











The Muses' Library

POEMS  
OF  
EDGAR ALLAN POE

• WITH A SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

BY

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of Edgar Allan Poe"*



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## PREFACE TO THE POEMS.

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These trifles are collected and republished chiefly with a view to their redemption from the many improvements to which they have been subjected while going at random "the rounds of the press." I am naturally anxious that what I have written should circulate as I wrote it, if it circulate at all. In defence of my own taste, nevertheless, it is incumbent upon me to say that I think nothing in this volume of much value to the public, or very creditable to myself.

Events not to be controlled have prevented me from making, at any time, any serious effort in what, under happier circumstances, would have been the field of my choice. With me poetry has been not a purpose, but a passion; and the passions should be held in reverence. They must not — they cannot at will be excited, with an eye to the paltry compensations, or the more paltry commendations of mankind.

E. A. P.





## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE TO THE POEMS . . . . .	3
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH . . . . .	7
THE POETIC PRINCIPLE . . . . .	31
THE RAVEN . . . . .	67
LENORE . . . . .	74
THE BELLS . . . . .	76
ANNABEL LEE . . . . .	80
ULALUME . . . . .	81
THE COLISEUM . . . . .	85
TO HELEN . . . . .	86
TO — — . . . . .	89
A VALENTINE . . . . .	90
TO MY MOTHER . . . . .	91
HYMN . . . . .	91
AN ENIGMA . . . . .	92
THE HAUNTED PALACE . . . . .	92
THE CONQUEROR WORM . . . . .	94
TO ONE IN PARADISE . . . . .	96
TO F—S. O—D. . . . .	97
THE CITY IN THE SEA . . . . .	97
SILENCE . . . . .	99
THE SLEEPER . . . . .	100
THE VALLEY OF UNREST . . . . .	102

	PAGE
A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM . . . . .	103
DREAM-LAND. . . . .	104
TO ZANTE . . . . .	106
EULALIE. . . . .	106
ELDORADO. . . . .	107
ISRAFEL. . . . .	108
FOR ANNIE . . . . .	110
TO F—. . . . .	114
BRIDAL BALLAD . . . . .	114
TO — . . . . .	116
SCENES FROM "POLITIAN" . . . . .	116
POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH:	
SONNET—TO SCIENCE. . . . .	136
AL AARAAF . . . . .	139
TO THE RIVER —. . . . .	156
TAMERLANE . . . . .	156
FAIRY-LAND . . . . .	165
TO M. L. S —. . . . .	166
ROMANCE . . . . .	167
SPIRITS OF THE DEAD . . . . .	168
TO — . . . . .	169
A DREAM . . . . .	169
THE LAKE.—TO — . . . . .	170
SONG . . . . .	171
TO HELEN . . . . .	172
ALONE . . . . .	172
THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION . . . . .	175
THE POWER OF WORDS . . . . .	193

EDGAR POE : A SKETCH

By JOHN H. INGRAM



## EDGAR POE :

### A SKETCH.

EDGAR POE was descended from one of the oldest and best known families of Maryland. His paternal great-grandfather, John Poe and his wife, Jane, said to have been sister of Admiral James McBride and two infant sons emigrated to the United States about the middle of the eighteenth century.

David Poe, the elder boy, was only eighteen months old when he left Ireland, but became a very patriotic citizen of his adopted country, faithfully serving the Americans with purse and in person. He fought for the States when they revolted from the British government, and acquired the rank of Quartermaster-General in their army. General Poe not only raised troops but furnished them with clothing and provisions at his own expense, and even lent the impoverished revolutionaries forty thousand dollars from his own pocket. In his old age the General applied for repayment of the actual money lent the State, but, owing to technical informalties, was unable to recover it, although subsequently his widow was granted a pension by the Maryland Legislature. The Act of Allowance acknowledged the equity of Mrs. Poe's claim, whilst deploring the legal insufficiency of the proofs.

General de Lafayette, who knew the great sacrifices General Poe had made for the national cause, when he revisited America after the war, called on the widow of his old comrade and expressed his indignation at finding her in comparative indigence. He visited General Poe's grave, and as he knelt on the ground exclaimed, '*Ici repose un cœur noble !*'

General Poe's elder son, David, was placed in the office of William Gwynn, a barrister, but speechly

forsook legal studies for the stage. Whilst following the dramatic profession David became enamoured of a beautiful girl, the daughter of Mrs Arnold, an English actress. Mrs Arnold appears to have been the widow of a well-known English author, related to Dr. S. Arnold, and to have left her native land in order to try her fortune in the New World. Mrs. Arnold died a few years after her arrival in America, leaving her daughter Elizabeth dependent upon her talents for a living. The child was cared for by her mother's theatrical friends until, eventually, she was enabled to make her appearance, in 1797, as "Maria," in "The Spoiled Child."

After some years of theatrical life, the talented young actress met the dramatic student on the stage, consented to become his wife, and reappeared in 1806, at New York, as Mrs. David Poe. For the next five years the young couple's career can be traced through various cities of the United States, until their arrival at Richmond, in 1811. During their peregrinations three children had been born to them, William Henry Leonard, Edgar and Rosalie. Shortly after the birth of their daughter both the ill-fated parents died, within a few weeks of each other, of consumption, accelerated, it is feared, by privation.

At Mrs. Poe's death she had little to leave her orphaned children beyond the memory of her love, her beauty and her talents. She was not only a clever actress, gaining much popularity in leading Shakespearean characters, but a skilful vocalist and musician, and an accomplished painter. Her three children were adopted by various people. General Poe took charge of the elder boy, Wilham, who subsequently entered the Navy and, after displaying some literary talent, died at an early age. Rosalie was adopted by a family of the name of McKenzie, but this family being impoverished by the Civil War, she had to find a home in a charitable institution at Washington, dying there in 1874.

Edgar Poe was born at Boston, in the United States, on January 19, 1809. At his mother's death,

Mr John Allan, a Scotch merchant of Richmond, Virginia, persuaded General Poe to let him adopt the beautiful little orphan Mr. Allan, although he had been married for several years, was childless, consequently there was every prospect that the adopted boy would inherit a share of his wealth. Mrs. Allan treated her foster-son with much kindness, but her husband, a man of very irregular temperament, seemed mainly to regard the handsome, precocious child with pride, as the direct evidence of his own skill in adopting and training him. The boy, now known to the world as Edgar Allan, was brought in before visitors in order to display his elocutionary and educational qualifications, without any regard to the effects such excitement might have on his highly nervous organization.

After obtaining the rudiments of learning in Richmond, Edgar, in 1816, accompanied his foster-parents to England, where he was placed at a classic school, in Stoke Newington, a suburb of London. At the Rev. Dr. Bransby's academy, Edgar made good use of his time, obtaining a good foundation in classic lore, but not benefiting much, apparently, by interruptions to study caused by week-end visits to the Allans at their temporary residence in Russell Square. In after years Dr. Bransby remembered "Edgar Allan" as "a quick and clever boy," who "would have been a very good boy had he not been spoilt by his parents," as he deemed the Allans to be, for they "allowed him an extravagant amount of pocket money, which enabled him to get into all manner of mischief."

Edgar looked back on the five years he spent at the Manor House School with grateful feelings, and in the earliest, unrevised version of his wonderful tale of "William Wilson," has recalled the most salient features of those schooldays and their surroundings with marvellous fidelity. That he was, also, describing his own idiosyncrasies when he referred to "the ardour, the enthusiasm and the imperiousness" of the hero of his story is equally certain. The same



thoughts and feelings, mannerisms and passions which as a boy characterized the future poet, are also seen influencing him in after life as a man. "In childhood," he exclaims, "I must have felt with the energy of a man what I now find stamped upon memory in lines as vivid, as deep and as durable, as the *exergues* of the Carthaginian medals."

In 1821 the lad returned to America with the Allans, and for some months spent his time in making verses and dreaming dreams. During this period some of the boyish poems which appear in his first volume of 1827 were composed. Indeed, he states some of them were written before he had completed his fourteenth year.

On being placed at a classical academy in Richmond, in 1822, Poe assumed his proper surname. The school was kept by John Clarke, of Trinity College, Dublin, who is described by Colonel Preston, a fellow-pupil of Edgar Poe, as "a Latinist of the first order, according to the style of scholarship of that date." Poe, having been well grounded in his Latin at Dr. Bransby's, was able to take a good position in Mr. Clarke's school, spoken of as of the highest repute in the Virginia metropolis. Poe was about fifteen when the future Colonel Preston made his acquaintance, and the impression he made on that gallant gentleman is described thus--

He being one of the oldest boys in the school and I one of the youngest, his power and accomplishments captivated me, and something in me, or in him, made him take a fancy to me. In the simple school athletics of those days, when a gymnasium had not been heard of, he was *facile princeps*. He was a swift runner, a wonderful leaper, and what was more rare, a boxer, with some slight training. I remember too, that he would allow the strongest boy in the school to strike him with full force in the chest. He taught me the secret. It was to inflate the lungs to the uttermost, and at the moment of receiving the blow to exhale the air. It looked surprising, and was, indeed, a little rough, but with a good breast-bone, and some resolution, it was not difficult to stand it. For swimming he was noted. . . . There was no one among the

schoolboys who would so dare in the midst of the rapids of the James River. I recall one of his races. A challenge to a footrace had been passed between the two classical schools of the city, we selected Poe as our champion. The race came off one bright May morning at sunrise, in the Capitol Square. Historical truth compels me to add that on this occasion our school was beaten, and we had to pay up our small bets. Poe ran well, but his competitor was a long-legged, Indian-looking fellow, who would have outstripped Atalanta, without the help of the golden apples. . . . In our Latin exercises Poe was among the first—not first without dispute . . . Especially one, Nat Howard, afterwards known as one of the ripest scholars in Virginia. If Howard was less brilliant than Poe, he was far more studious, for even then the germs of waywardness were developing in the nascent poet, and even then no inconsiderable time was given to versifying. But if I put Howard as a Latinist on a level with Poe, I do him full justice.

Poe was very fond of the Odes of Horace, and repeated them so often in my hearing that I learned by sound the words of many before I understood their meaning. . . . Poe was also a very fine French scholar. Yet, with all his superiorities, he was not the master-spirit, not even the favourite of the school. I assign, from my recollection, this place to Howard. Poe was self-willed, capricious, inclined to be imperious and, though of generous impulses, not steadily kind or even amiable. . . . Not a little of Poe's time in school, and out of it, was occupied with writing verses.

Other fellow-pupils furnish somewhat similar reminiscences of Poe's schooldays at Richmond. Dr. Ambler writes that in 1823 he was in constant intercourse with him. "No one living," he writes us, "had better opportunities of becoming acquainted with his physique, as for two summers we stripped together for a bath daily, and learned to swim in the same pool. . . . at a subsequent period Poe became famous for swimming from Mayo's Bridge to Warwick." An account of this notable swim has been furnished us by Colonel Robert Mayo, another of the poet's school-fellows, but needs not repetition. Full particulars were published at the time in the local papers.

An important thing to be drawn from these records of Poe's early life is that he had already strongly impressed those with whom he came in contact with a belief in his intellectual superiority. It is, also, seen that he had begun to entertain a somewhat aggressive disdain for those less richly gifted by nature than himself. More pleasing characteristics of the future man were fidelity to friends and extreme sensitiveness to kindness. In her charming work, *Edgar Poe and his Critics*, Mrs. Whitman relates an incident of the poet's youth which forcibly illustrates these *traits* of his disposition—

While at the academy at Richmond, he one day accompanied a schoolmate to his home, where he saw for the first time Mrs. Helen Stannard, the mother of his young friend. This lady, on entering the room, took his hand and spoke some gentle and gracious words of welcome, which so penetrated the sensitive heart of the orphan boy as to deprive him of the power of speech and for a time almost of consciousness. He returned home in a dream, with but one thought, one hope in life—to hear again the sweet and gracious words that had made the desolate world so beautiful to him. . . . This lady afterwards became the confidant of all his boyish sorrows, and hers was the one redeeming influence that saved and guided him in the earlier days of his turbulent and passionate youth.

Mrs. Clemm, his mother-in-law, records that he ever cherished a profound devotion for this lady, and that, "when he was unhappy at home (which was very often the case) he went to her for sympathy, for consolation and for advice." But Mrs. Stannard became the victim of sorrow, and when her guiding advice would have been most valuable to the poor youth, she succumbed to mental alienation and died. Poe could not bear to think of her as forsaken in the lonely vault, and for months after her decease would wander at night to the tomb of this revered friend, and "when the autumnal rains fell and the winds wailed mournfully over the graves, he lingered longest, and came away most regretfully."

Poe never forgot this "one idolatrous and purely

ideal love " of his wayward youth, and only a year before his death confessed to Mrs. Whitman that his beautiful stanzas " To Helen," were inspired by her memory, and that other poems of his early life were devoted to the same sanctified passion. In those solitary churchyard vigils, a friend of Poe deemed might be found the clue " to much that seems strange and abnormal in the poet's after life," and, doubtless, in this disregarded phase of his mind may be discovered the key to many of the psychological phenomena referred to in his weird tales and poems. He who could trace, step by step, the gruesome gradations of *sentience after death*, as does Poe in the " Colloquy of Monos and Una," must have been one who had frequently striven to wrest its earthly secrets from the charnel-house.

Reverting to the less unusual facts of the young poet's life, he is found employing his time after leaving the academy at Richmond chiefly in making love and verses. Regarded as the adopted son and heir of the wealthy Mr. Allan, and being a handsome, athletic and fascinating, if somewhat eccentric young man, with a reputation for great intellectual attainments, Poe was naturally a welcome guest in the best society of Virginia. Amongst the young ladies whose company he frequented was a Miss Elmira Royster, daughter of a well-to-do father, living just opposite the Allans' mansion. She was a year or two younger than Poe, good-looking and accomplished, so that it was most natural that the two not only became acquainted but attached to each other. She has written us that in her memory he was " a beautiful boy," somewhat silent and whose " general manner was sad." When induced to talk his conversation was very charming. " Of his own parents he never spoke," but " he was devoted to the first Mrs. Allan and she to him. He had few associates, but he was very intimate with Eleazer Berling, a widow's son of about the same age as himself." He expressed a great admiration for beauty and a hatred of everything coarse. He was a good artist, and drew a pencil likeness with great rapidity.

He was even then passionately fond of music, "an art which in after life he loved so well."

With thoughts turned to his own first love Poe speaks of Byron's attachment for Mary Chaworth as one that sublimated and purified from earthliness all his works alluding to it, and yet deems this passion "of the most thoroughly romantic, shadowy and imaginative character." It was one the poet was certain to have felt in the circumstances of frequent and unrestricted intercourse, such as the young folks are represented as having enjoyed. Similar inevitable consequences arose from the meetings of Edgar and Elmira. Their attachment lasted until Poe left for the University, and at parting they vowed eternal fidelity. The youth wrote frequently to the maiden, but her father deeming his daughter too young for such correspondence intercepted the letters. It was not until Poe returned from a University career, when Miss Royster having reached seventeen had married the rich Mr. Shelton, that he learnt why his impassioned epistles had not been responded to. Frequent references to this first love appear in Poe's juvenile poems, but they are of a shadowy, unsubstantial nature.

In 1826 Edgar Poe entered the University of Virginia, at Charlottesville, signing the matriculation book on February 14. He remained in good standing the whole of the year, and was, we are officially informed, "a successful student, having obtained distinction at the final examination in Latin and French, and this was at that time the highest honour a student could obtain." Dr. Harrison states that Poe was a great favourite with his fellow-students, and noted for the rapidity and general accuracy of his work; his translations from the living languages being especially noteworthy. "On one occasion Professor Bluffman requested his Italian class to render into English verse a portion of the lesson in Tasso, which he had assigned them for the next lecture." This was not intended as compulsory, but recommended as beneficial to the students. "At the next lecture the

professor stated that ' Mr. Poe was the only member of the class who had responded to his suggestion,' and paid a very high compliment to his performance "

Several of Poe's fellow-students at Charlottesville bear witness to his skill in educational and physical performances, but some of them refer to his melancholy reserve. He is remembered as having covered the walls of his dormitory with charcoal sketches and as having great artistic skill. Mr. Thomas Bolling tells of how one day, when visiting his eccentric associate, he noticed Poe scratching away with a pencil during the whole of their conversation. On calling his attention to his want of politeness Poe explained that he was trying to *divide his mind*—carry on a conversation and at the same time write sensibly on a different subject ! The poet was continually engaged upon similar feats of mental analysis.

At the University Poe's time was occupied with lectures, debating societies, and rambles in the neighbouring mountains. In these rambles the only companion the poet cared for was a dog, there being, he considered, "something in the unselfish and self-sacrificing love of a brute which goes directly to the heart of him who has had frequent occasion to test the paltry friendship and gossamer fidelity of mere man."

Although among the professors, men of high-standing and wide repute, Poe had the reputation of being a sober, quiet, orderly young man, and the officials bore witness to the fact that his conduct was uniformly that of an intelligent, polished gentleman, Poe was not immaculate ; he indulged in the prevalent vice of gaming. This love of gambling caused him to lose about four hundred pounds in all, and when he returned home at the termination of the academical year, in December, 1826, his reception was not pleasant. Mr. Allan, being a thrifty man of business, refused to discharge these " Debts of Honour," or to consider them counterbalanced by the good results of Edgar's educational examination. An altercation followed and the proud and impulsive

poet left home to seek his fortune in the wide and unknown world.

The fact that his ladylove, Elmira Royster, had married another was an additional reason for hastening the young man's departure from Richmond. He seems to have commemorated the event in those lines of his 1827 volume, "To——," beginning—

I saw thee on the bridal day,  
When a burning blush came o'er thee

On leaving Richmond Poe proceeded to Boston, with the intention, apparently, of embarking on a literary career. He succeeded in getting a little volume of verse printed, but before it had time to make its way in the world it was "suppressed through circumstances of a private nature." What these "circumstances" were cannot now be known. The title-page of the tiny volume is interesting for various reasons. It is as follows—

TAMERLANE  
AND  
OTHER POEMS

*By a Bostonian*

Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,  
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.—*Cowper.*

BOSTON  
CALVIN F. S. THOMAS . . . PRINTER  
1827

The little book is introduced by a characteristic preface in which, as in the "Fugitive Pieces," the youthful author proudly proclaims belief in his own genius and confidence in his future fame.

After the suppression of "Tamerlane" Poe visited his father's kindred at Baltimore, and sought for occupation in a newspaper office but without success. Unable to obtain employment at home, Poe, according to his own account, supported by contemporary

evidence, departed for Europe, ostensibly to assist the Greeks in their efforts to emancipate themselves from the Turkish yoke. Young Berling, who agreed to accompany him, gave up the design and Poe started alone. He never reached his destination nor beheld—

The glory that *was* Greece,  
And the grandeur that *was* Rome,

but a memento of the young crusader's enthusiasm is his translation of the world-famed "Hymn in honour of Harmodius and Aristogeiton" —

Wreathed in myrtle my sword I'll conceal,  
Like those champions, devoted and brave,  
• When they plunged in the tyrant their steel,  
And to Athens deliverance gave.

Beloved heroes! your deathless souls roam  
In the joy-breathing isles of the blast;  
Where the mighty of old have their home—  
Where Achilles and Diomed rest.

In fresh myrtle my blade I'll entwine,  
Like Harmodius, the gallant and good,  
When he made at the tutelard shrine  
• A libation of Tyranny's blood

Ye deliverers of Athens from shame—  
Ye avengers of Liberty's wrongs!  
Endless ages shall cherish your fame  
• Embalmed in their echoing songs

Poe's own story is that he never got further than France on his expedition, but that he met with some romantic adventures there which he embodied subsequently in a two-volume novel. This novel, although frequently alluded to by Poe and his contemporaries, was published anonymously and has never been identified. Its author said it was too sensational, and too personal as regards living people, for him to acknowledge it.

