and hand.
 Our Nobles visit with thy grace divine,
 And banish sorrow from the land!
 Thy mercies, Lord, are sweet;
 And Peace and Mercy meet
 Before thy Judgment seat;
 Lord, hear us! we entreat!

Youth and Age

1823-1832

Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
 Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee —
 Both were mine! Life went a-maying
 With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
 When I was young!

When I was young? — Ah, woful When!
 Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
 This breathing house not built with hands,
 This body that does me grievous wrong,
 O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,
 How lightly then it flashed along: —
 Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
 On winding lakes and rivers wide,
 That ask no aid of sail or oar,
 That fear no spite of wind or tide!
 Nought cared this body for wind or weather
 When Youth and I lived in't together.

Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
 Friendship is a sheltering tree;
 O! the joys, that came down shower-like,
 Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
 Ere I was old!

Ere I was old? Ah woful Ere,
 Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
 O Youth! for years so many and sweet,
 'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
 I'll think it but a fond conceit —
 It cannot be that Thou art gone!
 Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd: —
 And thou wert aye a masker bold!
 What strange disguise hast now put on,
 To make believe, that thou art gone?
 I see these locks in silvery slips,
 This drooping gait, this altered size:
 But Spring-tide blossoms on thy lips,
 And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
 Life is but thought: so think I will
 That Youth and I are house-mates still.

The Reproof and Reply

1823

Or, The Flower-Thief's Apology, for a robbery committed in Mr. and Mrs. —'s garden, on Sunday morning, 25th of May, 1823, between the hours of eleven and twelve.

“Fie, Mr. Coleridge! — and can this be you?
 Break two commandments? and in church-time too!
 Have you not heard, or have you heard in vain,
 The birth-and-parentage-recording strain? —
 Confessions shrill, that out-shrill'd mack'rel drown
 Fresh from the drop — the youth not yet cut down —
 Letter to sweet-heart — the last dying speech —
 And didn't all this begin in Sabbath-breach?
 You, that knew better! In broad open day,
 Steal in, steal out, and steal our flowers away?
 What could possess you? Ah! sweet youth, I fear
 The chap with horns and tail was at your ear!”

Such sounds of late, accusing fancy brought
 From fair Chisholm to the Poet's thought.
 Now hear the meek Parnassian youth's reply:
 A bow — a pleading look — a downcast eye, —
 And then:

“Fair dame! a visionary wight,
 Hard by your hill-side mansion sparkling white,
 His thoughts all hovering round the Muses' home,
 Long hath it been your Poet's wont to roam,
 And many a morn, on his becharméd sense
 So rich a stream of music issued thence,
 He deem'd himself, as it flowed warbling on,
 Beside the vocal fount of Helicon!
 But when, as if to settle the concern,
 A Nymph too he beheld, in many a turn,
 Guiding the sweet rill from its fontal urn, —
 Say, can you blame? — No! none that saw and heard
 Could blame a bard, that he thus inly stirr'd;
 A muse beholding in each fervent trait,
 Took Mary H — for Polly Hymnia!
 Or haply as there stood beside the maid
 One loftier form in sable stole array'd,
 If with regretful thought he hail'd in *thee*
 Chisholm, his long-lost friend, Mol Pomene!
 But most of *you*, soft warblings, I complain!
 'Twas ye that from the bee-hive of my brain

Did lure the fancies forth, a freakish rout,
And witch'd the air with dreams turn'd inside out.

Thus all conspir'd — each power of eye and ear,
And this gay month, th' enchantress of the year,
To cheat poor me (no conjuror, God wot!)
And Chisholm's self accomplice in the plot.
Can you then wonder if I went astray?
Not bards alone, nor lovers mad as they; —
All Nature *day-dreams* in the month of May.
And if I pluck'd 'each flower that *sweetest* blows,' —
Who walks in sleep, needs follow must his *nose*.

Thus, long accustom'd on the twy-fork'd hill,
To pluck both flower and floweret at my will;
The garden's maze, like No-man's-land, I tread,
Nor common law, nor statute in my head;
For my own proper smell, sight, fancy, feeling,
With autocratic hand at once repealing
Five Acts of Parliament 'gainst private stealing!
But yet from Chisholm who despairs of grace?
There's no spring-gun or man-trap in *that* face!
Let Moses then look black, and Aaron blue,
That look as if they had little else to do:
For Chisholm speaks, 'Poor youth! he's but a waif!
The spoons all right? the hen and chickens safe?
Well, well, he shall not forfeit our regards —
The Eighth Commandment was not made for Bards!'"

First Advent of Love

?1824

O fair is Love's first hope to gentle mind!
As Eve's first star thro' fleecy cloudlet peeping;
And sweeter than the gentle south-west wind.
O'er willowy meads, and shadow'd waters creeping,
And Ceres' golden fields; — the sultry hind
Meets it with brow uplift, and stays his reaping.

The Delinquent Travellers

1824

Some are home-sick — some two or three,
 Their third year on the Arctic Sea —
 Brave Captain Lyon tells us so —
 Spite of those charming Esquimaux.
 But O, what scores are sick of Home,
 Agog for Paris or for Rome!
 Nay! tho' contented to abide,
 You should prefer your own fireside;
 Yet since grim War has ceas'd its madding,
 And Peace has set John Bull agadding,
 'Twould such a vulgar taste betray,
 For very shame you must away!
 "What? not yet seen the coast of France!
 The folks will swear, for lack of bail,
 You've spent your last five years in jail!"

Keep moving! Steam, or Gas, or Stage,
 Hold, cabin, steerage, hencoop's cage —
 Tour, Journey, Voyage, Lounge, Ride, Walk,
 Skim, Sketch, Excursion, Travel-talk —
 For move you must! 'Tis now the rage,
 The law and fashion of the Age.
 If you but perch, where Dover tallies,
 So strangely with the coast of Calais,
 With a good glass and knowing look,
 You'll soon get matter for a book!
 Or else, in Gas-car, take your chance
 Like that adventurous king of France,
 Who, once, with twenty thousand men
 Went up — and then came down again;
 At least, he moved if nothing more:
 And if there's nought left to explore,
 Yet while your well-greased wheels keep spinning,
 The traveller's honoured name you're winning,
 And, snug as Jonas in the Whale,
 You may loll back and dream a tale.
 Move, or be moved — there's no protection,
 Our Mother Earth has ta'en the infection —
 (That rogue Copernicus, 'tis said
 First put the whirring in her head,
 A planet She, and can't endure
 T'exist without her annual Tour:

The *name* were else a mere misnomer,
Since Planet is but Greek for *Roamer*.
The atmosphere, too, can do no less
Than ventilate her emptiness,
Bilks turn-pike gates, for no one cares,
And gives herself a thousand airs —
While streams and shopkeepers, we see,
Will have their run toward the sea —
And if, meantime, like old King Log,
Or ass with tether and a clog,
Must graze at home! to yawn and bray
“I guess we shall have rain to-day!”
Nor clog nor tether can be worse
Than the dead palsy of the purse.
Money, I’ve heard a wise man say,
Makes herself wings and flies away:
Ah! would She take it in her head
To make a pair for me instead!
At all events, the Fancy’s free,
No traveller so bold as she.
From Fear and Poverty released
I’ll saddle Pegasus, at least,
And when she’s seated to her mind,
I within I can mount behind:
And since this outward I, you know,
Must stay because he cannot go,
My fellow-travellers shall be they
Who go because they cannot stay —
Rogues, rascals, sharpers, blanks and prizes,
Delinquents of all sorts and sizes,
Fraudulent bankrupts, Knights burglarious,
And demireps of means precarious —
All whom Law thwarted, Arms or Arts,
Compel to visit foreign parts,
All hail! No compliments, I pray,
I’ll follow where you lead the way!
But ere we cross the main once more,
Methinks, along my native shore,
Dismounting from my steed I’ll stray
Beneath the cliffs of Dumpton Bay,
Where, Ramsgate and Broadstairs between,
Rude caves and grated doors are seen:
And here I’ll watch till break of day,
(For Fancy in her magic might
Can turn broad noon to starless night!)
When lo! methinks a sudden band

Of smock-clad smugglers round me stand.
Denials, oaths, in vain I try,
At once they gag me for a spy,
And stow me in the boat hard by.
Suppose us fairly now afloat,
Till Boulogne mouth receives our Boat.
But, bless us! what a numerous band
Of cockneys anglicise the strand!
Delinquent bankrupts, leg-bail'd debtors,
Some for the news, and some for letters —
With hungry look and tarnished dress,
French shrugs and British surliness.
Sick of the country for their sake
Of them and France *French leave* I take —
And lo! a transport comes in view
I hear the merry motley crew,
Well skill'd in pocket to make entry,
Of Dieman's Land the elected Gentry,
And founders of Australian Races. —
The Rogues! I see it in their faces!
Receive me, Lads! I'll go with you,
Hunt the black swan and kangaroo,
And that New Holland we'll presume
Old England with some elbow-room.
Across the mountains we will roam,
And each man make himself a home:
Or, if old habits ne'er forsaking,
Like clock-work of the Devil's making,
Ourselves inveterate rogues should be,
We'll have a virtuous progeny;
And on the dunghill of our vices
Raise human pine-apples and spices.
Of all the children of John Bull
With empty heads and bellies full,
Who ramble East, West, North and South,
With leaky purse and open mouth,
In search of varieties exotic
The usefullest and most patriotic,
And merriest, too, believe me, Sirs!
Are your Delinquent Travellers!

Work Without Hope. Lines composed 21st February 1825

1825

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair —
The bees are stirring — birds are on the wing —
And Winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And Hope without an object cannot live.

Sancti Dominici Pallium. A Dialogue between Poet and Friend

Found written on the blank leaf at the beginning of Butler's "Book of the Church" (1825)

1825

POET I note the moods and feelings men betray,
And heed them more than aught they do or say;
The lingering ghosts of many a secret deed
Still-born or haply strangled in its birth;
These best reveal the smooth man's inward creed!
These mark the spot where lies the treasure — Worth!

Milner, made up of impudence and trick,
With cloven tongue prepared to hiss and lick,
Rome's Brazen Serpent — boldly dares discuss
The roasting of thy heart, O brave John Huss!
And with grim triumph and a truculent glee
Absolves anew the Pope-wrought perfidy,
That made an empire's plighted faith a lie,
And fix'd a broad stare on the Devil's eye —
(Pleas'd with the guilt, yet envy-stung at heart
To stand outmaster'd in his own black art!)
Yet Milner —

FRIEND Enough of Milner! we're agreed,
Who now defends would then have done the deed.
But who not feels persuasion's gentle sway,
Who but must meet the proffered hand half way
When courteous Butler —

POET
[(aside)] (Rome's smooth go-between!)
FRIEND Laments the advice that soured a milky queen —
(For "bloody" all enlightened men confess
An antiquated error of the press:)
Who rapt by zeal beyond her sex's bounds,
With actual cautery staunch'd the Church's wounds!
And tho' he deems, that with too broad a blur
We damn the French and Irish massacre,
Yet *blames* them both — and thinks the Pope *might* err!
What think you now? Boots it with spear and shield
Against such gentle foes to take the field
Whose beckoning hands the mild Caduceus wield?

POET What think I now? Even what I thought before; —
What Milner boasts though Butler may deplore,
Still I repeat, words lead me not astray
When the *shown* feeling points a different way.

Smooth Butler can say grace at slander's feast,
And bless each haut-gout cook'd by monk or priest;
Leaves the full lie on Milner's gong to swell,
Content with half-truths that do just as well;
But duly decks his mitred comrade's flanks,
And with him shares the Irish nation's thanks!

So much for you, my friend! who own a Church,
And would not leave your mother in the lurch!
But when a Liberal asks me what I think —
Scared by the blood and soot of Cobbett's ink,
And Jeffrey's glairy phlegm and Connor's foam,
In search of some safe parable I roam —
An emblem sometimes may comprise a tome!

Disclaimant of his uncaught grandsire's mood,
I see a tiger lapping kitten's food:
And who shall blame him that he purs applause,
When brother Brindle pleads the good old cause;
And frisks his pretty tail, and half unsheathes his claws!
Yet not the less, for modern lights unapt,
I trust the bolts and cross-bars of the laws
More than the Protestant milk all newly lapt,
Impearling a tame wild-cat's whisker'd jaws!

Song

?1825

Though veiled in spires of myrtle-wreath,
Love is a sword which cuts its sheath,
And through the clefts itself has made,
We spy the flashes of the blade!

But through the clefts itself has made
We likewise see Love's flashing blade,
By rust consumed, or snapt in twain;
And only hilt and stump remain.

A Character

1825

A bird, who for his other sins
Had liv'd amongst the Jacobins;
Though like a kitten amid rats,
Or callow tit in nest of bats,
He much abhorr'd all democrats;
Yet nathless stood in ill report
Of wishing ill to Church and Court,
Tho' he'd nor claw, nor tooth, nor sting,
And learnt to pipe God save the King;
Tho' each day did new feathers bring,
All swore he had a leathern wing;
Nor polish'd wing, nor feather'd tail,
Nor down-clad thigh would aught avail;
And tho' — his tongue devoid of gall —
He civilly assur'd them all: —
“A bird am I of Phoebus' breed,
And on the sunflower cling and feed;
My name, good Sirs, is Thomas Tit!”
The bats would hail him Brother Cit,
Or, at the furthest, cousin-german.
At length the matter to determine,
He publicly denounced the vermin;
He spared the mouse, he praised the owl;
But bats were neither flesh nor fowl.
Blood-sucker, vampire, harpy, goul,
Came in full clatter from his throat,
Till his old nest-mates chang'd their note
To hireling, traitor, and turncoat, —
A base apostate who had sold
His very teeth and claws for gold; —
And then his feathers! — sharp the jest —
No doubt he feather'd well his nest!
“A Tit indeed! aye, tit for tat —
With place and title, brother Bat,
We soon shall see how well he'll play
Count Goldfinch, or Sir Joseph Jay!”
Alas, poor Bird! and ill-bestarr'd —
Or rather let us say, poor Bard!
And henceforth quit the allegoric,
With metaphor and simile,
For simple facts and style historic: —
Alas, poor Bard! no gold had he;

Behind another's team he stept,
 And plough'd and sow'd, while others reapt;
 The work was his, but theirs the glory,
Sic vos non vobis, his whole story.
 Besides, whate'er he wrote or said
 Came from his heart as well as head;
 And though he never left in lurch
 His king, his country, or his church,
 'Twas but to humour his own cynical
 Contempt of doctrines Jacobinical;
 To his own conscience only hearty,
 'Twas but by chance he serv'd the party; —
 The self-same things had said and writ,
 Had Pitt been Fox, and Fox been Pitt;
 Content his own applause to win,
 Would never dash thro' thick and thin,
 And he can make, so say the wise,
 No claim who makes no sacrifice; —
 And bard still less: — what claim had he,
 Who swore it vex'd his soul to see
 So grand a cause, so proud a realm,
 With Goose and Goody at the helm;
 Who long ago had fall'n asunder
 But for their rivals' baser blunder,
 The coward whine and Frenchified
 Slaver and slang of the other side? —