An American writer has endeavoured to prove that Poe did not leave the United States at all during the period in question, but that he enlisted in the army as a private soldier, under an assumed name, on May 26, 1827, and remained in the service until April 15, 1829.



He is stated to have behaved so well that he was appointed sergeant-major, and obtained testimonials of good conduct from the various officers he served under. But all these matters refer to a man named Perry, whose occupation, age, eyes, hair, complexion, and height differ from what Poe's were at that time, so that this identification does not go for much.

However the mysterious two years may have been spent, certain it is that Poe returned to Richmond early in March 1829, just too late to see his foster-mother again, she having died on February 28. The young traveller did not get the prodigal's proverbial welcome from Mr. Allan, and had to seek a home with his relatives at Baltimore. Soon after his return he published his second volume of poetry in Baltimore, and Mr. Bolling, his old University chum, tells us at that time he met Poe, who recounted to him the hardships he had undergone on his travels, and how he had determined to adopt literature as a profession. The poet took Bolling with him to Sanxy's, the bookseller's, and presenting him with a copy of his new volume, gave orders for him to be given as many copies as he required, for presentation to their old college mates.

In 1829, through the influence of General Winfield Scott and others, Poe obtained a nomination to the United States Military Academy at West Point, but was not admitted as a cadet until the beginning of the new session on July 1, 1830. The discipline of the place was extremely severe, and the restraints enforced very galling for young men, but he managed to maintain a good position at the institution until the close of the year. In November the Inspector issued the usual notification to the cadets of the approaching semi-annual examination, and warned them that "if dismissed, strong and satisfactory reasons will be required to obtain a restoration," thus proving that dismissal from the Academy was not an unpardonable offence nor, seeing that "only a small minority pass the whole term of service," an unusual occurrence.

By the end of the year Poe learnt that his foster-

father had married another and a young wife, and Mr. Allan let him know that he was not to look to him for future support. The poet deemed the army was not the place for a poor man and resigned his cadetship. His resignation could not be accepted without the permission of parent or guardian, and the requested permission Mr. Allan refused to give, as he considered the pay allowed cadets by the Government, of twenty-eight dollars monthly, would suffice for Edgar's subsistence.

Impetuous as ever, Poe absented himself from all duty and disobeyed orders, consequently he was ordered to appear before a general court martial, at West Point, held on February 8, 1831. Had he pleaded guilty to all the charges against him it is considered that some leniency might have been shown, so, to make his dismissal certain, he entered a plea of "not guilty" to an easily provable charge. At the trial he declined to plead, and the result was that Cadet Edgar Poe was dismissed the service of the United States, and ceased to be a member of the Military Academy after March 6, 1831.

The young poet now determined to place his services at the disposal of the Poles, who were fighting for liberty against the combined hordes of Russia, Austria, and Prussia. On March 10 he wrote to Colonel Thayer, Superintendent of the Military Academy, that—

having no longer any ties which can bind me to my native country—no prospects, nor any friends—I intend by the first opportunity to proceed to Paris with the view of obtaining, through the interest of the Marquis de la Fayette, an appointment (if possible) in the Polish army . . . The object of this letter is respectfully to request that you will give me such assistance as . . . a certificate of my standing in my class. . . . Anything further—a letter to a friend in Paris or to the Marquis—would be a kindness which I should never forget.

Whether Poe obtained the desired letter, or whether the required means for the journey were forth-

coming, mattered little, seeing that the unfortunate Poles had to capitulate before he could get away, and with them fell the young poet's hopes of ever being of service to Poland.

To try literature again seemed Poe's only chance of independence. He inaugurated his second attempt to live by his own labour by publication of another little volume of poems, but although this collection contained pieces now included amongst his best, it brought him neither praise nor pecuniary profit. For the next two years Poe's career is almost a blank. In the autumn of 1833, the Baltimore *Saturday Visitor*, a weekly literary journal, offered prizes of one hundred dollars, and fifty dollars respectively, for the best prose story and the best poem. The adjudicators having unanimously selected the "MS. found in a Bottle" and "The Coliseum" for the prizes, discovered that they were both by the same person, by Edgar Poe, a stranger to them all. On October 12 the three gentlemen who had selected the prizewinner published a most flattering notice of his writings in the *Saturday Visitor*, but in consideration of his having obtained the higher award placed that for the poem elsewhere.

One of the adjudicators was John P. Kennedy, not only a well-known author, a rich man, and a member of Congress, but liberal and kind-hearted. He sought Poe out, raised him from the misery into which he had fallen, treated him as a dear relative, and, as he records in his diary, gave him "free access to my table, and the use of a horse for exercise whenever he chose; in fact, brought him up from the very verge of despair."

Kennedy's kindness did not end there: after having set Poe drudging upon whatever might make money, he recommended the poor poet to the proprietor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, a magazine just started at Richmond, and that gentleman soon discovered the value of his contributions. Poe's writings attracted such notice that the editorship of the new publication was offered to him, at a salary of five hundred and twenty dollars per annum to start with.

Previous to this turn in the tide of Poe's affairs, he had been rudely awakened from his expectations of ever receiving any bequest from his foster-father, for Mr. Allan died on March 27, 1834, leaving a wife and three children to inherit his large fortune, but did not leave his adopted son anything.

Directly Poe became associated with the *Messenger* he made it the medium of introducing his weird and fascinating tales and imperishable poems to the public, it also, at the instigation of its proprietor, became the source whence issued his crushing scarifications of bookmaking mediocrities. His ruthless reviews, his crucial dissection of "boomed" books and their authors, not only created terror amongst the literary Lilliputians, but, also, as Poe afterwards found to his cost, made him a host of implacable enemies who never hesitated to accept and repeat, and even to invent any story, however improbable, to his discredit.

Poe returned to the scene of his brilliant boyhood with some *éclat*, as a successful author and the editor of a respected publication. To enhance the pleasantness of the prospect he was married, May 16, 1836, to his young and beautiful cousin, Virginia Clemm. Incapable as the young couple were, apparently, of taking care of themselves, it is but reasonable to believe that they might have had a happier future had they been more alone, and free from the too exclusive guardianship of the wife's mother. Scarcely was Poe wedded than she, Mrs. Clemm, attempted to start a boarding-house, and having no means of her own, made her son-in-law responsible for the ill-fated speculation. Henceforth Poe's pecuniary embarrassment became chronic, and much of the misery of his future life arose from this circumstance.

In the beginning of 1837 Poe resigned the editorship of the *Messenger*. He continued to occasionally contribute to its pages and remained on friendly terms with its proprietor, but spoke somewhat bitterly of the poor remuneration he had received for the quantity, apart even from the quality of the work he had done for him. He found the journal moribund and

left it in a highly flourishing condition, a state of affairs entirely due to his own labours.

The poet and his *ménage* removed to New York, where Mrs. Clemm repeated her ever unsuccessful speculation of a boarding-house. Mr. William Gowans, a wealthy, eccentric biblioplist, was a boarder there, and his reminiscences of the household are interesting—

The characters drawn of Poe by his various biographers and critics may with safety be pronounced an excess of exaggeration, but this is not to be much wondered at, when it is taken into consideration that these men were rivals. . . . I will show you my opinion of this gifted, but unfortunate genius . . . it has this merit, it comes from an eye and ear witness; and this is the very highest of legal evidence. For eight months or more "one house contained us, us one table fed." During that time I saw much of him, and had an opportunity of conversing with him often. And I must say that I never saw him the least affected with liquor, nor even descend to any known vice, whilst he was one of the most courteous, gentlemanly, and intelligent gentlemen I have met with during my journeyings and haltings through divers divisions of the globe; besides, he had an extra inducement to be a good man as well as a good husband, for he had a wife of matchless beauty . . . with a temper and disposition of surpassing sweetness; besides, she seemed as much devoted to him and his every interest as a young mother is to her first-born. . . . Poe had a remarkably pleasing and prepossessing countenance, what the ladies would call decidedly handsome.

After his marriage Poe spent his leisure hours in continuing his girl-wife's education, and under his careful tuition she became highly accomplished. "She was an excellent linguist and a perfect musician, and she was *so very beautiful*," records her mother. "How often has Eddie<sup>1</sup> said, 'I see no one so beautiful as my sweet little wife.'" His "more than mother" avers that Eddie "was domestic in all his habits" and that "He was truly an affectionate, kind husband, and a devoted son to me. He was impulsive, generous, and

<sup>1</sup> The poet's pet name at home.

noble. His tastes were very simple and his admiration for all that was good and beautiful, very great " "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym," the longest of Poe's romances, was completed and published as a volume during Poe's New York residence, and was immediately reissued in England, where its Defoe-like fidelity attracted much notice and caused it to run through many editions. The supernatural termination, which detracts from the truthful air of "The Narrative," was wisely omitted in the English reprints. Besides the many romantic adventures which render this story so fascinating for boys, there are other portions of it which illustrate Poe's idiosyncrasies to the full. The dreaming fit described in the second chapter, and the weird analysis of the mental phases which the hero passes through in his descent of the soapstone cliff, and *must not think*, until the *longing to fall* is finished by the fall, fully equals in psychological subtlety anything in De Quincey's "Confessions of an Opium Eater."

In the latter part of the year, 1838, Poe and his household removed to Philadelphia, where prospects of congenial literary occupation were offered him. For five years he dwelt in the Quaker city, working hard and producing those weirdly wonderful tales which have made his name world-famous. Captain Mayne Reid, in his "A Dead Man Defended," states how at this time he had known Poe "for a whole month closeted in his house, hard at work with his pen, poorly paid and hard driven to keep the wolf from his slightly furnished door; intruded on only by a few select friends, who always found him, what they knew him to be, a generous host, an affectionate son-in-law and husband—in short, a respectable gentleman. . . . In the list of literary men," he says, "there has been . . . never such a victim of posthumous spite as poor Edgar Poe." And the poet's wife, Captain Reid tells us, was "a lady angelically beautiful in person and not less beautiful in spirit. . . . No one," he adds, "who has ever spent an hour in her company but will endorse

what I have said. I remember how we, the friends of the poet, used to talk of her high qualities, and when we talked of her beauty, I well knew that the rose-tint upon her cheek was too bright, too pure to be of earth. It was consumption's colour, that sadly beautiful light that beckons to an early tomb." The Captain's foreboding was but too true. Whilst singing one evening the delicate young wife ruptured a blood-vessel, and henceforth there was no hope for her. A friend states, "After that she suffered a hundred deaths. She could not bear the slightest exposure, and needed the utmost care; and all those conveniences as to apartment and surroundings which are so important in the case of an invalid were almost matters of life and death to her. . . . No one dared to speak, Poe was so sensitive and irritable. He would not allow a word about the danger of her dying, the mention of it drove him wild."

The knowledge that his darling wife needed comforts which he was unable to provide rendered Poe utterly unable to carry on any literary work, and drove him to the verge of madness. It was thus, he averred to an old and valued correspondent, which caused the "irregularities" of his future life—his "lonesome latter years." He relates how his wife—

whom I loved as no man ever loved before, ruptured a blood-vessel in singing. Her life was despaired of. . . . She recovered partially, and I again hoped. At the end of a year the vessel broke again. . . . I felt all the agonies of her death, and at each accession of the disorder I loved her more dearly and clung to her life with more desperate pertinacity. . . . I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity. During these fits of absolute unconsciousness, I drank. . . . As a matter of course, my enemies referred the insanity to the drunk, rather than the drunk to the insanity. I had, indeed, nearly abandoned all hope of a permanent cure, when I found one in the death of my wife. This I can and do endure as becomes a man.

Those who knew the poet intimately, and not from

the slanders of his enemies, all agree as to the devoted, passionate love he had for his wife. Mr. Graham, whose magazine Poe had written for and had edited, in his eloquent defence of the dead author, says—

His whole efforts seemed to be to procure the comfort and welfare of his home. Except for their happiness, and the natural ambition of having a magazine of his own, I never heard him deplore the want of wealth. He cared little for money, and knew less of its value, for he seemed to have no personal expenses. What he received from me in regular monthly instalments went directly into the hands of his mother-in-law for family comforts, and twice only I remember his purchasing some rather expensive luxuries for his house, and then he was nervous to the degree of misery until he had, by extra articles, covered what he considered an imprudent indebtedness. His love for his wife was a sort of rapturous worship of the spirit of beauty, which he felt was fading before his eyes. I have seen him hovering around her when she was ill . . . her slightest cough causing in him a shudder, a heart-chill that was visible. . . . It was this hourly anticipation of her loss that made him a sad and thoughtful man, and lent a mournful melody to his undying song.

There was no literary woman more admired, or more welcome in Poe's home, than Mrs. Osgood, the poetess, and she, indignant at the statement that the poet's marriage had only been one of convenience and not affection, said: "I believe she, Virginia, was the only woman whom he ever truly loved; and this is evidenced by the exquisite pathos of the little poem, called 'Annabel Lee,' of which she was the subject, and which is far the most natural, simple, tender, and touchingly beautiful of all his songs."

In the spring of 1843 Poe was prominently before the public as the winner of the one-hundred-dollar prize, offered by *The Dollar* newspaper for the best tale. This would be a poor price for such a work at this time, but then was regarded as a magnificent recompense, and the award made quite a stir. "The Gold Bug," the story referred to, had been previously sold to Mr. Graham for fifty-two dollars, but was returned to the author for submission to the adjudica-



tors. "The Gold Bug" will chiefly be read for the interest of the story, but Poe had written it as a practical illustration of his theory that human ingenuity cannot construct a cipher human ingenuity cannot unriddle. On previous occasions the poet had promulgated this theory through the journals, and been pestered by correspondents sending him all kinds of cryptographs to test his skill. Although Poe had not engaged to decipher these puzzles he did take them in hand, and as a triumphant proof of the truth of his proposition, resolved them all. Through his fascinating prize tale he popularised the discovery of the mathematical ratio in which letters recur in the alphabet, and thus furnished the basis of the Morse telegraphic code.

Newspaper prizes notwithstanding, literary labour was not very remunerative in America in those days, and eventually Poe abandoned Philadelphia, and returned to New York, where he took up the post of assistant editor and critic on the *Evening Mirror*. In addition to this work the poet continued to contribute to the leading journals and occasionally lectured. On January 29, 1845, the *Evening Mirror* published, in advance of its appearance in a monthly, *The American Review*, Poe's most famous poem, "The Raven." Its popularity was immediate and immense. It is not too much to say that no short poem ever published has produced such a permanent effect upon the public. Mrs. Browning (then Miss Barrett) expressed the general feeling when she wrote to Poe—

This vivia writing ! This power which is felt ! Your "Raven" has produced a sensation, a "fit horror," here in England. Some of my friends are taken by the fear of it and some by the music. I hear of persons haunted by the "Nevermore," and one acquaintance of mine, who has the misfortune of possessing "a bust of Pallas," never can bear to look at it in the twilight. . . . Our great poet, Mr. Browning, is enthusiastic in his admiration of the rhythm.

This success enabled Poe to get a volume of his

poems published in New York, as "The Raven and Other Poems," and popularised his name to such an extent that his writings were eagerly accepted, although not always paid for, by editors and publishers. But for his wife's condition brighter days might now have dawned on the poet. To ensure greater quiet and fresher air for his darling, Poe, in the summer of 1846, took a pretty little cottage at Fordham, a little way out of New York ; but it was too late, a few months and all was over. On January 30, 1847, Virginia Poe died.

After the loss of his wife Edgar Poe was a lost man. He sometimes wrote a weird story, or a caustic critique, or even a melodious poem, but the light had gone out of his soul. Mrs. Clemm watched over him and worked for him, and begged for him, and it is but too true, sometimes pledged his name to do work for money which it was not wise nor well he should have done. When health and sanity permitted, he wrote out his wonderful theory of Creation, the work which had been seething in his brain for many years, and obtained its publication under the title of "Eureka : a Prose Poem."

Henceforward Poe was no longer able to trust himself. He was continually seeking the moral aid of some one or the other, to guide him through the "lonesome latter years" of his life. Friend after friend attempted the task, but discovered the burden was too oppressive. Mrs. Helen Whitman had promised to marry and stand by him, but repented and withdrew her promise ; Mrs. Shew aided him in the hours of his deepest adversity, but had to relinquish care of him for her family's sake ; Mrs. Richmond did her best for him, as also for Mrs. Clemm, as far as she could ; and, finally, Mrs. Shelton, the Elmira of his boyish love, now a widow, promised to become his wife. It was too late !

About October 2, 1849, Poe, after a somewhat prolonged visit to friends in the south, left Richmond for New York, partly on certain literary business, but mainly to fetch Mrs. Clemm for his wedding. He

reached Baltimore by boat, but after that his acts are shrouded in mystery. The 3rd was election day for Members of Congress, and in those days it was a common occurrence for strangers to be waylaid, drugged, and in a dazed condition dragged to the poll, and forced to vote for some absent person, superintending officials registering the vote, utterly regardless of the condition of the person voting. According to the testimony of various responsible people the wretched poet was so treated. At any rate he was found lying insensible on a bench, recognised, and was taken to the Washington University College for medical treatment.

It does not appear clear that Edgar Poe ever completely returned to consciousness. Upon Sunday, October 7, his wearied and tortured spirit passed away. Two days later his remains were consigned to rest in the grave of his ancestors, in Westminster Churchyard, Baltimore. His "more than mother," Mrs. Clemm, wrote a few days later to the best and kindest friend of his last years "He had many friends, but of what little consequence to him *now*." Some of those friends, and many of his myriad admirers, will gladly accept his own declaration, and deem it of good import—

*I firmly do believe—  
I know—for Death who comes for me  
From regions of the list afar,  
Where there is nothing to deceive,  
Hath left his iron gate ajar,  
And rays of light you cannot see  
Are flashing through eternity.*

JOHN H. INGRAM.

THE POETIC • PRINCIPLE •



## THE POETIC PRINCIPLE.

IN speaking of the poetic principle, I have no design to be either thorough or profound. While discussing, very much at random, the essentiality of what we call Poetry, my principal purpose will be to cite for consideration some few of those minor English or American poems which best suit my own taste, or which, upon my own fancy, have left the most definite impression. By "minor poems" I mean, of course, poems of little length. And here, in the beginning, permit me to say a few words in regard to a somewhat peculiar principle, which, whether rightfully or wrongfully, has always had its influence in my own critical estimate of the poem. I hold that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase "a long poem" is simply a flat contradiction in terms.

I need scarcely observe that a poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites by elevating the soul. The value of the poem is in the ratio of this elevating excitement. But all excitements are, through a psychal necessity, transient. That degree of excitement which would entitle a poem to be so called at all cannot be sustained throughout a composition of

any great length. After the lapse of half an hour, at the very utmost, it flags, fails, a revulsion ensues; and then the poem is, in effect and in fact, no longer such.

There are, no doubt, many who have found difficulty in reconciling the critical dictum that the "Paradise Lost" is to be devoutly admired throughout with the absolute impossibility of maintaining for it, during perusal, the amount of enthusiasm which that critical dictum would demand. This great work, in fact, is to be regarded as poetical only when, losing sight of that vital requisite in all works of art, unity, we view it merely as a series of minor poems. If, to preserve its unity, — its totality of effect or impression, — we read it (as would be necessary) at a single sitting, the result is but a constant alternation of excitement and depression. After a passage of what we feel to be true poetry, there follows, inevitably, a passage of platitude which no critical prejudice can force us to admire; but if, upon completing the work, we read it again, omitting the first book, — that is to say, commencing with the second, — we shall be surprised at now finding that admirable which we before condemned, that damnable which we had previously so much admired. It follows from all this that the ultimate, aggregate, or absolute effect of even the best epic under the sun is a nullity: and this is precisely the fact.