Thus, his own whim his only bribe,
 Our Bard pursued his old A. B. C.
 Contented if he could subscribe
 In fullest sense his name 'Ἔστησε;
 ('Tis Punic Greek for 'he hath stood!')
 Whate'er the men, the cause was good;
 And therefore with a right good will,
 Poor fool, he fights their battles still.
 Tush! squeak'd the Bats; — a mere bravado
 To whitewash that base renegado;
 'Tis plain unless you're blind or mad,
 His conscience for the bays he barter; —
 And true it is — as true as sad —
 These circlets of green baize he had —
 But then, alas! they were his garters!
 Ah! silly Bard, unfed, untended,
 His lamp but glimmer'd in its socket;
 He lived unhonour'd and unfriended
 With scarce a penny in his pocket; —
 Nay — tho' he hid it from the many —

With scarce a pocket for his penny!

The Two Founts.

Stanzas addressed to a lady on her recovery with unblemished looks, from a severe attack of pain

1826

'Twas my last waking thought, how could it be
That thou, sweet friend, such anguish should'st endure;
When straight from Dreamland came a Dwarf, and he
Could tell the cause, forsooth, and knew the cure.

Methought he fronted me with peering look
Fix'd on my heart; and read aloud in game
The loves and griefs therein, as from a book:
And uttered praise like one who wished to blame.

In every heart (quoth he) since Adam's sin
Two Founts there are, of Suffering and of Cheer!
That to let forth, and this to keep within!
But she, whose aspect I find imaged here,

Of Pleasure only will to all dispense,
That Fount alone unlock, by no distress
Choked or turned inward, but still issue thence
Unconquered cheer, persistent loveliness.

As on the driving cloud the shiny bow,
That gracious thing made up of tears and light,
Mid the wild rack and rain that slants below
Stands smiling forth, unmoved and freshly bright;

As though the spirits of all lovely flowers,
Inweaving each its wreath and dewy crown,
Or ere they sank to earth in vernal showers,
Had built a bridge to tempt the angels down.

Even so, Eliza! on that face of thine,
On that benignant face, whose look alone
(The soul's translucence thro' her crystal shrine!)
Has power to soothe all anguish but thine own,

A beauty hovers still and ne'er takes wing,
But with a silent charm compels the stern
And tort'ring Genius of the bitter spring,
To shrink aback, and cower upon his urn.

Who then needs wonder if (no outlet found
In passion, spleen, or strife) the Fount of Pain
O'erflowing beats against its lovely mound,
And in wild flashes shoots from heart to brain?

Sleep, and the Dwarf with that unsteady gleam
On his raised lip, that aped a critic smile,
Had passed: yet I, my sad thoughts to beguile,
Lay weaving on the tissue of my dream;

Till audibly at length I cried, as though
Thou hadst indeed been present to my eyes,
O sweet, sweet sufferer; if the case be so,
I pray thee, be less good, less sweet, less wise!

In every look a barbéd arrow send,
On those soft lips let scorn and anger live!
Do any thing, rather than thus, sweet friend!
Hoard for thyself the pain, thou wilt not give!

Constancy to an Ideal Object

?1826

Since all that beat about in Nature's range,
 Or veer or vanish; why should'st thou remain
 The only constant in a world of change,
 O yearning Thought! that liv'st but in the brain?
 Call to the Hours, that in the distance play,
 The faery people of the future day —
 Fond Thought! not one of all that shining swarm
 Will breathe on thee with life-enkindling breath,
 Till when, like strangers shelt'ring from a storm,
 Hope and Despair meet in the porch of Death!
 Yet still thou haunt'st me; and though well I see,
 She is not thou, and only thou art she,
 Still, still as though some dear embodied Good,
 Some living Love before my eyes there stood
 With answering look a ready ear to lend,
 I mourn to thee and say — "Ah! loveliest friend!
 That this the meed of all my toils might be,
 To have a home, an English home, and thee!"
 Vain repetition! Home and Thou are one.
 The peacefull'st cot, the moon shall shine upon,
 Lulled by the thrush and wakened by the lark,
 Without thee were but a becalméd bark,
 Whose Helmsman on an ocean waste and wide
 Sits mute and pale his mouldering helm beside.

And art thou nothing? Such thou art, as when
 The woodman winding westward up the glen
 At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze
 The viewless snow-mist weaves a glist'ning haze,
 Sees full before him, gliding without tread,
 An image with a glory round its head;
 The enamoured rustic worships its fair hues,
 Nor knows he makes the shadow, he pursues!

The Pang More Sharp than All. An Allegory

?1825-6

He too has flitted from his secret nest,
 Hope's last and dearest child without a name! —
 Has flitted from me, like the warmthless flame,
 That makes false promise of a place of rest
 To the tired Pilgrim's still believing mind; —
 Or like some Elfin Knight in kingly court,
 Who having won all guerdons in his sport,
 Glides out of view, and whither none can find!

Yes! he hath flitted from me — with what aim,
 Or why, I know not! 'Twas a home of bliss,
 And he was innocent, as the pretty shame
 Of babe, that tempts and shuns the menaced kiss,
 From its twy-cluster'd hiding place of snow!
 Pure as the babe, I ween, and all aglow
 As the dear hopes, that swell the mother's breast —
 Her eyes down gazing o'er her claspéd charge; —
 Yet gay as that twice happy father's kiss,
 That well might glance aside, yet never miss,
 Where the sweet mark emboss'd so sweet a targe —
 Twice wretched he who hath been doubly blest!

Like a loose blossom on a gusty night
 He flitted from me — and has left behind
 (As if to them his faith he ne'er did plight)
 Of either sex and answerable mind
 Two playmates, twin-births of his foster-dame: —
 The one a steady lad (Esteem he hight)
 And Kindness is the gentler sister's name.
 Dim likeness now, though fair she be and good,
 Of that bright Boy who hath us all forsook; —
 But in his full-eyed aspect when she stood,
 And while her face reflected every look,
 And in reflection kindled — she became
 So like Him, that almost she seem'd the same!

Ah! he is gone, and yet will not depart! —
 Is with me still, yet I from him exiled!
 For still there lives within my secret heart
 The magic image of the magic Child,
 Which there he made up-grow by his strong art,
 As in that crystal orb — wise Merlin's feat, —

The wondrous "World of Glass", wherein inisled
All long'd-for things their beings did repeat; —
And there he left it, like a Sylph beguiled,
To live and yearn and languish incomplete!

Can wit of man a heavier grief reveal?
Can sharper pang from hate or scorn arise? —
Yes! one more sharp there is that deeper lies,
Which fond Esteem but mocks when he would heal.
Yet neither scorn nor hate did it devise,
But sad compassion and atoning zeal!
One pang more blighting-keen than hope betray'd!
And this it is my woeful hap to feel,
When, at her Brother's hest, the twin-born Maid
With face averted and unsteady eyes,
Her truant playmate's faded robe puts on;
And inly shrinking from her own disguise
Enacts the faery Boy that's lost and gone.
O worse than all! O pang all pangs above
Is Kindness counterfeiting absent Love!