In regard to the Iliad, we have, if not positive proof, at least very good reason, for believing it intended as a series of lyrics; but granting the epic intention, I can only say that the work is based in an

imperfect sense of art. The modern epic is of the supposititious ancient model; but an inconsiderate and blindfold imitation. But the days of these artistic anomalies are over. If, at any time, any very long poem *were* popular in reality, — which I doubt, — it is at least clear that no very long poem will ever be popular again.

That the extent of a poetical work is, *ceteris paribus*, the measure of its merit, seems undoubtedly, when we thus state it, a proposition sufficiently absurd; yet we are indebted for it to the Quarterly Reviews. Surely there can be nothing in mere *size*, abstractly considered, there can be nothing in mere *bulk*, so far as a volume is concerned, which has so continuously elicited admiration from these saturnine pamphlets! A mountain, to be sure, by the mere sentiment of physical magnitude which it conveys, *does* impress us with a sense of the sublime; but no man is impressed after *this* fashion by the material grandeur of even "The Columbiad." Even the quarterlies have not instructed us to be so impressed by it. *As yet* they have not *insisted* on our estimating Lamartine by the cubic foot, or Pollok by the pound; but what else are we to *infer* from their continually prating about "sustained effort"? If by "sustained effort" any little gentleman has accomplished an epic, let us frankly commend him for the effort, — if this indeed be a thing commendable, — but let us forbear praising the epic on the effort's account.

It is to be hoped that common-sense, in the time to come, will prefer deciding upon a work of art rather



by the impression it makes, by the effect it produces, than by the time it took to produce the effect, or by the amount of "sustained effort" which had been found necessary in effecting the impression. The fact is, that perseverance is one thing and genius quite another, nor can all the quarterlies in Christendom confound them. By and by this proposition, with many which I have been just urging, will be received as self-evident. In the mean time, by being generally condemned as falsities, they will not be essentially damaged as truths.

On the other hand, it is clear that a poem may be improperly brief. Undue brevity degenerates into mere epigrammatism. A *very* short poem, while now and then producing a brilliant or vivid, never produces a profound or enduring, effect. There must be the steady pressing down of the stamp upon the wax. De Béranger has wrought innumerable things, pungent and spirit-stirring; but, in general, they have been too imponderous to stamp themselves deeply into the public attention; and thus, as so many feathers of fancy, have been blown aloft only to be whistled down the wind.

A remarkable instance of the effect of undue brevity in depressing a poem — in keeping it out of the popular view — is afforded by the following exquisite little serenade: —

- I arise from dreams of thee  
     In the first sweet sleep of night,  
 When the winds are breathing low  
     And the stars are shining bright.

I arise from dreams of thee,  
 And a spirit in my feet  
 Has led me — who knows how? —  
 To thy chamber-window, sweet!

The wandering airs they faint  
 On the dark, the silent stream;  
 The champak odors fail  
 Like sweet thoughts in a dream;  
 The nightingale's complaint,  
 It dies upon her heart,  
 As I must die on thine,  
 Oh, beloved, as thou art!

Oh, lift me from the grass!  
 I die, I faint, I fail!  
 Let thy love in kisses rain  
 • On my lips and eyelids pale.  
 My cheek is cold and white, alas!  
 My heart beats loud and fast:  
 Oh, press it close to thine again,  
 Where it will break at last!

Very few, perhaps, are familiar with these lines, yet no less a poet than Shelley is their author. Their warm yet delicate and ethereal imagination will be appreciated by all; but by none so thoroughly as by him who has himself arisen from sweet dreams of one beloved to bathe in the aromatic air of a southern midsummer night.

One of the finest poems by Willis — the very best, in my opinion, which he has ever written — has, no

doubt through this same defect of undue brevity, been kept back from its proper position, not less in the critical than in the popular view.

The shadows lay along Broadway,  
 'Twas near the twilight tide,  
 And slowly there a lady fair  
 Was walking in her pride.  
 Alone walked she, but viewlessly  
 Walked spirits at her side.

Peace charmed the street beneath her feet,  
 And Honor charmed the air,  
 And all astir looked kind on her,  
 And called her good as fair ;  
 For all God ever gave to her  
 She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare  
 From lovers warm and true,  
 For her heart was cold to all but gold,  
 And the rich came not to woo :  
 But honored well are charms to sell  
 If priests the selling do.

Now walking there was one more fair, —  
 A slight girl, lily-pale ;  
 And she had unseen company  
 To make the spirit quail :  
 'Twixt Want and Scorn she walked forlorn,  
 And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow  
 For this world's peace to pray;  
 For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,  
 Her woman's heart gave way!—  
 But the sin forgiven by Christ in heaven  
 By man is cursed away!

In this composition we find it difficult to recognize the Willis who has written so many mere "verses of society." The lines are not only richly ideal, but full of energy, while they breathe an earnestness, an evident sincerity of sentiment, for which we look in vain throughout all the other works of this author.

While the epic mania—while the idea that to merit, in poetry, prolixity is indispensable—has, for some years past, been gradually dying out of the public mind by mere dint of its own absurdity, we find it succeeded by a heresy too palpably false to be long tolerated, but one which, in the brief period it has already endured, may be said to have accomplished more in the corruption of our poetical literature than all its other enemies combined. I allude to the heresy of *The Didactic*. It has been assumed, tacitly and avowedly, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate object of all poetry is truth. Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral: and by this moral is the poetical merit of the work to be adjudged. We Americans, especially, have patronized this happy idea; and we Bostonians, very especially, have developed it in full. We have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be

to confess ourselves radically wanting in the true poetic dignity and force ; but the simple fact is, that, would we but permit ourselves to look into our own souls, we should immediately there discover that under the sun there neither exists nor *can* exist any work more thoroughly dignified, more supremely noble, than this very poem ; this poem *per se* ; this poem which is a poem and nothing more ; this poem written solely for the poem's sake.

With as deep a reverence for the True as ever inspired the bosom of man, I would nevertheless limit, in some measure, its modes of inculcation. I would limit, to enforce them. I would not enfeeble them by dissipation. The demands of Truth are severe. She has no sympathy with the myrtles. All *that* which is so indispensable in Song is precisely all *that* with which *she* has nothing whatever to do. It is but making her a flaunting paradox to wreath her in gems and flowers. In enforcing a truth, we need severity rather than efflorescence of language. We must be simple, precise, terse ; we must be cool, calm, unimpassioned ; in a word, we must be in that mood which, as nearly as possible, is the exact converse of the poetical. *He* must be blind indeed who does not perceive the radical and chasmal differences between the truthful and the poetical modes of inculcation. He must be theory-mad beyond redemption who, in spite of these differences, shall still persist in attempting to reconcile the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and Truth.

Dividing the world of mind into its three most immediately obvious distinctions, we have the Pure

Intellect, Taste, and the Moral Sense. I place Taste in the middle, because it is just this position which, in the mind, it occupies. It holds intimate relations with either extreme, but from the Moral Sense is separated by so faint a difference that Aristotle has not hesitated to place some of its operations among the virtues themselves. Nevertheless, we find the *offices* of the trio marked with a sufficient distinction. Just as the Intellect concerns itself with Truth, so Taste informs us of the Beautiful, while the Moral Sense is regardful of Duty. Of this latter, while Conscience teaches the obligation, and Reason the expediency, Taste contents herself with displaying the charms; waging war upon Vice solely on the ground of her deformity, her disproportion, her animosity, to the fitting, to the appropriate, to the harmonious, — in a word, to Beauty.

An immortal instinct, deep within the spirit of man, is thus, plainly, a sense of the Beautiful. This it is which administers to his delight in the manifold forms and sounds and odors and sentiments amid which he exists. And just as the lily is repeated in the lake, or the eyes of Amaryllis in the mirror, so is the mere oral or written repetition of these forms and sounds and colors and odors and sentiments a duplicate source of delight. But this mere repetition is not poetry. He who shall simply sing, with however glowing enthusiasm or with however vivid a truth of description, of the sights and sounds and odors and colors and sentiments which greet *him* in common with all mankind, — he, I say, has yet failed to prove his divine title. There is still a something in the

distance which he has been unable to attain. We have still a thirst unquenchable, to allay which he has not shown us the crystal springs. This thirst belongs to the immortality of man. It is at once a consequence and an indication of his perennial existence. It is the desire of the moth for the star. It is no mere appreciation of the beauty before us, but a wild effort to reach the beauty above. Inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle, by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of time, to attain a portion of that loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to eternity alone. And thus when by poetry— or when by music, the most entrancing of the poetic moods—we find ourselves melted into tears, we weep then, not, as the Abbate Gravina supposes, through excess of pleasure, but through a certain petulant, impatient sorrow, at our inability to grasp *now*, wholly, here on earth, at once and forever, those divine and rapturous joys, of which *through* the poem or *through* the music, we attain to but brief and indeterminate glimpses.

The struggle to apprehend the supernal loveliness, this struggle, on the part of souls fittingly constituted, has given to the world all that which it (the world) has ever been enabled at once to understand and *to feel* as poetic.

The poetic sentiment, of course, may develop itself in various modes, — in painting, in sculpture, in architecture, in the dance, very especially in music, and very peculiarly, and with a wide field, in the composition of the landscape garden. Our present

theme, however, has regard only to its manifestation in words. And here let me speak briefly on the topic of rhythm. Contenting myself with the certainty that music, in its various modes of metre, rhythm, and rhyme, is of so vast a moment in poetry as never to be wisely rejected, is so vitally important an adjunct that he is simply silly who declines its assistance, I will not now pause to maintain its absolute essentiality. It is in music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the poetic sentiment, it struggles, — the creation of supernal beauty. It *may* be, indeed, that here this sublime end is, now and then, attained, *in fact*. We are often made to feel, with a shivering delight, that from an earthly harp are stricken notes which *cannot* have been unfamiliar to the angels. And thus there can be little doubt that with the intellect or with the conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth.

A few words, however, in explanation. *That* pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contemplation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty, we alone find it possible to attain this pleasurable elevation or excitement *of the soul* which we recognize as the poetic sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the heart. I make Beauty, therefore, — using the word as inclusive of the sublime, — I make Beauty the province of the



poem, simply because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring as directly as possible from their causes, — no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation in question is at least *most readily* attainable in the poem. It by no means follows, however, that the incitements of Passion or the precepts of Duty, or even the lessons of Truth, may not be introduced into a poem, and with advantage; for they may subserve, incidentally, in various ways, the general purposes of the work: but the true artist will always contrive to tone them down in proper subjection to that *Beauty* which is the atmosphere and the real essence of the poem.

I cannot better introduce the few poems which I shall present for your consideration than by the citation of the poem to Mr. Longfellow's "Waif."

The day is done, and the darkness  
 Falls from the wings of Night,  
 As a feather is wafted downward  
 From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village  
 Gleam through the rain and the mist,  
 And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me  
 That my soul can not resist, —

A feeling of sadness and longing,  
 That is not akin to pain,  
 And resembles sorrow only  
 As the mist resembles rain.

Come, read to me some poem,  
• Some simple and heartfelt lay,  
That shall soothe this restless feeling,  
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,  
Not from the bards sublime,  
Whose distant footsteps echo  
Through the corridors of Time ;

For, like strains of martial music,  
• Their mighty thoughts suggest  
Life's endless toil and endeavor ;  
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,  
Whose songs gushed from his heart  
As showers from the clouds of summer  
• Or tears from the eyelids start ;

Who, through long days of labor  
And nights devoid of ease,  
Still heard in his soul the music  
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet  
The restless pulse of care,  
And come like the benediction  
• That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume  
The poem of thy choice,  
And lend to the rhyme of the poet  
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,  
 And the cares that infest the day  
 Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs  
 And as silently steal away.

With no great range of imagination, these lines have been justly admired for their delicacy of expression. Some of the images are very effective. Nothing can be better than

—— The bards sublime,  
 Whose distant footsteps echo  
 Down the corridors of Time.

The idea of the last quartrain is also very effective. The poem on the whole, however, is chiefly to be admired for the graceful *insouciance* of its metre, so well in accordance with the character of the sentiments, and especially for the *ease* of the general manner. This "ease," or naturalness, in a literary style, it has long been the fashion to regard as ease in appearance alone, — as a point of really difficult attainment. But not so: a natural manner is difficult only to him who should never meddle with it, — to the unnatural. It is but the result of writing with the understanding, or with the instinct, that *the tone*, in composition, should always be that which the mass of mankind would adopt, and must perpetually vary, of course, with the occasion. The author who, after the fashion of *The North American Review*, should be, upon *all* occasions, merely "quiet," must necessarily, upon *many* occasions, be simply silly or

stupid; and has no more right to be considered "easy" or "natural," than a cockney exquisite, or than the sleeping Beauty in the waxworks.

Among the minor poems of Bryant, none has so much impressed me as the one which he entitles "June." I quote only a portion of it:—

There, through the long, long summer hours,  
 The golden light should lie,  
 And thick young herbs and groups of flowers  
 Stand in their beauty by.  
 The oriole should build and tell  
 His love-tale close beside my cell;  
 The idle butterfly  
 Should rest him there, and there be heard  
 The housewife-bee and humming bird.

And what if cheerful shouts, at noon,  
 Come, from the village sent,  
 Or songs of maids, beneath the moon,  
 With fairy laughter blent?  
 And what if, in the evening light,  
 Betrothed lovers walk in sight  
 Of my low monument?  
 I would the lovely scene around  
 Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

I know, I know I should not see  
 The season's glorious show,  
 Nor would its brightness shine for me,  
 Nor its wild music flow;

But if around my place of sleep,  
 The friends I love should come to weep,  
     They might not haste to go  
 Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom,  
 Should keep them lingering by my tomb.

These to their softened hearts should bear  
     The thought of what has been,  
 And speak of one who cannot share  
     The gladness of the scene;  
 Whose part in all the pomp that fills  
 The circuit of the summer hills,  
     Is — that his grave is green;  
 And deeply would their hearts rejoice  
 To hear again his living voice.

The rhythmical flow here is even voluptuous, — nothing could be more melodious. The poem has always affected me in a remarkable manner. The intense melancholy which seems to well up, perforce, to the surface of all the poet's cheerful sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul, while there is the truest poetic elevation in the thrill. The impression left is one of a pleasurable sadness. And if, in the remaining compositions which I shall introduce to you, there be more or less of a similar tone always apparent, let me remind you that (how or why we know not) this certain taint of sadness is inseparably connected with all the higher manifestations of true beauty. It is, nevertheless,

A feeling of sadness and longing  
That is not akin to pain,  
And resembles sorrow only  
As the mist resembles the rain.

The taint of which I speak is clearly perceptible even in a poem so full of brilliancy and spirit as the "Health" of Edward Coate Pinckney:—

I fill this cup to one made up  
Of loveliness alone,  
A woman, of her gentle sex  
The seeming paragon ;  
To whom the better elements  
And kindly stars have given  
A form so fair, that, like the air  
'Tis less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own,  
Like those of morning birds,  
And something more than melody  
Dwells ever in her words ;  
The coinage of her heart are they,  
And from her lips each flows  
As one may see the burden'd bee  
Forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her,  
The measures of her hours ;  
Her feelings have the fragrancy,  
The freshness of young flowers ;

And lovely passions, changing oft,  
 So fill her, she appears  
 The image of themselves by turns,—  
 The idol of past years!

Of her bright face one glance will trace  
 A picture on the brain,  
 And of her voice in echoing hearts  
 A sound must long remain;  
 But memory, such as mine of her,  
 So very much endears,  
 When death is nigh my latest sigh  
 Will not be life's, but hers.

I fill'd this cup to one made up  
 Of loveliness alone,—  
 A woman, of her gentle sex<sup>o</sup>  
 The seeming paragon.  
 Her health! and would on earth there stood  
 Some more of such a frame,  
 That life might be all poetry,  
 And weariness a name.

It was the misfortune of Mr. Pinckney to have been born too far south. Had he been a New-Englander, it is probable that he would have been ranked as the first of American lyrists by that magnanimous cabal which has so long controlled the destinies of American Letters in conducting the thing called *The North American Review*. The poem just cited is especially beautiful; but the poetic elevation which it induces, we must refer chiefly to our sympathy in the poet's

enthusiasm. We pardon his hyperboles for the evident earnestness with which they are uttered.

It was by no means my design, however, to expatiate upon the *merits* of what I should read you. These will necessarily speak for themselves. Boccacini, in his "Advertisements from Parnassus," tells us that Zoilus once presented Apollo a very caustic criticism upon a very admirable book, whereupon the god asked him for the beauties of the work. He replied that he only busied himself about the errors. On hearing this, Apollo, handing him a sack of unwinnowed wheat, bade him pick out *all the chaff* for his reward.

Now this fable answers very well as a hit at the critics; but I am by no means sure that the god was in the right. I am by no means certain that the true limits of the critical duty are not grossly misunderstood. Excellence, in a poem especially, may be considered in the light of an axiom, which need only be properly *put* to become self-evident. It is *not* excellence if it require to be demonstrated as such; and thus, to point out too particularly the merits of a work of art is to admit that they are *not* merits altogether.

Among the "Melodies" of Thomas Moore is one whose distinguished character as a poem proper seems to have been singularly left out of view. I allude to his lines beginning "Come, rest in this bosom." The intense energy of their expression is not surpassed by anything in Byron. There are two of the lines in which a sentiment is conveyed that embodies the *all in all* of the divine passion of love.



— a sentiment which, perhaps, has found its echo in more and in more passionate human hearts, than any other single sentiment ever embodied in words:—

Come, rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer,  
Though the herd have fled from thee, thy home is  
still here;

Here still is the smile that no cloud can o'ercast,  
And a heart and a hand all thy own to the last.

Oh, what was love made for, if 'tis not the same  
Through joy and through torment, through glory and  
shame,

I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart:  
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art. °

Thou hast call'd me thy angel in moments of bliss,  
And thy angel I'll be 'mid the horrors of this, —  
Through the furnace, unshrinking, thy steps to  
pursue,  
And shield thee, and save thee, — or perish there,  
too!

It has been the fashion of late days to deny Moore imagination, while granting him fancy, — a distinction originating with Coleridge, than whom no man more fully comprehended the great powers of Moore. The fact is that the fancy of this poet so far predominates over all his other faculties, and over the fancy of all other men, as to have induced, very naturally, the idea that he is fanciful *only*. But never was there a greater mistake; never was a grosser wrong done the name of a true poet. In the compass of the

English language I can call to mind no poem more profoundly — more weirdly — *imaginative*, in the best sense, than the lines commencing “I would I were by that dim lake,” which are the composition of Thomas Moore. I regret that I am unable to remember them.

One of the noblest — and, speaking of fancy, one of the most singularly fanciful of modern poets — was Thomas Hood. His “Fair Ines” had always, for me, an inexpressible charm: —

Oh, saw ye not fair Ines?

She's gone into the West,  
To dazzle when the sun is down,  
And rob the world of rest.

She took our daylight with her,  
The smiles that we love best,  
With morning blushes on her cheek  
And pearls upon her breast.

Oh, turn again, fair Ines,  
Before the fall of night,  
For fear the moon should shine alone,  
And stars unrivall'd bright:  
And blessed will the lover be  
That walks beneath their light,  
And breathes the love against thy cheek  
I dare not even write!

Would I had been, fair Ines,  
That gallant cavalier  
Who rode so gayly by thy side,  
And whispered thee so near!

Were there no bonny dames at home,  
 Or no true lovers here,  
 That he should cross the seas to win  
 The dearest of the dear?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,  
 Descend along the shore,  
 With a band of noble gentlemen,  
 And banners wav'd before ;  
 And gentle youth and maidens gay,  
 And snowy plumes they wore ;  
 It would have been a beauteous dream,  
 If it had been no more !

Alas, 'alas, fair Ines !  
 She went away with song,  
 With Music waiting on her steps,  
 And shoutings of the throng ;  
 But some were sad and felt no mirth,  
 But only Music's wrong,  
 In sounds that sang Farewell, Farewell,  
 To her you've lov'd so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines !  
 That vessel never bore  
 So fair a lady on its deck,  
 Nor danced so light before.  
 Alas for pleasure on the sea  
 And sorrow on the shore !  
 The smile that blest one lover's heart  
 Has broken many more !

"The Haunted House," by the same author, is one of the truest poems ever written, one of the truest, one of the most unexceptionable, one of the most thoroughly artistic, both in its theme and in its execution. It is, moreover, powerfully ideal, imaginative. I regret that its length renders it unsuitable for the purposes of this Lecture. In place of it, permit me to offer the universally appreciated "Bridge of Sighs :"—

One more Unfortunate,  
Weary of breath,  
Rashly importunate,  
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,  
Lift her with care,—  
Fashion'd so slenderly,  
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments,  
Clinging like cerements,—  
Whilst the wave constantly  
Drips from her clothing.  
Take her up instantly,—  
Loving, not loathing.

Touch her not scornfully,  
Think of her mournfully,  
Gently and humanly;  
Not of the stains of her,  
All that remains of her  
Now, is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny  
Into her mutiny,  
Rash and undutiful ;  
Past all dishonor,  
Death has left on her  
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers.  
One of Eve's family,  
Wipe those poor lips of hers,  
Oozing so clammily ;  
Loop up her tresses  
Escaped from the comb,  
Her fair auburn tresses,  
Whilst wonderment guesses  
Where was her home?

Who was her father?  
Who was her mother?  
Had she a sister?  
Had she a brother?  
Or was there a dearer one  
Still, and a nearer one  
Yet, than all other?

Alas, for the rarity  
Of Christian charity  
Under the sun !  
Oh, it was pitiful !  
Near a whole city full,  
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,  
Fatherly, motherly  
    Feelings had changed ;  
Love, by harsh evidence,  
Thrown from its eminence ;  
Even God's providence  
    Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver  
So far in the river,  
    With many a light  
From window and casement,  
From garret to basement,  
She stood, with amazement,  
    Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March  
    Made her tremble and shiver,  
But not the dark arch,  
    Or the black flowing river :  
Mad from life's history,  
Glad to death's mystery  
    Swift to be hurl'd, —  
Any where, any where  
    Out of the world !

In she plunged boldly,  
No matter how coldly  
    The rough river ran, —  
Over the brink of it,  
Picture it, think of it,  
    Dissolute man !  
Lave in it, drink of it,  
    Then, if you can !

Take her up tenderly,  
 Lift her with care, —  
 Fashion'd so slenderly,  
 Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly  
 Stiffen too rigidly,  
 Decently, — kindly, —  
 Smooth and compose them;  
 And her eyes, close them,  
 Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring  
 Through muddy impurity,  
 As when, with the daring  
 Last look of despairing  
 Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,  
 Spurred by contumely,  
 Cold inhumanity  
 Burning insanity  
 Into her rest.  
 Cross her hands humbly,  
 As if praying dumbly,  
 Over her breast!  
 Owing her weakness,  
 Her evil behavior,  
 And leaving, with meekness,  
 Her sins to her Saviour!

The vigor of this poem is no less remarkable than its pathos. The versification, although carrying the

fanciful to the very verge of the fantastic, is nevertheless admirably adapted to the wild insanity which is the thesis of the poem.

Among the minor poems of Lord Byron is one which has never received from the critics the praise which it undoubtedly deserves : —

Though the day of my destiny's over,  
 And the star of my fate hath declined,  
 Thy soft heart refused to discover  
 The faults which so many could find ;  
 Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,  
 It shrunk not to share it with me,  
 And the love which my spirit hath painted,  
 It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when Nature around me is smiling,  
 The last smile which answers to mine,  
 I do not believe in beguiling,  
 Because it reminds me of thine ;  
 And when winds are at war with the ocean,  
 As the breasts I believed in with me,  
 If their billows excite an emotion,  
 It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is shivered,  
 And its fragments are sunk in the wave,  
 Though I feel that my soul is delivered  
 To pain, — it shall not be its slave.

There is many a pang to pursue me :  
 They may crush, but they shall not contain ;  
 They may torture, but shall not subdue me :  
 'Tis of *thee* that I think, — not of them.



Though human, thou didst not deceive me ;  
 Though woman, thou didst not forsake ;  
 Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me ;  
 Though slandered, thou never couldst shake :  
 Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me ;  
 Though parted, it was not to fly ;  
 Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me ;  
 Nor mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,  
 Nor the war of the many with one :  
 If my soul was not fitted to prize it,  
 'Twas folly not sooner to shun ;  
 And ~~it~~ dearly that error hath cost me,  
 And ~~more~~ than ~~once~~ could foresee,  
 I have found that, whatever it lost me,  
 It could not deprive me of *thee*.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perished,  
 Thus much I at least may recall,  
 It hath taught me that which I most cherished,  
 Deserved to be dearest of all :  
 In the desert a fountain is springing,  
 In the wide waste there still is a tree,  
 And a bird in the solitude singing,  
 Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

Although the rhythm, here, is one of the most difficult, the versification could scarcely be improved. No nobler *theme* ever engaged the pen of poet. It is the soul-elevating idea that no man can consider himself entitled to complain of fate, while in his

adversity he still retains the unwavering love of woman

From Alfred Tennyson — although in perfect sincerity I regard him as the noblest poet that ever lived — I have left myself time to cite only a very brief specimen. I call him and *think* him the noblest of poets, — *not* because the impressions he produces are, at *all* times, the most profound; *not* because the poetical excitement which he induces is, at *all* times, the most intense; but because it is, at *all* times, the most ethereal, — in other words, the most elevating and the most pure. No poet is so little of the earth, earthy. What I am about to read is from his last long poem, “The Princess”: —

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean!  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail  
That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge, —  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square, —  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
 And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
 On lips that are for others ; deep as love,  
 Deep as first love, and wild with all regret.  
 Oh, Death in Life ! the days that are no more.

Thus, although in a very cursory and imperfect manner, I have endeavored to convey to you my conception of the Poetic Principle. It has been my purpose to suggest that, while this principle itself is, strictly and simply, the human aspiration for supernal beauty, the manifestation of the principle is always found in *an elevating excitement of the soul*, quite independent of that passion which is the intoxication of the heart, or of that truth which is the satisfaction of the reason ; for, in regard to passion, alas ! its tendency is to degrade rather than to elevate the soul. Love, on the contrary, — Love, the true, the divine Eros, the Uranian as distinguished from the Dionæan Venus, — is unquestionably the purest and truest of all poetical themes. And in regard to Truth, if, to be sure, through the attainment of a truth we are led to perceive a harmony where none was apparent before, we experience at once the true poetical effect ; but this effect is referrible to the harmony alone, and not in the least degree to the truth which merely served to render the harmony manifest.

We shall reach, however, more immediately a distinct conception of what the true poetry is by mere reference to a few of the simple elements which induce in the poet himself the true poetical effect.

He recognizes the ambrosia which nourishes his soul, in the bright orbs that shine in Heaven, in the volutes of the flower, in the clustering of low shrubberies, in the waving of the grain-fields, in the slanting of tall Eastern trees, in the blue distance of mountains, in the grouping of clouds, in the twinkling of half-hidden brooks, in the gleaming of silver rivers, in the repose of sequestered lakes, in the star-mirroring depths of lonely wells. He perceives it in the songs of birds, in the harp of Æolus, in the sighing of the night-wind, in the repining voice of the forest, in the surf that complains to the shore, in the fresh breath of the woods, in the scent of the violet, in the voluptuous perfume of the hyacinth, in the suggestive odor that comes to him, at eventide, from far-distant, undiscovered islands, over dim oceans, illimitable and unexplored. He owns it in all noble thoughts, in all unworldly motives, in all holy impulses, in all chivalrous, generous, and self-sacrificing deeds. He feels it in the beauty of woman, — in the grace of her step, in the lustre of her eye, in the melody of her voice, in her soft laughter, in her sigh, in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in her winning endearments, in her burning enthusiasms, in her gentle charities, in her meek and devotional endurance; but above all — ah, far above all! — he kneels to it, he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty of her *love*.

Let me conclude by the recitation of yet another brief poem, — one very different in character from any that I have before quoted. It is by Motherwell.

and is called "The Song of the Cavalier." With our modern and altogether rational ideas of the absurdity and impiety of warfare, we are not precisely in that frame of mind best adapted to sympathize with the sentiments, and thus to appreciate the real excellence of the poem. To do this fully, we must identify ourselves, in fancy, with the soul of the old cavalier.

Then mounte, then mounte, brave gallants all,  
 And don your helmes amaine! •  
 Deathe's couriers, Fame and Honour, call  
 Us to the field againe.  
 Now shrewish teares shall fill our eye  
 When the sword-hilt's in our hand;  
 Heart-whole we'll part, and no whit sighe  
 For the fayrest of the land. •  
 Let piping swaine and craven wight  
 Thus weepe and puling crye:  
 Our business is like men to fight,  
 And hero-like to die.

# POEMS.



## P O E M S .

### *THE RAVEN.*

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak  
and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten  
lore, —

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there  
came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, — rapping at my  
chamber door.

“ ’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “ tapping at my  
chamber door, —

Only this, and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak  
December,

And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost  
upon the floor.

Eagerly I wished the morrow ; — vainly I had sought  
to borrow

From my books surcease of sorrow, — sorrow for the  
lost Lenore, —

For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels  
name Lenore, —

Nameless here for evermore.



And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple  
curtain

Thrilled me — filled me — with fantastic terrors never  
felt before ;

So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood  
repeating

“ ’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber  
door, —

Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber  
door.

This it is, and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger : hesitating then no  
longer,

“ Sit,” said I, “ & Madam, truly your forgiveness I  
implore :

But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you  
came rapping,

And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my  
chamber door,

That I scarce was sure I heard you.” Here I opened  
wide the door.

Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there,  
wondering, fearing,

Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to  
dream before.

But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave  
no token,

And the only word there spoken was the whispered  
word, “ Lenore !”

This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the  
word, "Lenore!"

Merely this, and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within  
me burning,

Soon again I heard a tapping, something louder than  
before.

"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my  
window-lattice:

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery  
explore. —

Let my heart be still a moment, and this mystery  
explore:

'Tis the wind, and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a  
flirt and flutter,

In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days  
of yore.

Not the least obeisance made he, — not a minute  
stopped or stayed he,

But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my  
chamber door, —

Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber  
door, —

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebon bird beguiling my sad fancy into  
smiling,

By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance  
it wore,

"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said,  
 "art sure no craven,  
 Ghastly, grim, and ancient Raven, wandering from  
 the Nightly shore.  
 Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's  
 Plutonian shore!"  
 Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse  
 so plainly,  
 Though its answer little meaning—little "relevancy  
 bore;  
 For we can not help agreeing that no living human  
 being  
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his  
 chamber door,—  
 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his  
 chamber door,  
 With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust,  
 spoke only  
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did  
 outpour,  
 Nothing further then he uttered; not a feather then  
 he fluttered,—  
 Till I scarcely more than muttered, "Other friends  
 have flown before!  
 On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have  
 flown before!"  
 Then the bird said "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly  
 spoken,  
 "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock  
 and store,  
 Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful  
 Disaster  
 Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one  
 burden bore, —  
 Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden  
 bore  
 Of 'Never, — nevermore!'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul into  
 smiling,  
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird  
 and bust and door;  
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to  
 linking  
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird  
 of yore —  
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and omin-  
 ous bird of yore  
 Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable  
 expressing  
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my  
 bosom's core:  
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease  
 reclining,  
 On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight  
 gloated o'er,

But whose velvet violet lining, with the lamplight  
gloating o'er,

*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed  
from an unseen censer

Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the  
tufted floor.

“Wretch!” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee — by  
these angels he hath sent thee

Respite — respite and nepenthe from thy memories  
of Lenore!

Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget the  
lost Lenore!”

Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” cried I, “thing of evil! — prophet still,  
if bird or devil! —

Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed  
thee here ashore,

Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land  
enchanted —

On this Home by horror haunted — tell me truly, I  
implore —

Is there — is there balm in Gilead? Tell me! — tell  
me, I implore!”

Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

“Prophet!” cried I, “thing of evil! — prophet still,  
if bird or devil! —

By that Heaven that bends above us — by that God  
we both adore! —

Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if, within the distant Aidenn,  
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore, —  
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!"  
 I shrieked, upstarting.

"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken! — quit the bust above my door!

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting

On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,

And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor

Shall be lifted — nevermore!

## LENORE.

AH, broken is the golden bowl! — the spirit flown  
 forever! —  
 Let the bell toll! — a saintly soul floats on the  
 Stygian river;  
 And, Guy De Vere, hast *thou* no tear? — weep now,  
 or never more!

See, on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love,  
 Legure!  
 Come, let the burial rite be read, — the funeral song  
 be sung! —  
 An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so  
 young, —  
 A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so  
 young.

“Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth and hated  
 her for her pride!  
 And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her —  
 that she died!  
 How *shall* the ritual, then, be read? — the requiem  
 how be sung  
 By you — by yours, the evil eye, — by yours, the  
 slanderous tongue  
 That did to death the innocence that died, and died  
 so young?”

*Peccavimus!* But rave not thus, and let a Sabbath  
 song  
 Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no  
 wrong!  
 The sweet Lenore hath "gone before," with Hope,  
 that flew beside,  
 Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have  
 been thy bride! —  
 For her, the fair and *debonair*, that now so lowly  
 lies,  
 The life upon her yellow hair, but not within her  
 eyes, —  
 The life still there, upon her hair, — the death upon  
 her eyes.

"Avaunt! To-night my heart is light! No dirge  
 will I upraise,  
 But waft the angel on her flight with a pæan of old  
 days!  
 Let *no* bell toll! — lest her sweet soul, amid its hal-  
 lowed mirth,  
 Should catch the note, as it doth float up from the  
 damned Earth!  
 To friends above, from fiends below, the indignant  
 ghost is riven, —  
 From Hell unto a high estate far up within the  
 Heaven, —  
 From grief and groan to a golden throne, beside the  
 King of Heaven."



## THE BELLS.

## I.

HEAR the sledges with the bells, —  
Silver bells!

What a world of merriment their melody foretells!  
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,  
In the icy air of night!  
While the stars that oversprinkle  
All the heavens, seem to twinkle  
With a crystalline delight;  
Keeping time, time, time,  
In a sort of Runic rhyme,  
To the tintinabulation that so musically wells  
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,  
Bells, bells, bells. —  
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

## II.

Hear the mellow wedding bells, —  
Golden bells!

What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!  
Through the balmy air of night  
How they ring out their delight!  
From the molten golden notes,  
(And all in tune,)  
What a liquid ditty floats  
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats  
On the moon!

Oh, from out the sounding cells,)
   
 What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
   
     How it swells!
   
     How it dwells
   
     On the Future! How it tells
   
     Of the rapture that impels
   
 To the swinging and the ringing
   
     Of the bells, bells, bells,
   
     Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
   
         Bells, bells, bells,—
   
 To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

## III.

Hear the loud alarum bells, —
   
     Brazen bells!
   
 What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
   
     In the startled ear of night
   
     How they scream out their affright!
   
     (Too much horrified to speak,
   
     They can only shriek, shriek, shriek,
   
         Out of tune,)
   
 In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
   
 In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic
   
 fire,
   
     (Leaping higher, higher, higher,
   
     With a desperate desire,
   
     And a resolute endeavor
   
     Now — now to sit, or never,
   
     By the side of the pale-faced moon.
   
     Oh, the bells, bells, bells!)
   
     What a tale their terror tells
   
         Of Despair!

How they clang, and clash, and roar!  
 What a horror they outpour  
 On the bosom of the palpitating air!  
 Yet the ear it fully knows,  
 By the twanging,  
 And the clanging,  
 How the danger ebbs and flows;  
 Yet the ear distinctly tells,  
 In the jangling,  
 And the wrangling,  
 How the danger sinks and swells,  
 By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the  
 bells,

Of the bells, —  
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,  
 Bells, bells, bells, —  
 In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

## IV.

Hear the tolling of the bells, —  
 Iron bells!  
 What a world of solemn thought their monody com-  
 pels!  
 In the silence of the night,  
 How we shiver with affright  
 At the melancholy menace of their tone!  
 For every sound that floats  
 From the rust within their throats  
 Is a groan.  
 And the people — ah, the people —  
 They that dwell up in the steeple,  
 All alone,

And who tolling, tolling, tolling,  
 In that muffled monotone,  
 • Feel a glory in so rolling  
 On the human heart a stone : \*  
 They are neither man nor woman, —  
 They are neither brute nor human, —

They are Ghouls ;

And their king it is who tolls, —  
 And he rolls, rolls, rolls,  
 Rolls a pæan from the bells !

• And his merry bosom swells  
 With the pæan of the bells,  
 And he dances, and he yells ;  
 Keeping time, time, time,  
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,  
 To the pæan of the bells, —

Of the bells :

◁ • Keeping time, time, time,  
 in a sort of Runic rhyme,)

To the throbbing of the bells, —  
 (Of the bells, bells, bells, ♪)

To the sobbing of the bells ;  
 (Keeping time, time, time,  
 As he knells, knells, knells,)

(In a happy Runic rhyme, )  
 To the rolling of the bells, —

• (Of the bells, bells, bells, ♪  
 • To the tolling of the bells,  
 (Of the bells, bells, bells, bells, —  
 Bells, bells, bells, ♪

To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

## ANNABEL LEE.

It was many and many a year ago,  
 In a kingdom by the sea,  
 That a maiden there lived whom you may know,  
 By the name of ANNABEL LEE;  
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought  
 Than to love and be loved by me.

I was ~~born~~ and ~~she~~ was a child,  
 In this kingdom by the sea:  
 But we loved with a love that was more than love,  
 I and my ANNABEL LEE;  
 With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven  
 Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,  
 In this kingdom by the sea,  
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling  
 My beautiful ANNABEL LEE;  
 So that her highborn kinsman came  
 And bore her away from me,  
 To shut her up in a sepulchre  
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,  
 Went envying her and me, —

Yes!— that was the reason (as all men know,  
 In this kingdom by the sea) -  
 That the wind came out of the cloud by night,  
 Chilling and killing my ANNABEL LEE.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love  
 Of those who were older than we, —  
 Of many far wiser than we ;  
 And neither the angels in heaven above,  
 Nor the demons down under the sea,  
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
 Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE :  
 For the moon never beams, without bringing me  
 dreams  
 Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE ;  
 And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes  
 Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE ;  
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side  
 Of my darling — my darling — my life and my  
 bride,  
 In the sepulchre there by the sea,  
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.