Duty Surviving Self-love. The only sure Friend of declining Life. A Soliloquy

1826

Unchanged within, to see all changed without,
Is a blank lot and hard to bear, no doubt.
Yet why at others' wanings should'st thou fret?
Then only might'st thou feel a just regret,
Hadst thou withheld thy love or hid thy light
In selfish forethought of neglect and slight.
O wiselier then, from feeble yearnings freed,
While, and on whom, thou may'st — shine on! nor heed
Whether the object by reflected light
Return thy radiance or absorb it quite:
And though thou notest from thy safe recess
Old Friends burn dim, like lamps in noisome air,
Love them for what they are; nor love them less,
Because to thee they are not what they were.

Homeless

1826

“O! Christmas Day, Oh! happy day!
A foretaste from above,
To him who hath a happy home
And love returned from love!”

O! Christmas Day, O gloomy day,
The barb in Memory’s dart,
To him who walks alone through Life,
The desolate in heart.

Lines Suggested by the last Words of Berengarius

ob. Anno Dom. 1088
?1826

No more 'twixt conscience staggering and the Pope
Soon shall I now before my God appear,
By him to be acquitted, as I hope;
By him to be condemnéd, as I fear. —

Reflection on the above

Lynx amid moles! had I stood by thy bed,
Be of good cheer, meek soul! I would have said:
I see a hope spring from that humble fear.
All are not strong alike through storms to steer
Right onward. What? though dread of threatened death
And dungeon torture made thy hand and breath
Inconstant to the truth within thy heart!
That truth, from which, through fear, thou twice didst start,
Fear haply told thee, was a learned strife,
Or not so vital as to claim thy life:
And myriads had reached Heaven, who never knew
Where lay the difference 'twixt the false and true!

Ye, who secure 'mid trophies not your own,
Judge him who won them when he stood alone,
And proudly talk of recreant Berengare —
O first the age, and then the man compare!
That age how dark! congenial minds how rare!
No host of friends with kindred zeal did burn!
No throbbing hearts awaited his return!
Prostrate alike when prince and peasant fell,
He only disenchanted from the spell,
Like the weak worm that gems the starless night,
Moved in the scanty circlet of his light:
And was it strange if he withdrew the ray
That did but guide the night-birds to their prey?

The ascending day-star with a bolder eye
Hath lit each dew-drop on our trimmer lawn!
Yet not for this, if wise, shall we decry
The spots and struggles of the timid Dawn;
Lest so we tempt th' approaching Noon to scorn
The mists and painted vapours of our Morn.

Epitaphium Testamentarium

1826

Τό του ἘΣΤΗΣΕ του επιθανους Epitaphium testamentarium αυτόγραφον.

Quae linquam, aut nihil, aut nihili, aut vix sunt mea. Sordes
Do Morti: reddo caetera, Christe! tibi.

Ἔρως ἄει λαληθρος εταiros

In many ways does the full heart reveal
The presence of the love it would conceal;
But in far more th' estrangéd heart lets know
The absence of the love, which yet it fain would shew.

The Improvisatore; or “John Anderson, My Jo, John”

1827]

[Scene — A spacious drawing-room, with music-room adjoining]

KATHERINE What are the words?

ELIZA Ask our friend, the Improvisatore; here he comes. Kate has a favour to ask of you, Sir; it is that you will repeat the ballad that Mr. — sang so sweetly.

FRIEND It is in Moore’s Irish Melodies; but I do not recollect the words distinctly. The moral of them, however, I take to be this: —

Love would remain the same if true,
When we were neither young nor new;
Yea, and in all within the will that came,
By the same proofs would show itself the same.

ELIZ What are the lines you repeated from Beaumont and Fletcher, which my mother admired so much? It begins with something about two vines so close that their tendrils intermingle.

FRI You mean Charles’ speech to Angelina in *The Elder Brother*

We’ll live together, like two neighbour vines,
Circling our souls and loves in one another!
We’ll spring together, and we’ll bear one fruit;
One joy shall make us smile, and one grief mourn;
One age go with us, and one hour of death
Shall close our eyes, and one grave make us happy.

KATH A precious boon, that would go far to reconcile one to old age — this love — *if* true! But is there any such true love?

FRI I hope so.

KATH But do you believe it?

ELIZ [(*eagerly*)] I am sure he does.

FRI From a man turned of fifty, Katherine, I imagine, expects a less confident answer.

KATH A more sincere one, perhaps.

FRI Even though he should have obtained the nick-name of Improvisatore, by perpetrating charades and extempore verses at Christmas times?

ELIZ Nay, but be serious.

FRI Serious! Doubtless. A grave personage of my years giving a Love-lecture to two young ladies, cannot well be otherwise. The difficulty, I suspect, would be for them to remain so. It will be asked whether I am not the "elderly gentleman" who sate "despairing beside a clear stream", with a willow for his wig-block.

ELIZ Say another word, and we will call it downright affectation.

KATH No! we will be affronted, drop a courtesy, and ask pardon for our presumption in expecting that Mr. — would waste his sense on two insignificant girls.

FRI Well, well, I will be serious. Hem! Now then commences the discourse; Mr. Moore's song being the text. Love, as distinguished from Friendship, on the one hand, and from the passion that too often usurps its name, on the other —

LUCIUS [(*Eliza's brother, who had just joined the trio, in a whisper to the Friend*)]. But is not Love the union of both?

FRI [(*aside to Lucius*)]. He never loved who thinks so.

ELIZ Brother, we don't want *you*. There! Mrs. H. cannot arrange the flower vase without you. Thank you, Mrs. Hartman.

LUC I'll have my revenge! I know what I will say!

ELIZ Off! Off! Now, dear Sir, — Love, you were saying —

FRI Hush! *Preaching*, you mean, Eliza.

ELIZ [(*impatiently*)]. Pshaw!

FRI Well then, I was *saying* that Love, truly such, is itself not the most common thing in the world: and mutual love still less so. But that enduring personal attachment, so beautifully delineated by Erin's sweet melodist, and still more touchingly, perhaps, in the well-known ballad, "John Anderson, my Jo, John," in addition to a depth and constancy of character of no every-day occurrence, supposes a peculiar sensibility and tenderness of nature; a constitutional communicativeness and *utterancy* of heart and soul; a delight in the detail of sympathy, in the outward and visible signs of the sacrament within — to count, as it were, the pulses of the life of love. But above all, it supposes a soul which, even in the pride and summer-tide of life — even in the lustihood of health and strength, had felt oftenest and prized highest that which age cannot take away and which, in all our lovings, is *the Love*; —

ELIZ There is something *here* [(*pointing to her heart*)] that *seems* to understand you, but wants the *word* that would make it understand itself.

KATH I, too, seem to *feel* what you mean. Interpret the feeling for us.

FRI — I mean that *willing* sense of the insufficingness of the *self* for itself, which predisposes a generous nature to see, in the total being of another, the supplement and completion of its own; — that quiet perpetual *seeking* which the presence of the beloved object modulates, not suspends, where the heart momentarily finds, and, finding, again seeks on; — lastly, when 'life's changeful orb has pass'd the full'', a confirmed faith in the nobleness of humanity, thus brought home and pressed, as it were, to the very bosom of hourly experience; it supposes, I say, a heartfelt reverence for worth, not the less deep because divested of its solemnity by habit, by familiarity, by mutual infirmities, and even by a feeling of modesty which will arise in delicate minds, when they are conscious of possessing the same or the correspondent excellence in their own characters. In short there must be a mind, which, while it feels the beautiful and the excellent in the beloved as its own, and by right of love appropriates it, can call Goodness its Playfellow; and dares make sport of time and infirmity, while, in the person of a thousand-foldly endeared partner, we feel for aged Virtue the caressing fondness that belongs to the Innocence of childhood, and repeat the same attentions and tender courtesies which had been dictated by the same affection to the same object when attired in feminine loveliness or in manly beauty.

ELIZ What a soothing — what an elevating idea!

KATH If it be not only an *idea*.

FRI At all events, these qualities which I have enumerated, are rarely found united in a single individual. How much more rare must it be, that two such individuals should meet together in this wide world under circumstances that admit of their union as Husband and Wife. A person may be highly estimable on the whole, nay, amiable as neighbour, friend, housemate — in short, in all the concentric circles of attachment save only the last and inmost; and yet from how many causes be estranged from the highest perfection in this! Pride, coldness, or fastidiousness of nature, worldly cares, an anxious or ambitious disposition, a passion for display, a sullen temper, — one or the other — too often proves "the dead fly in the compost of spices", and any one is enough to unfit it for the precious balm of unction. For some mighty good sort of people, too, there is not seldom a sort of solemn saturnine, or, if you will, *ursine* vanity, that keeps itself alive by sucking the paws of its own self-importance. And as this high sense, or rather sensation of their own value is, for the most part, grounded on negative qualities, so they have no better means of preserving the same but by *negatives* — that is, by *not* doing or saying any thing, that might be put down for fond, silly, or nonsensical;—or (to use their own phrase) by *never forgetting themselves*, which some of their acquaintance are uncharitable enough to think the most worthless object they could be employed in remembering.

ELIZ [(in answer to a whisper from Katherine.)] To a hair! He must have sate for it himself. Save me from such folks! But they are out of the question.

FRI True! but the same effect is produced in thousands by the too general insensibility to a very important truth; this, namely, that the MISERY of human life is made up of large masses, each separated from the other by certain intervals. One year, the death of a child; years after, a failure in trade; after another longer or shorter interval, a daughter may have married unhappily; — in all but the singularly unfortunate, the integral parts that compose the sum total of the unhappiness of a man's life, are easily counted, and distinctly remembered. The HAPPINESS of life, on the contrary, is made up of minute fractions — the little, soon-forgotten charities of a kiss, a smile, a kind look, a heartfelt compliment in the disguise of playful raillery, and the countless other infinitesimals of pleasurable thought and genial feeling.

KATH Well, Sir; you have said quite enough to make me despair of finding a “John Anderson, my Jo, John”, with whom to totter down the hill of life.

FRI Not so! Good men are not, I trust, so much scarcer than good women, but that what another would find in you, you may hope to find in another. But well, however, may that boon be rare, the possession of which would be more than an adequate reward for the rarest virtue.

ELIZ Surely, he, who has described it so well, must have possessed it?

FRI If he were worthy to have possessed it, and had believingly anticipated and not found it, how bitter the disappointment! [(Then, after a pause of a few minutes)],

Answer, ex improviso

Yes, yes! that boon, life’s richest treat
 He had, or fancied that he had;
 Say, ’twas but in his own conceit—
 The fancy made him glad!
 Crown of his cup, and garnish of his dish!
 The boon, prefigured in his earliest wish,
 The fair fulfilment of his poesy,
 When his young heart first yearn’d for sympathy!
 But e’en the meteor offspring of the brain
 Unnourished wane;
 Faith asks her daily bread,
 And Fancy must be fed!
 Now so it chanced — from wet or dry,
 It boots not how — I know not why —
 She missed her wonted food; and quickly
 Poor Fancy stagger’d and grew sickly.
 Then came a restless state, ’twixt yea and nay,
 His faith was fix’d, his heart all ebb and flow;
 Or like a bark, in some half-shelter’d bay,
 Above its anchor driving to and fro.

That boon, which but to have possess’d
 In a *belief*, gave life a zest —
 Uncertain both what it *had* been,
 And if by error lost, or luck;
 And what it *was*; — an evergreen
 Which some insidious blight had struck
 Or annual flower, which, past its blow,
 No vernal spell shall e’er revive;
 Uncertain, and afraid to know,
 Doubts toss’d him to and fro:
 Hope keeping Love, Love Hope alive,
 Like babes bewildered in a snow,
 That cling and huddle from the cold

In hollow tree or ruin'd fold.

Those sparkling colours, once his boast
Fading, one by one away,
Thin and hueless as a ghost,
Poor Fancy on her sick bed lay;
Ill at distance, worse when near,
Telling her dreams to jealous Fear!
Where was it then, the sociable sprite
That crown'd the Poet's cup and deck'd his dish!
Poor shadow cast from an unsteady wish,
Itself a substance by no other right
But that it intercepted Reason's light;
It dimm'd his eye, it darken'd on his brow,
A peevish mood, a tedious time, I trow!
Thank Heaven! 'tis not so now.

O bliss of blissful hours!
The boon of Heaven's decreeing,
While yet in Eden's bowers
Dwelt the first husband and his sinless mate!
The one sweet plant, which, piteous Heaven agreeing,
They bore with them thro' Eden's closing gate!
Of life's gay summer tide the sovran Rose!
Late autumn's Amaranth, that more fragrant blows
When Passion's flowers all fall or fade;
If this were ever his, in outward being,
Or but his own true love's projected shade,
Now that at length by certain proof he knows,
That whether real or a magic show,
Whate'er it *was*, it *is* no longer so;
Though heart be lonesome, Hope laid low,
Yet, Lady! deem him not unblest:
The certainty that struck Hope dead,
Hath left Contentment in her stead:
And that is next to Best!

To Mary Pridham

[afterwards Mrs. Derwent Coleridge.]

16th October 1827

Dear tho' unseen! tho' I have left behind
Life's gayer views and all that stirs the mind,
Now I revive, Hope making a new start,
Since I have heard with most believing heart,
That all my glad eyes would grow bright to see,
My Derwent hath found realiz'd in thee,
The boon prefigur'd in his earliest wish
Crown of his cup and garnish of his dish!
The fair fulfilment of his poesy,
When his young heart first yearn'd for sympathy!
Dear tho' unseen! unseen, yet long portray'd!
A Father's blessing on thee, gentle Maid!

Alice du Clos; or the Forked-Tongue. A Ballad

?1828

"One word with two meanings is the traitor's shield and shaft: and a slit tongue be his blazon!" —
Caucasian Proverb.

"The Sun is not yet risen,
But the dawn lies red on the dew:
Lord Julian has stolen from the hunters away,
Is seeking, Lady! for you.
Put on your dress of green,
Your buskins and your quiver;
Lord Julian is a hasty man,
Long waiting brook'd he never.
I dare not doubt him, that he means
To wed you on a day,
Your lord and master for to be,
And you his lady gay.
O Lady! throw your book aside!
I would not that my lord should chide."

Thus spake Sir Hugh the vassal knight
To Alice, child of old Du Clos,
As spotless fair, as airy light
As that moon-shiny doe,
The gold star on its brow, her sire's ancestral crest
For ere the lark had left his nest,
She in the garden bower below
Sate loosely wrapt in maiden white,
Her face half drooping from the sight,
A snowdrop on a tuft of snow!