## ULALUME.

THE skies they were ashen and sober ;  
 The leaves they were crisped and sere, —  
 The leaves they were withering and sere, —  
 It was night in the lonesome October  
 Of my most immemorial year ;

It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,  
 In the misty mid-region of Weir, —  
 It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,  
 In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,  
 Of cypress, I roamed with my soul, —  
 Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.  
 These were days when my heart was volcanic  
 As the scoriac rivers that roll —  
 As the lavas that restlessly roll —  
 Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek  
 In the ultimate climes of the pole —  
 That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek,  
 In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,  
 But our thoughts they were palsied and sere,  
 Our memories were treacherous and sere, —  
 For we knew not the month was October,  
 And we marked not the night of the year, —  
 (Ah, night of all nights in the year!)  
 We noted not the dim lake of Auber —  
 (Though once we had journeyed down here) —  
 Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,  
 Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent,  
 And the star-dials pointed to morn, —  
 As the star-dials hinted of morn, —  
 At the end of our path a liquescent  
 And nebulous lustre was born,

Out of which a miraculous crescent  
 Arose with a duplicate horn, —  
 Astarte's bediamonded crescent,  
 Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said, " She is warmer than Dian :  
 She rolls through an ether of sighs, —  
 She revels in a region of sighs :  
 She has seen that the tears are not dry on  
 These cheeks, where the worm never dies,  
 And has come past the stars of the Lion  
 To point us the path to the skies, —  
 To the Lethean peace of the skies, —  
 Come up, in despite of the Lion,  
 To shine on us with her bright eyes,"  
 Come up through the lair of the Lion,  
 With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,  
 Said, " Sadly this star I mistrust, —  
 Her pallor I strangely mistrust :  
 Oh, hasten ! oh, let us not linger !  
 Oh, fly ! — let us fly ! — for we must."  
 In terror she spoke, letting sink her  
 Wings until they trailed in the dust, —  
 In agony sobbed, letting sink her  
 Plumes till they trailed in the dust, —  
 Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied, " This is nothing but dreaming :  
 Let us on by this tremulous light !  
 Let us bathe in this crystalline light !  
 Its Sybilic splendor is beaming  
 With Hope and in Beauty to-night :



See! it flickers up the sky through the night!  
 Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,  
 And be sure it will lead us aright.  
 We safely may trust to a gleaming  
 That cannot but guide us aright,  
 Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche, and kissed her,  
 And tempted her out of her gloom, —  
 And conquered her scruples and gloom;  
 And we passed to the end of the vista,  
 But were stopped by the door of a tomb, —  
 By the door of a legended tomb:  
 And I said, "What is written, sweet sister,  
 On the door of this legended tomb?"  
 She replied, "Ulalume! — Ulalume! —  
 'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober  
 As the leaves that were crisped and sere, —  
 As the leaves that were withering and sere:  
 And I cried, "It was surely October, —  
 On *this* very night of last year,  
 That I journeyed — I journeyed down here, —  
 That I brought a dread burden down here:  
 On this night, of all nights in the year,  
 Ah, what demon has tempted me here?  
 Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber, —  
 This misty mid-region of Weir, —  
 Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber, —  
 This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

## THE COLISEUM.

TYPE of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary  
 Of lofty contemplation left to Time  
 By buried centuries of pomp and power!  
 At length — at length — after so many days  
 Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst,  
 (Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie,)  
 I kneel, an altered and an humble man,  
 Amid thy shadows, and so drink within  
 My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory!

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld!  
 Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night!  
 I feel ye now — I feel ye in your strength —  
 Oh, spells more sure than e'er Judean king  
 Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane!  
 Oh, charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee  
 Ever drew down from out the quiet stars!

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls!  
 Here, where a mimic eagle glared in gold,  
 A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat!  
 Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair  
 Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!  
 Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,  
 Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,  
 Lit by the wan light of the horned moon,

The swift and silent lizard of the stones!  
 But stay! These walls — these ivy-clad arcades —  
 These mouldering plinths — these sad and blackened  
 shafts —

These vague entablatures — this crumbling frieze —  
 These shattered cornices — this wreck — this ruin —  
 These stones — alas! these gray stones — are they  
 all —

All of the famed and the colossal left  
 By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me?

“Not all!” the echoes answered me. “Not all!  
 Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever  
 From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,  
 As melody from Memnon to the Sun.  
 We rule the hearts of mightiest men! — we rule  
 With a despotic sway all giant minds!  
 We are not impotent — we pallid stones.  
 Not all our power is gone! — not all our fame! —  
 Not all the magic of our high renown! —  
 Not all the wonder that encircles us! —  
 Not all the mysteries that in us lie! —  
 Not all the memories that hang upon  
 And cling around about us as a garment,  
 Clothing us in a robe of more than glory.”

TO HELEN.

I saw thee once — once only — years ago:  
 I must not say *how* many — but *not* many.  
 It was a July midnight: and from out  
 A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul, soaring,

Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven,  
 There fell a silvery silken veil of light,  
 With quietude, and sultriness, and slumber,  
 Upon the upturned faces of a thousand  
 Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,  
 Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tiptoe, —  
 Fell on the upturned faces of these roses  
 That gave out, in return for the love-light,  
 Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death, —  
 Fell on the upturned faces of these roses  
 That smiled and died in this parterre, enchanted  
 By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank  
 I saw thee half reclining; while the moon  
 Fell on the upturned faces of the roses,  
 And on thine own, upturned, — alas, in sorrow!  
 Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight —  
 Was it not Fate (whose name is also Sorrow)  
 That bade me pause before that garden-gate  
 To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses?  
 No footstep stirred: the hated world all slept,  
 Save only thee and me. (Oh, Heaven! — oh, God!  
 How my heart beats in coupling those two words!)  
 Save only thee and me! I paused — I looked —  
 And in an instant all things disappeared.  
 (Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted!)

The pearly lustre of the moon went out:  
 The mossy banks and the meandering paths —  
 The happy flowers and the repining trees —  
 Were seen no more: the very roses' odors  
 Died in the arms of the adoring air.

All — all expired save thee — save less than thou :  
 Save only the divine light in thine eyes —  
 Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes.  
 I saw but them — they were the world to me :  
 I saw but them — saw only them for hours —  
 Saw only them until the moon went down.  
 What wild heart-histories seemed to lie enwritten  
 Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres !  
 How dark a woe ! yet how sublime a hope !  
 How silently serene a sea of pride !  
 How daring an ambition ! yet how deep —  
 How fathomless a capacity for love !  
 But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,  
 Into a western couch of thunder-cloud ;  
 And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees  
 Didst glide away. *Only thine eyes remained.*  
 They *would not* go, — they never yet have gone.

Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,  
*They* have not left me (as my hopes have) since.  
 They follow me — they lead me through the years —  
 They are my ministers — yet I their slave.  
 Their office is to illumine and enkindle,  
 My duty, *to be saved* by their bright light,  
 And purified in their electric fire,  
 And sanctified in their elysian fire.  
 They fill my soul with beauty (which is Hope),  
 And are far up in Heaven — the stars I kneel to  
 In the sad, silent watches of my night ;  
 While even in the meridian glare of day  
 I see them still — two sweetly scintillant  
 Venuses, unextinguished by the sun !

## TO —

NOT long ago, the writer of these lines,  
 In the mad pride of intellectuality,  
 Maintained "the power of words," — denied that  
 ever

A thought arose within the human brain  
 Beyond the utterance of the human tongue :  
 And now, as if in mockery of that boast,  
 Two words — two foreign soft dissyllables —  
 Italian tones, made only to be murmured  
 By angels dreaming in the moonlit "dew  
 That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill," —  
 Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart,  
 Unthought-like thoughts that are the souls of thought,  
 Richer, far wider, far diviner visions  
 Than even the seraph harper, Israfel  
 (Who has "the sweetest voice of all God's creatures")  
 Could hope to utter. And I! my spells are broken.  
 The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand.  
 With thy dear name as text, though bidden by thee,  
 I cannot write — I cannot speak or think —  
 Alas, I cannot feel; for 'tis not feeling,  
 This standing motionless upon the golden  
 Threshold of the wide open gate of dreams,  
 Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,  
 And thrilling as I see, upon the right,  
 Upon the left, and all the way along,  
 Amid unpurpled vapors, far away,  
 To where the prospect terminates — *there only.*

## A VALENTINE.

FOR her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes,  
 Brightly expressive of the twins of Læda,  
 Shall find her own sweet name, that, nestling lies  
 Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.  
 Search narrowly the lines! — they hold a treasure  
 Divine, — a talisman — an amulet  
 That must be worn *at heart*. Search well the meas-

ure —  
 The words — the syllables! Do not forget  
 The trivialest point, or you may lose your labor!  
 And yet there is in this no Gordian knot  
 Which one might not undo without a sabre,  
 If one could merely comprehend the plot.  
 Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering  
 Eyes scintillating soul, there lies *perdus*  
 Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing  
 Of poets, by poets, — as the name is a poet's, too.  
 Its letters, although naturally lying  
 Like the knight Pinto — Mendez Ferdinando —  
 Still form a synonym for Truth. — Cease trying!  
 You will not read the riddle, though you do the  
 • best you *can* do.

(To translate the address, read the first letter of the first line in connection with the second letter of the second line, the third letter of the third line, the fourth of the fourth, and so on to the end. The address will thus appear.)

## TO MY MOTHER.

**BECAUSE I feel that, in the Heavens above,**  
 The angels, whispering to one another,  
 Can find, among their burning terms of love,  
 None so devotional as that of "Mother,"  
 Therefore by that dear name I long have called you, —  
 You who are more than mother unto me,  
 And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed  
 you,  
 In setting my Virginia's spirit free.  
 My mother — my own mother, who died early,  
 Was but the mother of myself; but you  
 Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,  
 And thus are dearer than the mother I knew  
 By that infinity with which my wife  
 Was dearer to my soul than its own soul-life.

## HYMN.

**AT morn — at noon — at twilight dim —**  
 Maria, thou hast heard my hymn !  
 In joy and woe — in good and ill —  
 Mother of God, be with me still !  
 When the Hours flew brightly by,  
 And not a cloud obscured the sky,



My soul, lest it should truant be,  
 Thy grace did guide to thine and thee:  
 Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast  
 Darkly my Present and my Past,  
 Let my Future radiant shine  
 With sweet hopes of thee and thine!

## AN ENIGMA.

"SELDOM we find," says Solomon Don Dunce,  
 "Half an idea in the profoundest sonnet,  
 Through all the flimsy things we see at once,  
 As easily as through a Naples bonnet —  
 Trash of all ~~dash~~! — how *can* a lady don it!  
 Yet heavier far than your Petrarchan stuff, —  
 Owl-downy nonsense that the faintest puff  
 Twirls into trunk-paper the while you *can* it."  
 And, veritably, Sol is right enough.  
 The general tuckermanities are arrant  
 Bubbles, — ephemeral and *so* transparent!  
 But *this* is, now, — you may depend upon it, —  
 Stable, opaque, immortal, — all by dint  
 Of the dear names that lie concealed within't.

## THE HAUNTED PALACE.

In the greenest of our valleys  
 By good angels tenanted,  
 Once a fair and stately palace —  
 Radiant palace — reared its head.

In the monarch Thought's dominion —  
It stood there !  
Never seraph spread a pinion  
Over fabric half so fair !

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,  
On its roof did float and flow,  
(This — all this — was in the olden  
Time long ago.)  
And every gentle air that dallied,  
In that sweet day,  
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,  
A winged odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,  
Through two luminous windows, saw  
Spifits moving musically,  
To a lute's well-tuned law,  
Round about a throne where, sitting  
(Porphyrogene !)  
In state his glory well befitting,  
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing  
Was the fair palace door,  
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,  
And sparkling ever more,  
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty  
Was but to sing,  
In voices of surpassing beauty,  
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,  
 Assailed the monarch's high estate.  
 (Ah, let us mourn! — for never morrow\*  
 Shall dawn upon him desolate!)  
 And round about his home the glory  
 That blushed and bloomed,  
 Is but a dim-remembered story  
 Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,  
 Through the red-litten windows see  
 Vast forms, that move fantastically  
 To a discordant melody,  
 While, like a ghastly rapid river,  
 Through the pale door  
 A hideous throng rush out forever  
 And laugh, — but smile no more.

*THE CONQUEROR WORM.*

Lo! 'tis a gala night  
 Within the lonesome latter years.  
 An angel throng, bewinged, bedight  
 In veils, and drowned in tears,  
 Sit in a theatre, to see  
 A play of hopes and fears,  
 While the orchestra breathes fitfully  
 The music of the spheres.  
 Mimes, in the form of God on high,  
 Mutter and mumble low,  
 And hither and thither fly, —  
 Mere puppets they, who come and go.

At bidding of vast formless things  
That shift the scenery to and fro,  
Flapping from out their Condor wings  
Invisible Woe!

That motley drama — oh, be sure  
It shall not be forgot!  
With its Phantom chased for evermore,  
By a crowd that seize it not,  
Through a circle that ever returneth in  
To the self-same spot,  
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,  
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout  
A crawling shape intrude!  
A blood-red thing that writhes from out  
The scenic solitude!  
It writhes! — it writhes! — with mortal pangs  
The mimes become its food,  
And the angels sob at vermin fangs  
In human gore imbrued.

Out — out are the lights — out all!  
And, over each quivering form,  
The curtain, a funeral pall,  
Comes down with the rush of a storm,  
And the angels, all pallid and wan,  
Uprising, unveiling, affirm  
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"  
And its hero the Conqueror Worm.

## TO ONE IN PARADISE.

THOU wast that all to me, love,  
 For which my soul did pine, —  
 A green isle in the sea, love,  
 A fountain and a shrine,  
 All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,  
 And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!  
 Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise  
 But to be overcast!  
 A voice from out the future cries,  
 "On! on!" But o'er the Past  
 (Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies  
 Mute, motionless, aghast!

For, alas! alas! with me  
 The light of Life is o'er!  
 "No more — no more — no more —"  
 (Such language holds the solemn sea  
 To the sands upon the shore)  
 Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,  
 Or the stricken eagle soar!

And all my days are trances,  
 And all my nightly dreams  
 Are where thy dark eye glances,  
 And where thy footstep gleams, —  
 In what ethereal dances,  
 By what eternal streams.

*TO F—S S. O—D.*

THOU wouldst be loved? Then let thy heart  
From its present pathway part not!  
Being everything which now thou art,  
Be nothing which thou art not.  
So with the world thy gentle ways,  
Thy grace, thy more than beauty,  
Shall be an endless theme of praise,  
And love—a simple duty.

*THE CITY IN THE SEA.*

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne  
In a strange city lying alone  
Far down within the dim West,  
Where the good and the bad and the worst  
and the best  
Have gone to their eternal rest.  
There shrines and palaces and towers  
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)  
Resemble nothing that is ours.  
Around, by lifting winds forgot,  
Resignedly beneath the sky  
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down  
On the long night-time of that town;

But light from out the lurid sea  
 Streams up the turrets silently —  
 Gleams up the pinnacles far and free —  
 Up domes — up spires — up kingly halls —  
 Up fanes — up Babylon-like walls —  
 Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers  
 Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers —  
 Up many and many a marvellous shrine  
 Whose wreathed friezes intertwine  
 The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly, beneath the sky  
 The melancholy waters lie.  
 So black the turrets and shadows there  
 That all seem pendulous in air ;  
 While, from a proud tower in the town,  
 Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves  
 Yawn level with the luminous waves,  
 But not the riches there that lie  
 In each idol's diamond eye, —  
 Not the gayly-jewelled dead  
 Tempt the waters from their bed ;  
 For no ripples curl, alas !  
 Along that wilderness of glass ;  
 No swellings tell that winds may be  
 Upon some far-off happier sea ;  
 No heavings hint that winds have been  
 On scenes less hideously serene.

But lo! a stir is in the air!  
 The wave — there is a movement there!  
 As if the towers had thrust aside,  
 In slightly sinking, the dull tide, —  
 As if their tops had feebly given  
 A void within the filmy Heaven.  
 The waves have now a redder glow,  
 The hours are breathing faint and low;  
 And when, amid no earthly moans,  
 Down, down that town shall settle hence,  
 Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,  
 Shall do it reverence.

## SILENCE.

**THERE** are some qualities — some incorporate things —  
 That have a double life, which thus is made  
 A type of that twin entity which springs  
 From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.  
 There is a twofold *Silence* — sea and shore —  
 Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,  
 Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn graces,  
 Some human memories, and tearful lore,  
 Render him terrorless: his name's "No More."  
 He is the corporate Silence: dread him not!  
 No power hath he of evil in himself;  
 But should some urgent fate (untimely lot!)  
 Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,  
 That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod  
 No foot of man), commend thyself to God!



## THE SLEEPER.

AT midnight, in the month of June,  
I stand beneath the mystic moon.  
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,  
Exhales from out her golden rim,  
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,  
Upon the quiet mountain-top,  
Steals drowsily and musically  
Into the universal valley.  
The ~~rosemary~~ nods upon the grave ;  
The lily lolls upon the wave ;  
Wrapping the fog about its breast,  
The ruin moulders into rest ;  
Looking like Lethe, see ! the lake  
A conscious slumber seems to take,  
And would not, for the world, awake.  
All Beauty sleeps ! And lo ! where lies  
(Her casement open to the skies)  
Irene, with her Destinies !  
Oh, lady bright ! can it be right —  
This window open to the night ? —  
The wanton airs, from the tree-top,  
Laughingly through the lattice drop, —  
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,  
Flit through thy chamber in and out,  
And wave the curtain canopy  
So fitfully — so fearfully —

Above the closed and fringed lid  
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,  
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,  
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall!  
Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear?  
Why and what art thou dreaming here?  
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,  
A wonder to these garden-trees!  
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress!  
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,  
And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,  
Which is enduring, so be deep!  
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!  
This chamber changed for one more holy,  
This bed for one more melancholy,  
I pray to God that she may lie  
Forever with unopened eye,  
While the dim sheeted ghosts go by!

My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,  
As it is lasting, so be deep!  
Soft may the worms about her creep!  
Far in the forest, dim and old,  
For her may some tall vault unfold, —  
Some vault that oft hath flung its black  
And winged panels fluttering back,  
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls  
Of her grand family funerals, —  
Some sepulchre, remote, alone,  
Against whose portal she hath thrown,

In childhood many an idle stone, —  
 Some tomb from out whose sounding door  
 She ne'er shall force an echo more,  
 Thrilling to think, poor child of sin!  
 It was the dead who groaned within.

*THE VALLEY OF UNREST.*

ONCE it smiled a silent dell  
 Where the people did not dwell ;  
 They had gone unto the wars,  
 Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,  
 Nightly, from their azure towers,  
 To keep watch above the flowers,  
 In the midst of which all day  
 The red sunlight lazily lay.  
*Now* each visitor shall confess  
 The sad valley's restlessness.  
 Nothing there is motionless, —  
 Nothing save the airs that brood  
 Over the magic solitude.  
 Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees  
 That palpitate like the chill seas  
 Around the misty Hebrides!  
 Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven  
 That rustle through the unquiet Heaven  
 Uneasily, from morn till even,  
 Over the violets there that lie  
 In myriad types of the human eye, —  
 Over the lilies there that wave  
 And weep above a nameless grave!

They wave : — from out their fragrant tops  
Eternal dewes come down in drops.  
They weep : — from off their delicate stems  
Perennial tears descend in gems.

*A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM.*

TAKE this kiss upon the brow !  
And, in parting from you now,  
Thus much let me avow :  
You are not wrong, who deem  
That my days have been a dream ;  
Yet if Hope has flown away  
In a night, or in a day,  
In a vision, or in none,        "  
Is it therefore the less *gone* ?  
• *All* that we see or seem  
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar  
Of a surf-tormented shore,  
And I hold within my hand  
Grains of the golden sand :  
How few ! yet how they creep  
Through my fingers to the deep,  
While I weep, — while I weep !  
Oh, God ! can I not grasp  
Them with a tighter clasp ?  
Oh, God ! can I not save  
*One* from the pitiless wave ?  
Is *all* that we see or seem  
But a dream within a dream ?

*DREAM-LAND.*

BY a route obscure and lonely,  
 Haunted by ill angels only,  
 Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,  
 On a black throne reigns upright,  
 I have reached these lands but newly,  
 From an ultimate dim Thule, —  
 From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,  
 Out of SPACE — out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,  
 And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods,  
 With forms that no man can discover  
 For the dews that drip all over;  
 Mountains toppling evermore  
 Into seas without a shore;  
 Seas that restlessly aspire,  
 Surging, into skies of fire;  
 Lakes that endlessly outspread  
 Their lone waters — lone and dead, —  
 Their still waters — still and chilly  
 With the snows of the lolling lily.