O close your eyes, and strive to see
The studious maid, with book on knee, —
Ah! earliest-open'd flower;
While yet with keen unblunted light
The morning star shone opposite
The lattice of her bower —
Alone of all the starry host,
As if in prideful scorn
Of flight and fear he stay'd behind,
To brave th' advancing morn.

O! Alice could read passing well,
And she was conning then
Dan Ovid's mazy tales of loves,

And gods, and beasts, and men.

The vassal's speech, his taunting vein,
It thrill'd like venom thro' her brain;
Yet never from the book
She rais'd her head, nor did she deign
The knight a single look.

“Off, traitor friend! how darest thou fix
Thy wanton gaze on me?
And why, against my earnest suit,
Does Julian send by thee?”

Go, tell thy Lord, that slow is sure:
Fair speed his shafts to-day!
I follow here a stronger lure,
And chase a gentler prey.”

She said: and with a baleful smile
The vassal knight reel'd off —
Like a huge billow from a bark
Toil'd in the deep sea-trough,
That shouldering sideways in mid plunge,
Is travers'd by a flash.
And staggering onward, leaves the ear
With dull and distant crash.

And Alice sat with troubled mien
A moment; for the scoff was keen,
And thro' her veins did shiver!
Then rose and donn'd her dress of green,
Her buskins and her quiver.

There stands the flow'ring may-thorn tree!
From thro' the veiling mist you see
The black and shadowy stem; —
Smit by the sun the mist in glee
Dissolves to lightsome jewelry —
Each blossom hath its gem!

With tear-drop glittering to a smile,
The gay maid on the garden-stile
Mimics the hunter's shout.
“Hip! Florian, hip! To horse, to horse!
Go, bring the palfrey out.

My Julian's out with all his clan,
And, bonny boy, you wis,
Lord Julian is a hasty man,
Who comes late, comes amiss.''

Now Florian was a stripling squire,
A gallant boy of Spain,
That toss'd his head in joy and pride,
Behind his Lady fair to ride,
But blush'd to hold her train.

The huntress is in her dress of green, —
And forth they go; she with her bow,
Her buskins and her quiver! —
The squire — no younger e'er was seen! —
With restless arm and laughing een,
He makes his javelin quiver.

And had not Ellen stay'd the race,
And stopped to see, a moment's space,
The whole great globe of light
Give the last parting kiss-like touch
To the eastern ridge, it lack'd not much,
They had o'erta'en the knight.

It chanced that up the covert lane,
Where Julian waiting stood,
A neighbour knight prick'd on to join
The huntsmen in the wood.

And with him must Lord Julian go,
Tho' with an anger'd mind:
Betroth'd not wedded to his bride,
In vain he sought, 'twixt shame and pride,
Excuse to stay behind.

He bit his lip, he wrung his glove,
He look'd around, he look'd above,
But pretext none could find or frame.
Alas! alas! and well-a-day!
It grieves me sore to think, to say,
That names so seldom meet with Love,
Yet Love wants courage without a name!

Straight from the forest's skirt the trees
O'er-branching, made an aisle,
Where hermit old might pace and chaunt
As in a minster's pile.

From underneath its leafy screen,
And from the twilight shade,
You pass at once into a green,
A green and lightsome glade.

And there Lord Julian sate on steed;
Behind him, in a round,
Stood knight and squire, and menial train;
Against the leash the greyhounds strain;
The horses paw'd the ground.

When up the alley green, Sir Hugh
Spurr'd in upon the sward,
And mute, without a word, did he
Fall in behind his lord.

Lord Julian turn'd his steed half round, —
“What! doth not Alice deign
To accept your loving convoy, knight?
Or doth she fear our woodland sleight,
And join us on the plain?”

With stifled tones the knight replied,
And look'd askance on either side, —
“Nay, let the hunt proceed! —
The Lady's message that I bear,
I guess would scantily please your ear,
And less deserves your heed.

You sent betimes. Not yet unbarr'd
I found the middle door; —
Two stirrers only met my eyes,
Fair Alice, and one more.

I came unlook'd for; and it seem'd,
In an unwelcome hour;
And found the daughter of Du Clos
Within the lattic'd bower.

But hush! the rest may wait. If lost,
No great loss, I divine;
And idle words will better suit
A fair maid's lips than mine.”

“God's wrath! speak out, man,” Julian cried,
O'ermastered by the sudden smart; —
And feigning wrath, sharp, blunt, and rude,
The knight his subtle shift pursued. —

“Scowl not at me; command my skill,
To lure your hawk back, if you will,
But not a woman’s heart.

‘Go! (said she) tell him, — slow is sure;
Fair speed his shafts to-day!
I follow here a stronger lure,
And chase a gentler prey.’

The game, pardie, was full in sight,
That then did, if I saw aright,
The fair dame’s eyes engage;
For turning, as I took my ways,
I saw them fix’d with steadfast gaze
Full on her wanton page.’

The last word of the traitor knight
It had but entered Julian’s ear
From two o’erarching oaks between,
With glist’ning helm-like cap is seen,
Borne on in giddy cheer,

A youth, that ill his steed can guide,
Yet with reverted face doth ride,
As answering to a voice,
That seems at once to laugh and chide —
“Not mine, dear mistress,” still he cried,
“’Tis this mad filly’s choice.’

With sudden bound, beyond the boy,
See! see! that face of hope and joy,
That regal front! those cheeks aglow!
Thou need’st but the crescent sheen,
A quiver’d Dian to have been,
Thou lovely child of old Du Clos!

Dark as a dream Lord Julian stood,
Swift as a dream, from forth the wood,
Sprang on the plighted Maid!
With fatal aim, and frantic force,
The shaft was hurl’d! — a lifeless corse,
Fair Alice from her vaulting horse,
Lies bleeding in the glade.

Love's Burial-place

1828

LADY If Love be dead —*POET* And I aver it!*LADY* Tell me, Bard! where Love lies buried?*POET* Love lies buried where 'twas born:

Oh, gentle dame! think it no scorn

If, in my fancy, I presume

To call thy bosom poor Love's Tomb.

And on that tomb to read the line: —

“Here lies a Love that once seem'd mine

But caught a chill, as I divine,

And died at length of a Decline.”

Lines: To a Comic Author, on an Abusive Review

?1825

What though the chilly wide-mouth'd quacking chorus
From the rank swamps of murk Review-land croak:
So was it, neighbour, in the times before us,
When Momus, throwing on his Attic cloak,
Romp'd with the Graces; and each tickled Muse
(That Turk, Dan Phoebus, whom bards call divine,
Was married to — at least, he kept — all nine)
Fled, but still with reverted faces ran;
Yet, somewhat the broad freedoms to excuse,
They had allured the audacious Greek to use,
Swore they mistook him for their own good man.
This Momus — Aristophanes on earth
Men call'd him — maugre all his wit and worth,
Was croak'd and gabbled at. How, then, should you,
Or I, friend, hope to 'scape the skulking crew?
No! laugh, and say aloud, in tones of glee,
"I hate the quacking tribe, and they hate me!"

Cologne

1828

In Köhln, a town of monks and bones,
And pavements fang'd with murderous stones
And rags, and hags, and hideous wenches;
I counted two and seventy stenchs,
All well defined, and several stinks!
Ye Nymphs that reign o'er sewers and sinks,
The river Rhine, it is well known,
Doth wash your city of Cologne;
But tell me, Nymphs, what power divine
Shall henceforth wash the river Rhine?

On My Joyful Departure from the same City

1828

As I am a Rhymer,
And now at least a merry one,
Mr. Mum's Rudesheimer
And the church of St. Geryon
Are the two things alone
That deserve to be known
In the body-and-soul-stinking town of Cologne.

The Garden of Boccaccio

1828

Of late, in one of those most weary hours,
 When life seems emptied of all genial powers,
 A dreary mood, which he who ne'er has known
 May bless his happy lot, I sat alone;
 And from the numbing spell to win relief,
 Call'd on the Past for thought of glee or grief.
 In vain! bereft alike of grief and glee,
 I sate and cow'r'd o'er my own vacancy!
 And as I watch'd the dull continuous ache,
 Which, all else slumb'ring, seem'd alone to wake;
 O Friend! long wont to notice yet conceal,
 And soothe by silence what words cannot heal,
 I but half saw that quiet hand of thine
 Place on my desk this exquisite design.
 Boccaccio's Garden and its faery,
 The love, the joyaunce, and the gallantry!
 An Idyll, with Boccaccio's spirit warm,
 Framed in the silent poesy of form.

Like flocks adown a newly-bathéd steep
 Emerging from a mist: or like a stream
 Of music soft that not dispels the sleep,
 But casts in happier moulds the slumberer's dream,
 Gazed by an idle eye with silent might
 The picture stole upon my inward sight.
 A tremulous warmth crept gradual o'er my chest,
 As though an infant's finger touch'd my breast.
 And one by one (I know not whence) were brought
 All spirits of power that most had stirred my thought
 In selfless boyhood, on a new world tost
 Of wonder, and in its own fancies lost;
 Or charm'd my youth, that, kindled from above,
 Loved ere it loved, and sought a form for love;
 Or lent a lustre to the earnest scan
 Of manhood, musing what and whence is man!
 Wild strain of Scalds, that in the sea-worn caves
 Rehearsed their war-spell to the winds and waves;
 Or fateful hymn of those prophetic maids,
 That call'd on Hertha in deep forest glades;
 Or minstrel lay, that cheer'd the baron's feast;
 Or rhyme of city pomp, of monk and priest,
 Judge, mayor, and many a guild in long array,

To high-church pacing on the great saint's day:
 And many a verse which to myself I sang,
 That woke the tear, yet stole away the pang
 Of hopes, which in lamenting I renew'd:
 And last, a matron now, of sober mien,
 Yet radiant still and with no earthly sheen,
 Whom as a faery child my childhood woo'd
 Even in my dawn of thought — Philosophy;
 Though then unconscious of herself, pardie,
 She bore no other name than Poesy;
 And like a gift from heaven, in life's glee,
 That had but newly left a mother's knee,
 Prattled and play'd with bird and flower, and stone,
 As if with elfin playfellows well known,
 And life reveal'd to innocence alone.

Thanks, gentle artist! now I can descry
 Thy fair creation with a mastering eye,
 And all awake! And now in fix'd gaze stand,
 Now wander through the Eden of thy hand;
 Praise the green arches, on the fountain clear
 See fragment shadows of the crossing deer;
 And with that serviceable nymph I stoop,
 The crystal, from its restless pool, to scoop.
 I see no longer! I myself am there,
 Sit on the ground-sward, and the banquet share.
 'Tis I, that sweep that lute's love-echoing strings,
 And gaze upon the maid who gazing sings:
 Or pause and listen to the tinkling bells
 From the high tower, and think that there she dwells.
 With old Boccaccio's soul I stand possest,
 And breathe an air like life, that swells my chest.
 The brightness of the world, O thou once free,
 And always fair, rare land of courtesy!
 O Florence! with the Tuscan fields and hills
 And famous Arno, fed with all their rills;
 Thou brightest star of star-bright Italy!
 Rich, ornate, populous, — all treasures thine,
 The golden corn, the olive, and the vine.
 Fair cities, gallant mansions, castles old,
 And forests, where beside his leafy hold
 The sullen boar hath heard the distant horn,
 And whets his tusks against the gnarléd thorn;
 Palladian palace with its storied halls;
 Fountains, where Love lies listening to their falls;
 Gardens, where flings the bridge its airy span,
 And Nature makes her happy home with man;

Where many a gorgeous flower is duly fed
With its own rill, on its own spangled bed,
And wreathes the marble urn, or leans its head,
A mimic mourner, that with veil withdrawn
Weeps liquid gems, the presents of the dawn; —
Thine all delights, and every muse is thine;
And more than all, the embrace and intertwine
Of all with all in gay and twinkling dance!
Mid gods of Greece and warriors of romance,
See! Boccace sits, unfolding on his knees
The new-found roll of old Maeonides;
But from his mantle's fold, and near the heart,
Peers Ovid's Holy Book of Love's sweet smart!
O all-enjoying and all-blending sage,
Long be it mine to con thy mazy page,
Where, half conceal'd, the eye of fancy views
Fauns, nymphs, and wingéd saints, all gracious to thy muse!

Still in thy garden let me watch their pranks,
And see in Dian's vest between the ranks
Of the trim vines, some maid that half believes
The vestal fires, of which her lover grieves,
With that sly satyr peeping through the leaves!

Love, Hope, and Patience in Education

1829

O'er wayward childhood would'st thou hold firm rule,
And sun thee in the light of happy faces;
Love, Hope and Patience, these must be thy graces,
And in thine own heart let them first keep school.
For as old Atlas on his broad neck places
Heaven's starry globe, and there sustains it; — so
Do these upbear the little world below
Of Education, — Patience, Love, and Hope.
Methinks, I see them group'd in seemly show,
The straiten'd arms upraised, the palms aslope,
And robes that touching as adown they flow,
Distinctly blend, like snow emboss'd in snow.

O part them never! If Hope prostrate lie,
Love too will sink and die.
But Love is subtle, and doth proof derive
From her own life that Hope is yet alive;
And bending o'er, with soul-transfusing eyes,
And the soft murmurs of the mother dove,
Woos back the fleeting spirit, and half supplies; —
Thus Love repays to Hope what Hope first gave to Love.

Yet haply there will come a weary day,
When overtask'd at length
Both Love and Hope beneath the load give way.
Then with a statue's smile, a statue's strength,
Stands the mute sister, Patience, nothing loth,
And both supporting does the work of both.

To Miss A. T.

1829

Verse, pictures, music, thoughts both grave and gay,
Remembrances of dear-loved friends away,
On spotless page of virgin white displayed,
Such should thine Album be, for such art thou, sweet maid!

**Lines written in Commonplace Book of Miss Barbour,
Daughter of the Minister of the U.S.A. to England**

August, 1829

Child of my muse! in Barbour's gentle hand
Go cross the main: thou seek'st no foreign land:
'Tis not the clod beneath our feet we name
Our country. Each heaven-sanctioned tie the same,
Laws, manners, language, faith, ancestral blood,
Domestic honour, awe of womanhood: —
With kindling pride thou wilt rejoice to see
Britain with elbow-room and doubly free!
Go seek thy countrymen! and if one scar
Still linger of that fratricidal war,
Look to the maid who brings thee from afar;
Be thou the olive-leaf and she the dove,
And say, I greet thee with a brother's love!

Song, *ex improviso*, on hearing a Song in praise of a Lady's Beauty

1830

'Tis not the lily-brow I prize,
Nor roseate cheeks, nor sunny eyes,
Enough of lilies and of roses!
A thousand-fold more dear to me
The gentle look that Love discloses, —
The look that Love alone can see!