By the lakes that thus outspread  
 Their lone waters, lone and dread, —  
 Their sad waters, sad and chilly  
 With the snows of the lolling lily, —

By the mountains — near the river  
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever, —  
By the gray woods, — by the swamp  
Where the toad and the newt encamp, —  
By the dismal tarns and pools  
Where dwell the Ghouls, —  
By each spot the most unholy, —  
In each nook most melancholy, —  
There the traveller meets aghast  
Sheeted Memories of the Past, —  
Shrouded forms that start and sigh  
As they pass the wanderer by, —  
White-robed forms of friends long given  
In agony, to the Earth, — and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion  
'Tis a peaceful, soothing region, —  
For the spirit that walks in shadow  
'Tis — oh, 'tis an Eldorado!  
But the traveller, travelling through it,  
May not — dare not — openly view it;  
Never its mysteries are exposed  
To the weak human eye unclosed;  
So wills its King, who hath forbid  
The uplifting of the fringed lid;  
And thus the sad Soul that here passes  
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.  
By a route obscure and lonely,  
Haunted by ill angels only,  
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,  
On a black throne reigns upright,  
I have wandered home but newly  
From this ultimate dim Thule.

## TO ZANTE.

FAIR isle, that from the fairest of all flowers,  
 Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take!  
 How many memories of what radiant hours  
 At sight of thee and thine at once awake!  
 How many scenes of what departed bliss!  
 How many thoughts of what entombed hopes!  
 How many visions of a maiden that is  
 No more — no more upon thy verdant slopes!  
 No more! Ales, that magical sad sound  
 Transforming all! Thy charms shall please *no*  
*more, —*  
 Thy memory *no more!* Accursed ground  
 Henceforth I hold thy flower-enamelled shore,  
 Oh, hyacinthine isle! Oh, purple Zante!  
 “Isola d’oro! Fior di Levante!”

## EULALIE.

I DWELT alone  
 In a world of moan,  
 And my soul was a stagnant tide,  
 Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing  
 bride, —  
 Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my  
 smiling bride.

Ah, less — less bright  
The stars of the night  
• Than the eyes of the radiant girl;  
And never a flake  
That the vapor can make  
With the moon-tints of purple and pearl,  
Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded  
curl, —  
Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most  
humble and careless curl.

• Now Doubt — now Pain  
Come never again,  
For her soul gives me sigh for sigh, •  
And all day long  
Shines bright and strong,  
• Astarte within the sky,  
While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron  
eye, —  
While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet  
eye.

*ELDORADO.*

GAYLY bedight,  
• A gallant knight,  
In sunshine and in shadow,  
Had journeyed long,  
Singing a song,  
In search of Eldorado.



*ISRAFEL.*

But he grew old, —  
 This knight so bold, —  
 And o'er his heart a shadow  
 Fell as he found  
 No spot of ground  
 That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength  
 Failed him at length,  
 He met a pilgrim Shadow.  
 "Shadow," said he,  
 "Where can it be —  
 This land of Eldorado?"

"Over the Mountains  
 Of the Moon,  
 Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
 Ride, boldly ride,"  
 The Shade replied, —  
 "If you seek for Eldorado!"

*ISRAFEL.<sup>1</sup>*

IN Heaven a spirit doth dwell,  
 "Whose heartstrings are a lute."  
 None sing so wildly well  
 As the angel, Israfel,  
 And the giddy stars (so legends tell)  
 Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell  
 Of his voice, all mute.

<sup>1</sup> And the angel Israfel, whose heartstrings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures. — KORAN.

Tottering above,  
 In her highest noon,  
 The enamoured moon  
 Blushes with love, —  
 While, to listen, the red leven  
 (With the rapid Pleiades, even,  
 Which were seven,)  
 Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir  
 And the other listening things)  
 That Israfeli's fire  
 Is owing to that lyre  
 By which he sits and sings, —  
 The trembling living wire  
 Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,  
 Where deep thoughts are a duty —  
 Where Love's a grown-up God, —  
 Where the Houris glances are  
 Imbued with all the beauty  
 Which we worship in a star.

Therefore, thou art not wrong,  
 Israfeli, who despisest  
 An unimpassioned song:  
 To thee the laurels belong,  
 Best bard, because the wisest!  
 Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above  
 With thy burning measures suit

Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,  
 With the fervor of thy lute :  
 Well may the stars be mute !

Yes, Heaven is thine ; but this  
 Is a world of sweets and sour :  
 Our flowers are merely — flowers,  
 And the shadow of thy perfect bliss  
 Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell  
 Where Israfel  
 Hath dwelt, and he where I,  
 He might not sing so wildly well  
 A mortal melody, —  
 While a bolder note than this might swell  
 From my lyre within the sky.

## FOR ANNIE.

THANK Heaven ! the crisis --  
 The danger — is past,  
 And the lingering illness  
 Is over at last, —  
 And the fever called " Living "  
 Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know,  
 I am shorn of my strength,  
 And no muscle I move  
 As I lie at full length ;  
 But no matter ! — I feel  
 I am better at length.

And I rest so composed  
 Now, in my bed,  
 • That any beholder  
 Might fancy me dead, —  
 Might start at beholding me,  
 Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning —  
 The sighing and sobbing —  
 Are quieted now,  
 With that horrible throbbing  
 At heart : — ah, that horrible,  
 Horrible throbbing !

The sickness — the nausea —  
 The pitiless pain —  
 • Have ceased, with the fever  
 That maddened my brain, —  
 With the fever called “ Living ”  
 That burned in my brain.

And oh ! of all tortures,  
*That* torture the worst  
 Has abated — the terrible  
 Torture of thirst  
 For the naphthaline river  
 Of Passion accurst : —  
 I have drank of a water  
 That quenches all thirst : —

Of a water that flows,  
 With a lullaby sound,  
 From a spring but a very few

Feet under ground, —  
 From a cavern not very far  
 Down under ground.

And ah ! let it never  
 Be foolishly said  
 That my room it is gloomy,  
 And narrow my bed ;  
 For man never slept  
 In a different bed, —  
 And, to *sleep*, you must slumber,  
 In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit  
 Here blandly reposes,  
 Forgetting, or never  
 Regretting its roses, —  
 Its old agitations  
 Of myrtles and roses.

For now, while so quietly  
 Lying, it fancies  
 A holier odor  
 About it, of pansies, —  
 A rosemary odor  
 Commingled with pansies,  
 With rue and the beautiful  
 Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,  
 Bathing in many  
 A dream of the truth

And the beauty of Annie, —  
Drowned in a bath  
• Of the tresses of Annie. •

She tenderly kissed me,  
She fondly caressed,  
And then I fell gently  
To sleep on her breast, —  
Deeply to sleep  
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished  
She covered me warm,  
And she prayed to the angels  
To keep me from harm, —  
To the queen of the angels  
• To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,  
Now, in my bed,  
(Knowing her love)  
That you fancy me dead, —  
And I rest so contentedly,  
Now in my bed,  
(With her love at my breast)  
That you fancy me dead, —  
That you shudder to look at me,  
Thinking me dead.

But my heart it is brighter  
Than all of the many  
Stars in the sky,  
For it sparkles with Annie,  
H

*BRIDAL BALLAD.*

It glows with the light  
 Of the love of my Annie, —  
 With the thought of the light  
 Of the eyes of my Annie.

*TO F——.*

**BELOVED**, amid the earnest woes  
 That crowd around my earthly path, —  
 (Drear path, alas! where grows  
 Not even one lonely rose), —  
 My soul at least a solace hath  
 In dreams of thee, and therein knows  
 An Eden of bland repose.

And thus my memory is to me  
 Like some enchanted far-off isle  
 In some tumultuous sea, —  
 Some ocean throbbing far and free  
 With storms, — but where meanwhile  
 Serenest skies continually  
 Just o'er that one bright island smile.

*BRIDAL BALLAD.*

**THE** ring is on my hand,  
 And the wreath is on my brow;  
**Satins** and jewels grand  
 Are all at my command,  
 And I am happy now.

And my lord he loves me well ;  
But, when first he breathed his vow,  
I felt my bosom swell, —  
For the words rang as a knell,  
And the voice seemed *his* who fell  
In the battle down the dell,  
And who is happy now.

But he spoke to reassure me,  
And he kissed my pallid brow,  
While a reverie came o'er me,  
And to the churchyard bore me,  
And I sighed to him before me,  
Thinking him dead D'Elormie,  
" Oh, I am happy now ! "

And thus the words were spoken,  
And this the plighted vow,  
And, though my faith be broken,  
And, though my heart be broken,  
Behold the golden token  
That *proves* me happy now !

Would to God I could awaken !  
For I dream I know not how ;  
And my soul is sorely shaken  
Lest an evil step be taken, —  
Lest the dead who is forsaken  
May not be happy now.



## TO

I HEED not that my earthly lot  
 Hath — little of Earth in it, —  
 That years of love have been forgot  
 In the hatred of a minute :  
 I mourn not that the desolate  
 Are happier, sweet, than I ; '   
 But that *you* sorrow for *my* fate  
 Who am but a passer-by.

## SCENES FROM "POLITIAN."

AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA.

## I.

ROME — A Hall in a Palace. *Alessandra* and *Castiglione*.*Alessandra*. Thou art sad, *Castiglione*.*Castiglione*. Sad! — not I.

Oh, I'm the happiest, happiest man in Rome!

A few days more, thou knowest, my *Alessandra*,

Will make thee mine. Oh, I am very happy!

*Aless.* Methinks thou hast a singular way of  
 showing

Thy happiness! What ails thee, cousin of mine?

Why didst thou sigh so deeply?

*Cas.* Did I sigh?

I was not conscious of it. It is a fashion,  
A silly — a most silly fashion I have  
When I am *very* happy. Did I sigh? (*Sighing.*)

*Aless.* Thou didst. Thou art not well. Thou  
hast indulged

Too much of late, and I am vexed to see it.  
Late hours and wine, Castiglione, — these  
Will ruin thee! Thou art already altered, —  
Thy looks are haggard: nothing so wears away  
The constitution as late hours and wine.

*Cas. (musing).* Nothing, fair cousin, nothing, —  
• even deep sorrow, —

Wears it away like evil hours and wine.  
I will amend.

*Aless.* Do it! I would have thee drop  
Thy riotous company, too. Fellows low born  
Ill suit the like with old Di Brogho's heir  
And Alessandra's husband.

*Cas.* I will drop them.

*Aless.* Thou wilt, — thou must. Attend thou also  
more

To thy dress and equipage. They are over plain  
For thy lofty rank and fashion: much depends  
Upon appearances.

*Cas.* I'll see to it.

*Aless.* Then see to it! Pay more attention, sir,  
To a becoming carriage. Much thou wantest  
In dignity.

*Cas.* Much, much: oh, much I want,  
In proper dignity.

*Aless. (haughtily).* Thou mockest me, sir!

*Cas. (abstractedly).* Sweet, gentle Lalage!

*Aless.* Heard I aright?  
I speak to him, — he speaks of Lalage!  
Sir Count! (*places her hand on his shoulder*) what  
art thou dreaming?

He's not well! What ails thee, sir?

*Cas.* (*starting*). Cousin! fair cousin! — madam!  
I crave thy pardon. Indeed, I am not well!  
Your hand from off my shoulder, if you please.  
This air is most oppressive! Madam, the Duke!

(*Enter Di Broglio.*)

*Di Broglio.* My son, I've news for thee!  
Hey! what's the matter? (*observing Alessandra.*)  
I' the pouts? Kiss her, Castiglione! Kiss her,  
Yor dog! and make it up, I say, this minute!  
I've news for you both. Politian is expected  
Hourly in Rome, — Politian, Earl of Leicester!  
We'll have him at the wedding. 'Tis his first visit  
To the imperial city.

*Aless.* What! Politian  
Of Britain, Earl of Leicester?

*Di Brog.* The same, my love.  
We'll have him at the wedding. A man quite young  
In years, but gray in fame. I have not seen him,  
But Rumor speaks of him as of a prodigy, —  
Pre-eminent in arts and arms, and wealth,  
And high descent. We'll have him at the wedding.

*Aless.* I have heard much of this Politian.  
Gay, volatile, and giddy, — is he not?  
And little given to thinking.

*Di Brog.* Far from it, love.  
No branch, they say, of all philosophy  
So deep — abstruse — he has not mastered it.  
Learned as few are learned.

*Aless.* 'Tis very strange!

I have known men who have seen Politian,  
And sought his company. They speak of him  
As of one who entered madly into life,  
Drinking the cup of pleasure to the dregs.

*Cas.* Ridiculous! Now *I* have seen Politian,  
And know him well. Nor learned nor mirthful he:  
He is a dreamer, and a man shut out  
From common passions.

*Di Brog.* Children, we disagree.  
Let us go forth and taste the fragrant air  
Of the garden. Did I dream or did I hear  
Politian was a *melancholy* man?

## II.

ROME. — A Lady's apartment, with a window open and looking into a garden. Lalage, in deep mourning, reading at a table on which lie some books and a hand mirror. In the background Jacinta (a servant-maid) leans carelessly upon a chair.

*Lalage.* Jacinta! is it thou?

*Jacinta* (*pertly*). Yes, ma'am; I'm here.

*Lal.* I did not know, Jacinta, you were in waiting.  
Sit down, — let not my presence trouble you:  
Sit down, — for I am humble, most humble.

*Jac.* (*aside*). 'Tis time.

(*Jacinta seats herself in a sidelong manner upon the chair, resting her elbows upon the back, and regarding her mistress with a contemptuous look. Lalage continues to read.*)

*Lal.* "It in another climate, so he said,  
Bore a bright golden flower, but not i' this soil!"

*(Pauses, — turns over some leaves, and resumes.)*

"No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower;  
But Ocean, ever to refresh mankind,  
Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind."  
Oh, beautiful! — most beautiful! — how like  
To what my fevered soul doth dream of Heaven!  
Oh, happy land! (*pauses*) She died! — the maiden  
died!  
Oh, still more happy maiden, who couldst die  
Jacinta!

*(Jacinta returns no answer, and Lalage presently resumes.)*

Again! — a similar tale  
Told of a beauteous dame beyond the sea!  
Thus speaketh one Ferdinand, in the words of the  
play:  
"She died full young!" One Bossola answers him:  
"I think not so: her infelicity  
Seemed to have years too many." Ah, luckless lady!  
Jacinta! (*Still no answer.*)

Here's a far sterner story:

But like — oh, very like, in its despair —  
To that Egyptian queen, winning so easily  
A thousand hearts, — losing at length her own.  
She died. Thus endeth the history: and her maids  
Lean over her and weep. Two gentle maids,  
With gentle names — Eiros and Charmion!  
Rainbow and dove! — Jacinta!

*Jac. (pettishly).* Madam, what is it?

*Lal.* Wilt thou, my good Jacinta, be so kind  
As go down in the library and bring me  
The Holy Evangelists?

*Jac.* Pshaw! (*Exit.*)

*Lal.* If there be balm  
For the wounded spirit in Gilead, it is there:  
Dew in the night-time of my bitter trouble  
Will there be found: "dew sweeter far than that  
Which hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill."  
(*Re-enter Jacinta, and throws a volume on the table.*)

*Jac.* There, ma'am, 's the book! (*Aside.*) Indeed, she's very troublesome.

*Lal.* (*astonished*). What didst thou say, Jacinta?  
Have I done aught  
To grieve thee or to vex thee? I am sorry;  
For thou hast served me long, and ever been  
Trustworthy and respectful. (*Resumes her reading*)

*Jac.* (*aside*). I can't believe  
She has any more jewels! No, no! She gave me  
all!

*Lal.* What didst thou say, Jacinta? Now I be-  
think me,  
Thou hast not spoken lately of thy wedding.  
How fares good Ugo? — and when is it to be?  
Can I do aught? Is there no further aid  
Thou needest, Jacinta?

*Jac.* (*aside*). Is there no further aid!  
That's meant for me. — I'm sure, madam, you need  
not

Be always throwing those jewels in my teeth.

*Lal.* Jewels, Jacinta! Now, indeed, Jacinta,  
I thought not of the jewels.

*Jac.* Oh, perhaps not!  
But then I might have sworn it. After all,  
There's Ugo says the ring is only paste,

For he's sure the Count Castiglione never  
 Would have given a real diamond to such as you :  
 And at the best I'm certain, madam, you cannot  
 Have use for jewels *now*. But I might have sworn it.

(*Exit.*)

(*Lalage bursts into tears, and leans her head  
 upon the table. After a short pause raises it.*)

*Lal.* Poor Lalage ! And is it come to this !  
 Thy servant-maid ! But courage ! — 'tis but a viper  
 Whom thou hast cherished to sting thee to the soul !

(*Taking up the mirror.*)

Ha ! here at least's a friend ! — too much a friend  
 In earlier days ! — a friend will not deceive me.  
 Fair mirror and true, now tell me (for thou canst)  
 A tale — a pretty tale — and heed thou not,  
 Though it be rife with woe. It answers me :  
 It speaks of sunken eyes, and wasted cheeks,  
 And Beauty long deceased ; — remembers me  
 Of Joy departed ; — Hope, the Seraph Hope,  
 Inurned and intomb'd ! Now, in a tone  
 Low, sad, and solemn, but most audible,  
 Whispers of early grave untimely yawning  
 For ruined maid. Fair mirror and true ! thou liest  
 not !

*Thou* hast no end to gain, — no heart to break !

Castiglione lied, who said he loved ! —

*Thou* true, — he false ! — false ! — false !

(*While she speaks, a monk enters her apartment,  
 and approaches unobserved.*)

*Monk.* Refuge thou hast,  
 Sweet daughter, in Heaven. Think of eternal things !  
 Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray !

*Lal.* (*arising hurriedly*). I cannot pray! My soul is at war with God!

The frightful sounds of merriment below  
Disturb my senses! Go!—I cannot pray!  
The sweet airs from the garden worry me!  
Thy presence grieves me! Go! Thy priestly raiment  
Fills me with dread! Thy ebony crucifix  
With horror and awe!

*Monk.* Think of thy precious soul!

*Lal.* Think of my early days! Think of my father  
And mother in Heaven! Think of our quiet home,  
And the fivulet that ran before the door!  
Think of my little sisters!—think of them!  
And think of me! Think of my trusting love  
And confidence!—his vows—my ruin—think—  
think

Of my unspeakable misery!—Begone!  
Yet stay! yet stay!—what was't thou saidst of prayer  
And penitence? Didst thou not speak of faith,  
And vows before the throne?

*Monk.* I did.

*Lal.* 'Tis well.

There *is* a vow were fitting should be made, —  
A sacred vow, imperative and urgent, —  
A solemn vow!

*Monk.* Daughter, this zeal is well!

*Lal.* Father, this zeal is anything but well!  
Hast thou a crucifix fit for this thing?  
A crucifix whereon to register  
This sacred vow? (*He hands her his own.*)  
Not that! Oh, no!—no!—no! (*Shuddering.*)  
Not that! Not that! I tell thee, holy man,



Thy raiment and thy ebony cross affright me!  
 Stand back! I have a crucifix myself!  
*I have a crucifix! Methinks 'twere fitting*  
 The deed — the vow — the symbol of the deed —  
 And the deed's register — should tally, father!  
*(Draws a cross-handled dagger, and raises it  
 on high.)*

Behold the cross wherewith a vow like mine  
 Is written in Heaven!

*Monk.* Thy words are madness, daughter,  
 And speak a purpose unholy. Thy lips are livid, —  
 Thine eyes are wild! Tempt not the wrath divine!  
 Pause ere too late! Oh, be not — be not rash!  
 Swear not the oath, — oh, swear it not!

*Lal.* 'Tis sworn!

### III.

An apartment in a Palace. Politian and Baldazzar.

*Baldazzar.* Arouse thee now, Politian!  
 Thou must not — nay indeed, indeed, thou shalt not  
 Give way unto these humors. Be thyself!  
 Shake off the idle fancies that beset thee,  
 And live, for now thou diest!

*Politian.* Not so, Baldazzar!  
*Surely I live.*

*Bal.* Politian, it doth grieve me  
 To see thee thus.