Love and Friendship Opposite

?1830

Her attachment may differ from yours in degree,
Provided they are both of one kind;
But Friendship, how tender so ever it be,
Gives no accord to Love, however refined.
Love, that meets not with Love, its true nature revealing,
Grows ashamed of itself, and demurs:
If you cannot lift hers up to your state of feeling,
You must lower down your state to hers.

Not at Home

?1830

That Jealousy may rule a mind
Where Love could never be
I know; but ne'er expect to find
Love without Jealousy.

She has a strange cast in her ee,
A swart sour-visaged maid —
But yet Love's own twin-sister she
His house-mate and his shade.

Ask for her and she'll be denied: —
What then? they only mean
Their mistress has lain down to sleep,
And can't just then be seen.

Phantom or Fact. A Dialogue in Verse

?1830

AUTHOR A lovely form there sate beside my bed,
And such a feeding calm its presence shed,
A tender love so pure from earthly leaven,
That I unnethe the fancy might control,
'Twas my own spirit newly come from heaven,
Wooing its gentle way into my soul!
But ah! the change — It had not stirr'd, and yet —
Alas! that change how fain would I forget!
That shrinking back, like one that had mistook!
That weary, wandering, disavowing look!
'Twas all another, feature, look, and frame,
And still, methought, I knew, it was the same!

FRIEND This riddling tale, to whom does it belong?
Is't history? vision? or an idle song?
Or rather say at once, within what space
Of time this wild disastrous change took place?

AUTHOR Call it a moment's work (and such it seems)
This tale's a fragment from the life of dreams;
But say, that years matur'd the silent strife,
And 'tis a record from the dream of life.

Desire

?1830

Where true Love burns Desire is Love's pure flame;
It is the reflex of our earthly frame,
That takes its meaning from the nobler part,
And but translates the language of the heart.

Charity in Thought

?1830

To praise men as good, and to take them for such,
Is a grace which no soul can mete out to a tittle; —
Of which he who has not a little too much,
Will by Charity's gauge surely have much too little.

Humility the Mother of Charity

?1830

Frail creatures are we all! To be the best,
Is but the fewest faults to have: —
Look thou then to thyself, and leave the rest
To God, thy conscience, and the grave.

[Coeli Enarrant]

?1830

The stars that wont to start, as on a chace,
Mid twinkling insult on Heaven's darken'd face,
Like a conven'd conspiracy of spies
Wink at each other with confiding eyes!
Turn from the portent — all is blank on high,
No constellations alphabet the sky:
The Heavens one large Black Letter only shew,
And as a child beneath its master's blow
Shrills out at once its task and its affright —
The groaning world now learns to read aright,
And with its Voice of Voices cries out, O!

Reason

1830

["Finally, what is Reason? You have often asked me: and this is my answer": —]

Whene'er the mist, that stands 'twixt God and thee,
Defecates to a pure transparency,
That intercepts no light and adds no stain —
There Reason is, and then begins her reign!

But alas!

—“tu stesso, ti fai grosso
Col falso immaginar, sì che non vedi
Ciò che vedresti, se l'avessi scosso.”

Paradiso, Dante, Canto i.

Self-knowledge

1832

— E coelo descendit γνωθι σεαυτόν.—

Juvenal, xi.27.

Γνωθι σεαυτόν!— and is this the prime
And heaven-sprung adage of the olden time! —
Say, canst thou make thyself? — learn first that trade; —
Haply thou mayst know what thyself had made.
What has thou, Man, that thou dar'st call thine own? —
What is there in thee, Man, that can be known? —
Dark fluxion, all unfixable by thought,
A phantom dim of past and future wrought,
Vain sister of the worm, — life, death, soul, clod —
Ignore thyself, and strive to know thy God!

Forbearance

Beareth all things. —

1 Cor. xiii.7.

Gently I took that which ungently came,
And without scorn forgave: — Do thou the same.
A wrong done to thee think a cat's-eye spark
Thou wouldst not see, were not thine own heart dark.
Thine own keen sense of wrong that thirsts for sin,
Fear that — the spark self-kindled from within,
Which blown upon will blind thee with its glare,
Or smother'd stifle thee with noisome air.
Clap on the extinguisher, pull up the blinds,
And soon the ventilated spirit finds
Its natural daylight. If a foe have kenn'd,
Or worse than foe, an alienated friend,
A rib of dry rot in thy ship's stout side,
Think it God's message, and in humble pride
With heart of oak replace it; — thine the gains —
Give him the rotten timber for his pains!

Love's Apparition and Evanishment. An Allegorical Romance

1833

Like a lone Arab, old and blind,
 Some caravan had left behind,
 Who sits beside a ruin'd well,
 Where the shy sand-asps bask and swell;
 And now he hangs his agéd head aslant,
 And listens for a human sound — in vain!
 And now the aid, which Heaven alone can grant,
 Upturns his eyeless face from Heaven to gain; —
 Even thus, in vacant mood, one sultry hour,
 Resting my eye upon a drooping plant,
 With brow low-bent, within my garden-bower,
 I sate upon the couch of camomile;
 And — whether 'twas a transient sleep, perchance,
 Flitted across the idle brain, the while
 I watch'd the sickly calm with aimless scope,
 In my own heart; or that, indeed a trance,
 Turn'd my eye inward — thee, O genial Hope,
 Love's elder sister! thee did I behold,
 Drest as a bridesmaid, but all pale and cold,
 With roseless cheek, all pale and cold and dim,
 Lie lifeless at my feet!
 And then came Love, a sylph in bridal trim,
 And stood beside my seat;
 She bent, and kiss'd her sister's lips,
 As she was wont to do; —
 Alas! 'twas but a chilling breath
 Woke just enough of life in death
 To make Hope die anew.

L'envoy

In vain we supplicate the Powers above;
 There is no resurrection for the Love
 That nurs'd in tenderest care, yet fades away
 In the chill'd heart by gradual self-decay.

To the Young Artist Kayser of Kaserwerth

1833

Kayser! to whom, as to a second self,
Nature, or Nature's next-of-kin, the Elf,
Hight Genius, hath dispensed the happy skill
To cheer or soothe the parting friend's "Alas!"
Turning the blank scroll to a magic glass,
That makes the absent present at our will;
And to the shadowing of thy pencil gives
Such seeming substance, that it almost lives.

Well hast thou given the thoughtful Poet's face!
Yet hast thou on the tablet of his mind
A more delightful portrait left behind —
Even thy own youthful beauty, and artless grace,
Thy natural gladness and eyes bright with glee!
Kayser! farewell!
Be wise! be happy! and forget not me.

My Baptismal Birth-day

1833

God's child in Christ adopted, — Christ my all, —
What that earth boasts were not lost cheaply, rather
Than forfeit that blest name, by which I call
The Holy One, the Almighty God, my Father? —
Father! in Christ we live, and Christ in Thee —
Eternal Thou, and everlasting we.
The heir of heaven, henceforth I fear not death:
In Christ I live! in Christ I draw the breath
Of the true life! — Let then earth, sea, and sky
Make war against me! On my heart I show
Their mighty master's seal. In vain they try
To end my life, that can but end its woe. —
Is that a death-bed where a Christian lies? —
Yes! but not his — 'tis Death itself there dies.

Epitaph

9th November, 1833

Stop, Christian passer-by! — Stop, child of God,
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod
A poet lies, or that which once seem'd he.
O, lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.;
That he who many a year with toil of breath
Found death in life, may here find life in death!
Mercy for praise — to be forgiven for fame
He ask'd, and hoped, through Christ. Do thou the same!