*Pol.* Baldazzar, it doth grieve me  
 To give thee cause for grief, my honored friend.  
 Command me, sir! What wouldst thou have me do?  
 At thy behest I will shake off that nature  
 Which from my forefathers I did inherit, —

Which with my mother's milk I did imbibe, —  
 And be no more Politian, but some other.  
 Command me, sir!

*Bal.* To the field, then! — to the field!  
 To the senate or the field.

*Pol.* Alas! alas!  
 There is an imp would follow me even there!  
 There is an imp *hath* followed me even there!  
 There is — what voice was that?

*Bal.* I heard it not.  
 I heard not any voice except thine own,  
 And the echo of thine own.

*Pol.* Then I but dreamed.

*Bal.* Give not thy soul to dreams: the camp —  
 the court —  
 Befit thee. Fame awaits thee! Glory calls!  
 And her the trumpet-tongued thou wilt not hear,  
 In hearkening to imaginary sounds  
 And phantom voices.

*Pol.* It *is* a phantom voice!  
 Didst thou not hear it *then*?

*Bal.* I heard it not.

*Pol.* Thou heardst it not! Baldazzar, speak no  
 more  
 To me, Politian, of thy camps and courts.  
 Oh, I am sick, sick, sick, even unto death,  
 Of the hollow and high-sounding vanities  
 Of the populous Earth! Bear with me yet awhile!  
 We have been boys together, — school-fellows, —  
 And now are friends, — yet shall not be so long:  
 For in the eternal city thou shalt do me  
 A kind and gentle office, and a Power —

A Power august, benignant, and supreme —  
 Shall then absolve thee of all further duties  
 Unto thy friend.

*Bal.* Thou speakest a fearful riddle  
 I *will* not understand.

*Pol.* Yet now as Fate  
 Approaches, and the Hours are breathing low,  
 The sands of Time are changed to golden grains.  
 And dazzle me, Baldazzar. Alas! alas!  
 I *cannot* die, having within my heart  
 So keen a relish for the beautiful  
 As hath been kindled within it. Methinks the air  
 Is balmier now than it was wont to be.  
 Rich melodies are floating in the winds;  
 A rarer loveliness bedecks the earth;  
 And with a holier lustre the quiet moon  
 Sitteth in heaven. Hist! hist! thou canst not say  
 Thou hearest not *now*, Baldazzar!

*Bal.* Indeed, I hear not.

*Pol.* Not hear it? Listen, now! — listen! — the  
 faintest sound,  
 And yet the sweetest that ear ever heard!  
 A lady's voice! — and sorrow in the tone!  
 Baldazzar, it oppresses me like a spell!  
 Again! — again! — how solemnly it falls  
 Into my heart of hearts! That eloquent voice  
 Surely I never heard: yet it were well  
 Had I *but* heard it, with its thrilling tones,  
 In earlier days?

*Bal.* I myself hear it now.  
 Be still! The voice, if I mistake not greatly,  
 Proceeds from yonder lattice, — which you may see

Very plainly through the window. It belongs,  
Does it not, unto this palace of the Duke?  
The singer is undoubtedly beneath  
The roof of his Excellency; and perhaps  
Is even that Alessandra of whom he spake  
As the betrothed of Castiglione,  
His son and heir.

*Pol.* Be still! It comes again!

*Voice* "And is thy heart so strong  
(*very faintly*). As for to leave me thus,  
Who hath loved thee so long,  
• In wealth and woe among?  
And is thy heart so strong  
As for to leave me thus?

Say nay! — say nay!"

*Bal.* The song is English, and I oft have heard it  
In merry England, — never so plaintively:  
Hist! hist! — it comes again!

*Voice* "Is it so strong  
(*more loudly*). As for to leave me thus,  
Who hath loved thee so long,  
In wealth and woe among?  
And is thy heart so strong  
As for to leave me thus?

Say nay! — say nay!"

*Bal.* 'Tis hushed, and all is still!

*Pol.* All *is not* still.

*Bal.* Let us go down.

*Pol.* Go down, Baldazzar, go!

*Bal.* The hour is growing late. The Duke awaits

us:

Thy presence is expected in the hall

Below. What ails thee, Earl Politian?

*Voice* "Who hath loved thee so long,  
(*distinctly*). In wealth and woe among  
And is thy heart so strong?  
Say nay! — say nay!"

*Bal.* Let us descend! — 'tis time! Politian, give  
These fancies to the wind. Remember, pray,  
Your bearing lately savored much of rudeness  
Unto the Duke. Arouse thee! and remember!

*Pol.* Remember? I do. Lead on! I *do* re-  
member. (*Going.*)

Let us descend. Believe me, I would give —  
Freely would give — the broad lands of my earldom  
To look upon the face hidden by yon lattice.  
"To gaze upon that veiled face, and hear  
Once more that silent tongue."

*Bal.* Let me beg you, sir,  
Descend with me: the Duke may be offended.  
Let us go down, I pray you.

*Voice (loudly).* Say nay! — Say nay!

*Pol. (aside).* 'Tis strange! — 'tis very strange!  
Methought the voice  
Chimed in with my desires, and bade me stay.

(*Approaching the window.*)

Sweet voice! I heed thee, and will surely stay.  
Now be this Fancy, by Heaven, or be it Fate,  
Still will I not descend. Baldazzar, make  
Apology unto the Duke for me:  
I go not down to-night.

*Bal.* Your lordship's pleasure  
Shall be attended to. Good-night, Politian.

*Pol.* Good-night, my friend, good-night.

IV.

The gardens of a Palace — Moonlight. Lalage and Politian.

*Lalage.* And dost thou speak of love  
To *me*, Politian? Dost thou speak of love  
To Lalage? Ah, woe! — ah, woe is me!  
This mockery is most cruel! — most cruel, indeed!

*Politian.* Weep not! Oh, sob not thus! Thy  
bitter tears

Will madden me. Oh, mourn not, Lalage!  
Be comforted! I know — I know it all, —  
And *still* I speak of love. Look at me, brightest,  
And beautiful Lalage! Turn here thine eyes!  
Thou askest me if I could speak of love,  
Knowing what I know, and seeing what I have  
seen.

Thou askest me that; and thus I answer thee, —  
Thus on my bended knee I answer thee.

(*Kneeling.*)

Sweet Lalage, *I love thee — love thee — love thee;*  
Through good and ill — through weal and woe — *I*  
*love thee.*

Not mother, with her first-born on her knee,  
Thrills with intenser love than I for thee.  
Not on God's altar, in any time or clime,  
Burned there a holier fire than burneth now  
Within my spirit for *thee*. And do I love?

(*Arising.*)

Even for thy woes I love thee! — even for thy woes! —  
Thy beauty and thy woes.

*Lal.* Alas, proud Earl,  
And dost forget thyself, remembering me!

How, in thy father's halls, among the maidens  
 Pure and reproachless of thy princely line,  
 Could the dishonored Lalage abide?  
 Thy wife, and with a tainted memory?  
 My seared and blighted name, how would it tally  
 With the ancestral honors of thy house,  
 And with thy glory?

*Pol.* Speak not to me of glory!  
 I hate — I loathe the name! I do abhor  
 The unsatisfactory and ideal thing.  
 Art thou not Lalage and I Politian?  
 Do I not love? Art thou not beautiful?  
 What need we more? Ha! glory! Now speak not  
 • of it!

By all I hold most sacred and most solemn, —  
 By all my wishes now, — my fears hereafter, —  
 By all I scorn on earth and hope in heaven, —  
 There is no deed I would more glory in  
 Than in thy cause to scoff at this same glory,  
 And trample it under foot. What matters it —  
 What matters it, my fairest and my best,  
 That we go down unhonored and forgotten  
 Into the dust, — so we descend together?  
 Descend together, and then — and then, perchance, —

*Lal.* Why dost thou pause, Politian?

*Pol.* And then, perchance,  
 Arise together, Lalage, and roam  
 The starry and quiet dwellings of the blest,  
 And still —

*Lal.* Why dost thou pause, Politian?

*Pol.* And still together — together.

*Lal.* Now, Earl of Leicester,

Thou *lovest* me! And in my heart of hearts  
I feel thou *lovest* me truly.

*Pol.* Oh, Lalage! (*Throwing himself upon his  
knee.*) And *lovest* thou *me*?

*Lal.* Hush! hush! Within the gloom  
Of yonder trees methought a figure passed, —  
A spectral figure, solemn, and slow, and noiseless, —  
Like the grim shadow Conscience, solemn and noise-  
less. (*Walks across and returns.*)

I was mistaken: 'twas but a giant bough  
Stirred by the autumn wind. Politian!

*Pol.* My Lalage — my love! why art thou moved?  
Why dost thou turn so pale? Not Conscience self,  
Far less a shadow, which thou 'likenest to it,  
Should shake the firm spirit thus. But the night  
wind

Is chilly, — and these melancholy boughs  
Throw over all things a gloom.

*Lal.* Politian!

Thou speakest to me of love. Knowest thou the land  
With which all tongues are busy, — a land new  
found, —

Miraculously found by one of Genoa, —  
A thousand leagues within the golden west? —  
A fairy land of flowers, and fruit, and sunshine,  
And crystal lakes, and over-arching forests,  
And mountains, around whose towering summits the  
winds •

Of Heaven untrammelled flow, — which air to breathe  
Is Happiness now, and will be Freedom hereafter,  
In days that are to come?

*Pol.* Oh, wilt thou — wilt thou



Fly to that Paradise? My Lalage, wilt thou  
 Fly thither with me? There Care shall be forgotten,  
 And Sorrow shall be no more, and Eros be all.  
 And life shall then be mine; for I will live  
 For thee, and in thine eyes; and thou shalt be  
 No more a mourner, but the radiant Joys  
 Shall wait upon thee, and the angel Hope  
 Attend thee ever; and I will kneel to thee  
 And worship thee, and call thee my beloved, —  
 My own, my beautiful, my love, my wife,  
 My all! Oh, wilt thou — wilt thou, Lalage,  
 Fly thither with me?

*Lal.* A deed is to be done:

Castiglione lives!

*Pol.* And he shall die! (*Exit.*)

*Lal.* (*after a pause*). And — he — shall — die! —  
 Alas! Castiglione die! Who spoke the words?  
 Where am I? What was it he said? Politian!  
 Thou *art* not gone! — thou art not *gone*, Politian.  
 I *feel* thou art not gone, — yet dare not look,  
 Lest I behold thee not! Thou *couldst* not go  
 With those words upon thy lips! Oh, speak to me,  
 And let me hear thy voice! — one word — one word  
 To say thou art not gone! — one little sentence  
 To say how thou dost scorn — how thou dost hate  
 My womanly weakness! Ha! ha! thou *art* not  
 gone!

Oh, speak to me! I *knew* thou wouldst not go!  
 I knew thou wouldst not, couldst not, *durst* not go!  
 Villain, thou *art* not gone! Thou mockest me!  
 And thus I clutch thee — thus! — He is gone! —  
 he is gone! —

Gone, — gone! Where am I? 'Tis well! — 'tis very well!

So that the blade be keen — the blow be sure!  
'Tis well! — 'tis *very* well! Alas! alas!

V.

The suburbs. Politian alone.

*Politian.* This weakness grows upon me. I am faint,  
And much I fear me ill. It will not do  
To die ere I have lived! Stay — stay thy hand,  
Oh, Azrael, yet a while! Prince of the Powers  
Of Darkness and the Tomb, oh pity me!  
Oh, pity me! Let me not perish now  
In the budding of my Paradisal Hope!  
Give me to live yet — yet a little while.  
'Tis I who pray for life! — I who so late  
Demanded but to die! What sayeth the Count?

*Enter Baldazzar.*

*Baldazzar.* That knowing no cause of quarrel or  
feud  
Between the Earl Politian and himself,  
He doth decline your cartel.

*Pol.* *What* didst thou say?  
What answer was it you brought me, good Baldaz-  
zar?

With what excessive fragrance the zephyr comes  
Laden from yonder bowers! A fairer day,  
Or one more worthy Italy, methinks  
No mortal eyes have seen! *What* said the Count?

*Bal.* That he, Castiglione, not being aware  
Of any feud existing, or any cause

Of quarrel between your lordship and himself,  
Cannot accept the challenge.

*Pol.* It is most true!

All this is very true. When saw you, sir, —  
When saw you now, Baldazzar, in the frigid  
Ungemal Britain, which we left so lately,  
A heaven so calm as this? — so utterly free  
From the evil taint of clouds? And he did say?

*Bal.* No more, my lord, than I have told you,  
sir.

The Count Castiglione will not fight,  
Having no cause for quarrel.

*Pol.* Now this is true:

All very true. Thou art my friend, Baldazzar,  
And I have not forgotten it. Thou'lt do me  
A piece of service. Wilt thou go back and say  
Unto this man, that I, the Earl of Leicester,  
Hold him a villain? Thus much, I prythee, say  
Unto the Count. It is exceeding just  
He should have cause for quarrel.

*Bal.* My lord! — My friend! —

*Pol. (aside).* 'Tis he! He comes himself!

*(Aloud).* Thou reasonest well.

I know what thou wouldst say, — not send the mes-  
sage.

Well, I will think of it; I will not send it!

Now, prithee, leave me. Hither doth come a person  
With whom affairs of a most private nature  
I would adjust.

*Bal.* I go. To-morrow we meet,  
Do we not, at the Vatican?

*Pol.* At the Vatican.

*(Exit Bal).*

*(Enter Castiglione.)*

*Castiglione.* The Earl of Leicester here?

*Pol.* I am the Earl of Leicester, and thou seest,  
Dost thou not, that I am here.

*Cas.* My lord, some strange —  
Some singular mistake — misunderstanding —  
Hath without doubt, arisen. Thou hast been urged  
Thereby, in heat of anger, to address  
Some words most unaccountable, in writing,  
To me, Castiglione, — the bearer being  
Baldazzar, Duke of Surrey. I am aware  
Of nothing, which might warrant thee in this thing,  
Having given thee no offence. Ha! am I right?  
'Twas a mistake, undoubtedly. We all  
Do err at times.

*Pol.* Draw, villain, and prate no more!

*Cas.* Ha! draw! and villain!  
Have at thee, then, at once, proud Earl! *(Draws.)*

*Pol. (drawing).* Thus to the expiatory tomb,  
Untimely sepulchre, I do devote thee,  
In the name of Lalage!

*Cas. (letting fall his sword, and recoiling to the ex-  
tremity of the stage.)*  
Of Lalage!

Hold off — thy sacred hand! Avaunt, I say!  
Avaunt! I will not fight thee! Indeed, I dare not.

*Pol.* Thou wilt not fight with me, didst say, Sir  
Count?

Shall I be baffled thus? Now, this is well!  
Didst say thou *darest* not? Ha!

*Cas.* I dare not! — dare not!  
Hold off thy hand! With that beloved name

So fresh upon thy lips I will not fight thee !  
I cannot ! — dare not !

*Pol.* Now, by my halidom,  
I do believe thee ! Coward, I do believe thee !

*Cas.* Ha ! — coward ! This may not be !  
*(Clutches his sword, and staggers toward Politian,  
but his purpose is changed before reaching him,  
and he falls upon his knee at the feet of the  
Earl.)*

Alas ! alas ! my lord, it is — it is — most true !  
In such a cause I am the veriest coward. Oh, pity me !

*Pol.* *(greatly softened).* Alas ! I do ! Indeed, I  
pity thee !

*Cas.* And Lalage —

*Pol.* Scoundrel ! Arise, and die !

*Cas.* It needeth not be — thus — thus — oh, let  
me die

Thus on my bended knee. It were most fitting  
That in this deep humiliation I perish.  
For in the fight I will not raise a hand  
Against thee, Earl of Leicester. Strike thou home !  
*(Baring his bosom.)*

Here is no let or hinderance to thy weapon !  
Strike home ! I *will* not fight thee !

*Pol.* Now s' Death and Hell !

Am I not — am I not sorely — grievously tempted  
To take thee at thy word ? But mark me, sir :  
Think not to fly me thus ! Do thou prepare  
For public insult in the streets, before  
The eyes of the citizens. I'll follow thee, —  
Like an avenging spirit I'll follow thee  
Even unto death. Before those whom thou lovest —

Before all Rome I'll taunt thee, villain!—I'll taunt thee,

Dost hear? with *cowardice*! Thou *wilt not* fight me?

Thou liest! Thou *shalt*! (Exit.)

*Cas.* Now, this indeed is just!

Most righteous, and most just, avenging Heaven.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.<sup>1</sup>

## SONNET.— TO SCIENCE.

SCIENCE! True daughter of Old Time thou art!  
 Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.  
 Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,  
 Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?  
 How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,  
 Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering  
 To seek for treasure in the jeweled skies,  
 Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?  
 Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?  
 And driven the Hamadryad from the wood  
 To seek a shelter in some happier star?  
 Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,  
 The Elfin from the green grass, and from me  
 The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

<sup>1</sup> Private reasons—some of which have reference to the sin of plagiarism, and others to the date of Tennyson's first poems—have induced me, after some hesitation, to republish these, the crude compositions of my earliest boyhood. They are printed *verbatim*, without alteration from the original edition, the date of which is too remote to be judiciously acknowledged.— E. A. P.

AL AARAAF.<sup>1</sup>

## PART I.

OH, nothing earthly save the ray  
 (Thrown back from flowers) of Beauty's eye,  
 As in those gardens where the day  
 Springs from the gems of Circassy —  
 Oh, nothing earthly save the thrill  
 Of melody in woodland rill —  
 Or (music of the passion-hearted)  
 Joy's voice so peacefully departed  
 That like the murmur in the shell,  
 Its echo dwelleth and will dwell —  
 Oh, nothing of the dross of ours —  
 Yet all the Beauty — all the flowers  
 That list our Love, and deck our bowers —  
 Adorn yon world afar, afar,  
 The wandering star.

'Twas a sweet time for Nesace — for there  
 Her world lay lolling on the golden air,  
 Near four bright suns — a temporary rest —  
 An oasis in desert of the blest.

<sup>1</sup> A star was discovered by Tycho Brahe, which appeared suddenly in the heavens; attained, in a few days, a brilliancy surpassing that of Jupiter; then as suddenly disappeared, and has never been seen since.



Away — away — 'mid seas of rays that roll  
 Empyrean splendor o'er the unchained soul —  
 The soul that scarce (the billows are so dense)  
 Can struggle to its destin'd eminence —  
 To distant spheres, from time to time, she rode,  
 And late to ours, the favor'd one of God,  
 But now the ruler of an anchor'd realm,  
 She throws aside the sceptre — leaves the helm,  
 And, amid incense and high spiritual hymns,  
 Laves in quadruple light her angel limbs.

Now happiest, loveliest in yon lovely Earth,  
 Whence sprang the " Idea of Beauty " into birth,  
 (Falling in wreaths thro' many a startled star,  
 Like woman's hair 'mid pearls, until, afar,  
 It lit on hills Achaian, and there dwelt)  
 She look'd into Infinity — and knelt.  
 Rich clouds, for canopies, about her curled —  
 Fit emblems of the model of her world —  
 Seen but in beauty — not impeding sight  
 Of other beauty glittering thro' the light —  
 A wreath that twined each starry form around,  
 And all the opal'd air in color bound.

All hurriedly she knelt upon a bed  
 Of flowers: of lilies such as rear'd the head  
 On the fair Capo Deucato,<sup>1</sup> and sprang  
 So eagerly around about to hang  
 Upon the flying footsteps of — deep pride —  
 Of her who lov'd a mortal — and so died.<sup>2</sup>  
 The Sephalica, budding with young bees,  
 Uprear'd its purple stem around her knees:

<sup>1</sup> On Santa Maura — olim Deucadia.

<sup>2</sup> Sappho.

And gemmy flower, of Trebizond misnam'd<sup>1</sup> —  
 Inmate of highest stars, where erst it sham'd  
 All other loveliness: its honied dew  
 (The fabled nectar that the heathen knew)  
 Deliriously sweet, was dropp'd from Heaven,  
 And fell on gardens of the unforgiven  
 In Trebizond — and on a sunny flower  
 So like its own above, that to this hour  
 It still remaineth, torturing the bee  
 With madness, and unwonted reverie:  
 In Heaven, and all its environs, the leaf  
 And blossom of the fairy plant, in grief  
 Disconsolate linger, — grief that hangs her head,  
 Repenting follies that full long have fled,  
 Heaving her white breast to the balmy air,  
 Like guilty beauty, chasten'd, and more fair:  
 Nyctanthes too, as sacred as the light  
 She fears to perfume, perfuming the night:  
 And Clytia<sup>2</sup> pondering between many a sun,  
 While pettish tears adown her petals run:  
 And that aspiring flower that sprang on Earth  
 And died, ere scarce exalted into birth,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This flower is much noticed by Lewenhoeck and Tournefort. The bee, feeding upon its blossom, becomes intoxicated.

<sup>2</sup> Clytia, — the Chrysanthemum Peruvianum, or, to employ a better known term, the Turnsol, — which turns continually toward the sun, covers itself, like Peru, the country from which it comes, with dewy clouds which cool and refresh its flowers during the most violent heat of the day. — B DE ST. PIERRE.

<sup>3</sup> There is cultivated in the king's garden at Paris, a species of serpentine aloes without prickles, whose large and beautiful flower exhales a strong odor of the vanilla, during the time of its expansion, which is very short. It does not blow till toward the month of July. You then perceive it gradually open its petals, expand them, fade, and die.

Bursting its odorous heart in spirit to wing  
 Its way to Heaven, from garden of a king:  
 And Valesnerian lotus<sup>1</sup> thither flown  
 From struggling with the waters of the Rhone:  
 And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante!<sup>2</sup>  
 Isola d'oro! Fior di Levante!  
 And the Nelumbo bud<sup>3</sup> that floats forever  
 With Indian Cupid down the holy river —  
 Fair flowers, and fairy! to whose care is given  
 To bear the Goddess' song in odors up to Heaven:<sup>4</sup>

“ Spirit! that dwellest where,

In the deep sky,

The terrible and fair,

In beauty vie!

Beyond the line of blue —

The boundary of the star

Which turneth at the view

Of thy barrier and thy bar —

Of the barrier overgone

By the comets who were cast

From their pride and from their throne,

To be drudges till the last —

To be carriers of fire

(The red fire of their heart)

With speed that may not tire

<sup>1</sup> There is found, in the Rhone, a beautiful lily of the Valisnerian kind. Its stem will stretch to the length of three or four feet, thus preserving its head above water in the swellings of the river.

<sup>2</sup> The hyacinth.

<sup>3</sup> It is a fiction of the Indians, that Cupid was first seen floating in one of these down the river Ganges, and that he still loves the cradle of his childhood.

<sup>4</sup> And golden vials, full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. — REV. ST. JOHN.

And with pain that shall not part —  
 Who livest — *that* we know —  
 In Eternity — we feel — -  
 But the shadow of whose brow  
 What spirit shall reveal?  
 Thro' the beings whom thy Nesace,  
 Thy messenger hath known  
 Have dream'd for thy Infinity  
 A model of their own.<sup>1</sup>  
 Thy will is done, oh God!  
 The star hath ridden high  
 Thro' many a tempest, but she rode  
 Beneath thy burning eye ;  
 And here, in thought, to thee —  
 In thought that can alone  
 Ascend thy empire, and so be

<sup>1</sup> The Humanitarians held that God was to be understood as having really a human form. — *Vide Clarke's Sermons*, vol. 1 p. 26, fol. edit.

The drift of Milton's argument leads him to employ language which would appear, at first sight, to verge upon their doctrine, but it will be seen immediately that he guards himself against the charge of having adopted one of the most ignorant errors of the dark ages of the church. — *Dr Sumner's Notes on Milton's Christian Doctrine*

This opinion, in spite of many testimonies to the contrary, could never have been very general. Andeus, a Syrian of Mesopotamia, was condemned for the opinion, as heretical. He lived in the beginning of the fourth century. His disciples were called Anthropomorphites. — *Vide Du Pin*.

Among Milton's minor poems are these lines: —

Dicite sacrorum præsidēs nemorum Dææ,  
 Quis ille primus cujus ex imagine  
 Natura solers finxit humanum genus?  
 Eternus, incorruptus, æquævus polo,  
 Unusque et universus exemplar Dei.

And afterwards: —

Non cui profundum Cæcitas lumen dedit  
 Diræus augur vidit hunc alto sinu, etc.

A partner of thy throne —  
 By winged Fantasy,<sup>1</sup>  
 My embassy is given,  
 Till secrecy shall knowledge be  
 In the environs of Heaven.”

She ceased: and buried then her burning cheek  
 Abash'd amid the lilies there, to seek  
 A shelter from the fervor of His eye;  
 For the stars trembled at the Deity.  
 She stirr'd not — breath'd not — for a voice was  
 there

How solemnly pervading the calm air!  
 A sound of silence on the startled ear  
 Which dreamy poets name “the music of the sphere.”  
 Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call  
 “Silence,” — which is the merest word of all.  
 All Nature speaks, and ev'n ideal things  
 Flap shadowy sounds from visionary wings:  
 But ah! why not so when, thus, in realms on high  
 The eternal voice of God is passing by,  
 And the red winds are withering in the sky!

“What tho' in worlds which sightless<sup>2</sup> cycles run,  
 Link'd to a little system, and one sun —  
 Where all my love is folly, and the crowd  
 Still think my terrors but the thunder-cloud,  
 The storm, the earthquake, and the ocean wrath  
 (Ah! will they cross me in my angrier path?)

<sup>1</sup> Seltsamen Tochter Jovis  
 Seinem Schosskinde  
 Der Phantasie. — GÖTTE.

<sup>2</sup> Sightless — too small to be seen. — LUGGE.

What tho' in worlds which own a single sun  
 The sands of Time grow dimmer as they run,  
 Yet thine is my resplendency, so given  
 To bear my secrets thro' the upper Heaven,  
 Leave tenantless thy crystal home, and fly,  
 With all thy train, athwart the moony sky —  
 Apart — like fireflies <sup>1</sup> in Sicilian night,  
 And wing to other worlds another light!  
 Divulge the secrets of thy embassy  
 To the proud orbs that twinkle — and so be  
 To ev'ry heart a barrier and a ban  
 Lest the stars totter in the guilt of man!"

Up rose the maiden in the yellow night,  
 The single-mooned eve! — on Earth we plight  
 Our faith to one love — and one moon adore —  
 The birthplace of young Beauty had no more.  
 As sprang that yellow star from downy hours,  
 Up rose the maiden from her shrine of flowers,  
 And bent o'er sheeny mountain and dim plain  
 Her way, but left not yet her Therasæan<sup>2</sup> reign.

## PART II.

High on a mountain of enamel'd head —  
 Such as the drowsy shepherd on his bed  
 Of giant pasturage lying at his ease,  
 Raising his heavy eyelid, starts and sees

<sup>1</sup> I have often noticed a peculiar movement of the fireflies. They will collect in a body and fly off, from a common centre, into innumerable radii

<sup>2</sup> Therasæa, or Theræsea, the island mentioned by Seneca, which in a moment arose from the sea to the eyes of astonished mariners.

With many a mutter'd "hope to be forgiven"  
 What time the moon is quadrated in Heaven —  
 Of rosy herd, that towering far away  
 Into the sunlit ether, caught the ray  
 Of sunken suns at eve — at noon of night,  
 While the moon danc'd with the fair stranger  
 light —

Uprear'd upon such height arose a pile  
 Of gorgeous columns on th' unburthen'd air,  
 Flashing from Parian marble that twin smile  
 Far down upon the wave that sparkled there,  
 And nursled the young mountain in its lair.  
 Of molten stars <sup>1</sup> their pavement, such as fall  
 Thro' the ebon air besilvering the pall  
 Of their own dissolution, while they die —  
 Adorning then the dwellings of the sky.  
 A dome, by linked light from Heaven let down,  
 Sat gently on these columns as a crown —  
 A window of one circular diamond, there,  
 Look'd out above into the purple air,  
 And rays from God shot down that meteor chain  
 And hallow'd all the beauty twice again,  
 Save when, between th' Empyrean and that ring,  
 Some eager spirit flapp'd his dusky wing.  
 But on the pillars seraph eyes have seen  
 The dimness of this world: that grayish green  
 That Nature loves the best for Beauty's grave  
 Lurk'd in each cornice, round each architrave —  
 And every sculptur'd cherub thereabout  
 That from his marble dwelling peered out,

<sup>1</sup> Some star, which, from the ruin'd roof  
 Of shak'd Olympus, by mischance did fall. — MILTON.

Seem'd earthly in the shadow of his niche —  
 Achaian statues in a world so rich?  
 Friezes from Tadmor and Persepolis,<sup>1</sup> —  
 From Babel, and the stilly, clear abyss  
 Of beautiful Gomorrah!<sup>2</sup> Oh, the wave  
 Is now upon thee — but too late to save!

Sound loves to revel in a summer night:  
 Witness the murmur of the gray twilight  
 That stole upon the ear, in Eyraco,<sup>3</sup>  
 Of many a wild star-gazer long ago —  
 That stealeth ever on the ear of him  
 Who, musing, gazeth on the distance dim,  
 And sees the darkness coming as a cloud —  
 Is not its form — its voice — most palpable and loud?<sup>4</sup>

But what is this? It cometh, and it brings  
 A music with it: 'tis the rush of wings.

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, in speaking of Persepolis, says: "Je connois bien l'admiration qu'inspirent ces ruines — mais un palais érigé au pied d'une chaîne des rochers sterils — peut-il être un chef-d'œuvre des arts!"

<sup>2</sup> "Oh the wave" — Ula Degursi is the Turkish appellation; but on its shores, it is called Bahar Loth, or Almotanah. There were undoubtedly more than two cities ingulfed in the "Dead Sea." In the valley of Siddam were five — Adrah, Zebon, Zoar, Sodom, and Gomorrah. Stephen of Byzantium mentions eight, and Strabo thirteen (ingulfed) — but the last is out of all reason.

It is said [Tactus, Strabo, Josephus, Daniel of St. Saba, Nau, Maundrell, Troilo, D'Arvicux] that after an excessive drought, the vestiges of columns, walls, etc., are seen above the surface. At any season, such remains may be discovered by looking down into the transparent lake and at such distances as would argue the existence of many settlements in the space now usurped by the "Asphaltites."

<sup>3</sup> Eyraco — Chaldea.

<sup>4</sup> I have often thought I could distinctly hear the sound of the darkness as it stole over the horizon.



A pause — and then a sweeping, falling strain,  
And Nesace is in her halls again.

From the wild energy of wanton haste

Her cheeks were flushing, and her lips airt;  
And zone that clung around her gentle waist

Had burst beneath the heaving of her hair

Within the centre of that hall to breathe

She paus'd and panted, Zante! all beneath,

The fairy light that kiss'd her golden hair,

And long'd to rest, yet could but sparkle there!

Young flowers<sup>1</sup> were whispering in melody

To happy flowers that night — and tree to tree;

Fountains were gushing music as they fell

In many a star-lit grove, or moon-lit dell;

Yet silence came upon material things —

Fair flowers, bright waterfalls, and angel wings.

And sound alone that from the spirit sprang<sup>2</sup>

Bore burthen to the charm the maiden sang: —

“‘Neath bluebell or streamer,

Or tufted wild spray,

That keeps from the dreamer

The moonbeam away:<sup>2</sup> —

Bright beings that ponder,

With half-closing eyes,

On the stars which your wonder

Hath drawn from the skies,

<sup>1</sup> Fairies use flowers for their charactery — *Merry Wives of Windsor*

<sup>2</sup> In Scripture is this passage: “The sun shall not harm thee by day, nor the moon by night.” It is perhaps not generally known that the moon, in Egypt, has the effect of producing blindness to those who sleep with the face exposed to its rays, to which circumstance the passage evidently alludes.

Till they glance thro' the shade, and  
 Come down to your brow  
 Like eyes of the maiden  
 Who calls on you now, —  
 Arise<sup>e</sup> from your dreaming  
 In violet bowers,  
 To duty beseeming  
 These star-litten hours, —  
 And shake from your tresses  
 Encumber'd with dew  
 The breath of those kisses  
 That cumber them too —  
 (Oh, how, without you, Love,  
 Could angels be blest ?)  
 Those kisses of true love  
 That lull'd ye to rest !  
 Up ! shake from your wing  
 Each hindering thing :  
 The dew of the night —  
 It would weigh down your flight ;  
 And true love caresses —  
 Oh, leave them apart !  
 They are light on the tresses,  
 But lead on the heart.  
 Ligeia ! Ligeia !  
 My beautiful one !  
 Whose harshest idea  
 Will tō melody run,  
 Oh, is it thy will  
 On the breezes to toss ?  
 Or, capriciously still,  
 Like the lone albatross,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The albatross is said to sleep on the wing.

Incumbent on night  
 (As she on the air)  
 To keep watch with delight  
 On the harmony there ?

“ Ligeia ! wherever  
 Thy image may be,  
 No magic shall sever  
 Thy music from thee.  
 Thou hast bound many eyes  
 In a dreamy sleep,  
 But the strains still arise  
 Which *thy* vigilance keep —

“ The sound of the rain  
 Which leaps down to the flower,  
 And dances again  
 In the rhythm of the shower —  
 The murmur that springs <sup>1</sup>  
 From the growing of grass  
 Are the music of things —  
 But are model’d, alas !  
 Away, then, my dearest,  
 Oh, hie thee away  
 To springs that lie clearest  
 Beneath the moon-ray, —  
 To lone lake that smiles  
 In its dream of deep rest,  
 At the many star-isles  
 That enjewel its breast, —

<sup>1</sup> I met with this idea in an old English tale, which I am now unable to obtain, and quote from memory: “The verie essence, and, as it were, springe-head and origine of all musiche is the verie pleasaunte sounds which the trees of the forest do make when they growe.”

Where wild flowers, creeping,  
 Have mingled their shade,  
 Or its margin is sleeping  
 Full many a maid.  
 Some have left the cool glade, and  
 Have slept with the bee,<sup>1</sup> —  
 Arouse them, my maiden,  
 On moorland and lea, —  
 Go, breathe on their slumber,  
 All softly in ear, —  
 The musical number  
 They slumber'd to hear, —  
 For what can awaken  
 An angel so soon,  
 Whose sleep hath been taken  
 Beneath the cold moon,  
 As the spell which no slumber  
 Of witchery may test,  
 The rhythmical number  
 Which lull'd him to rest ?”

Spirits in wing, and angels to the view,  
 A thousand seraphs burst th' Empyrean through,  
 Young dreams still hovering on their drowsy flight,  
 Seraphs in all but “ Knowledge,” the keen light

<sup>1</sup> The wild bee will not sleep in the shade if there be moonlight  
 The rhyme in this verse, as in one about sixty lines before, has an  
 appearance of affectation. It is, however, imitated from Sir Walter  
 Scott, or rather from Claud Halcro, — in whose mouth I admired its  
 effect: —

“ Oh, were there an island,  
 Though ever so wild,  
 Where woman might smile, and  
 No man be beguil'd.”

That fell, refracted, through thy bounds, afar  
 Oh, Death! from eye of God upon that star:  
 Sweet was that error — sweeter still that death, —  
 Sweet was that error — ev'n with *us* the breath  
 Of Science dims the mirror of our joy, —  
 To them 'twere the Simoon, and would' destroy, —  
 For what (to them) availeth it to know  
 That Truth is Falselood, or that Bliss is Wor?  
 Sweet was their death. with them to die was rife  
 With the last ecstasy of satiate life; —  
 Beyond that death no immortality, —  
 But sleep that pondereth, and is not "to be."  
 And there, oh may my weary spirit dwell,  
 Apart from Heaven's Eternity, — and yet how far  
 from Hell!<sup>1</sup>

With guilty spirit, in what shrubbery dim,  
 Heard not the stirring summons of that hymn?  
 But two: they fell: for Heaven no grace imparts  
 To those who hear not for their beating hearts.

<sup>1</sup> With the Arabians there is a medium between Heaven and Hell, where men suffer no punishment, but yet do not attain that tranquil and even happiness which they suppose to be characteristic of heavenly enjoyment.

Un no rompido sueno —  
 Un dia puro — alegre — libre  
 Quiera —  
 Libre de amor — de zelo —  
 De odio — de esperanza — de rezelo. — LUIS PONCE DE LEON.

Sorrow is not excluded from "Al Aaraaf," but it is that sorrow which the living love to cherish for the dead, and which, in some minds, resembles the delirium of opium. The passionate excitement of Love and the buoyancy of spirit attendant upon intoxication are its holy pleasures, — the price of which, to those souls who make choice of "Al Aaraaf" as the residence after life, is final death and annihilation

A maiden-angel and her seraph lover —  
 Oh, where (and ye may seek the wide skies over)  
 Was Love, the blind, near sober Duty known?  
 Unguided Love hath fallen — 'mid "tears of perfect  
 moan."<sup>1</sup>

He was a goodly spirit — he who fell:  
 A wanderer by mossy-mantled well, —  
 A gazer on the lights that shine above, —  
 A dreamer in the moonbeam by his love!  
 What wonder? for each star is eyelike there,  
 And looks so sweetly down on Beauty's hair;  
 And they, and every mossy spring were holy  
 To his love-haunted heart and melancholy.  
 The night had found (to him a night of woe) ●  
 Upon a mountain crag, young Angelo, —  
 Beetling, it bends athwart the solemn sky,  
 And seows on starry worlds that down beneath it lie.  
 Here sate he with his love, — his dark eye bent  
 With eagle gaze along the firmament:  
 Now turn'd it upon her, — but ever then  
 It trembled to the orb of EARTH again.

"Ianthe, dearest, see, how dim that ray!  
 How lovely 'tis to look so far away!  
 She seem'd not thus upon that autumn eve  
 I left her gorgeous halls, — nor mourned to leave.  
 That eve — that eve — I should remember well —  
 The sun-ray dropp'd, in Lemnos, with a spell  
 On th' Arabesque carving of a gilded hall  
 Wherein I sate, and on the draperied wall —

<sup>1</sup> There be tears of perfect moan  
 Wept for thee in Helicon. — MILTON.

And on my eyelids — oh, the heavy light!  
 How drowsily it weigh'd them into night!  
 On flowers, before, and mist, and love they rēn  
 With Persian Saadi in his Gulistan:  
 But oh, that light! — I slumber'd  $\frac{7}{7}$  Death. the  
                   while,  
 Stole o'er my senses in that lovely isle  
 So softly that no single silken hair  
 Awoke that slept, — or knew that he was there.

“ The last spot of Earth's orb I trod upon  
 Was a proud temple call'd the Parthenon.<sup>1</sup>  
 More beauty clung around her column'd wall  
 Than ev'n thy glowing bosom beats withal,<sup>2</sup>  
 And when old Time my wing did disenthral,  
 Thence sprang I, as the eagle from his tower,  
 And years I left behind me in an hour.  
 What time upon her airy bounds I hung  
 One half the garden of her globe was flung  
 Unrolling as a chart unto my view  
 Tenantless cities of the desert, too!  
 Ianthe, beauty crowded on me, then,  
 And half I wish'd to be again of men.”

“ My Angelo! and why of them to be?  
 A brighter dwelling-place is here for thee;  
 And greener fields than in yon world above,  
 And woman's loveliness — and passionate love.”  
 “ But, list, Ianthe! when the air so soft

<sup>1</sup> It was entire in 1687, — the most elevated spot in Athens.

<sup>2</sup> Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows

Than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love. — MARLOWE.

Fail'd, as my pennon'd spirit leapt aloft.<sup>1</sup>  
 Perhaps my brain grew dizzy ; but the world  
 I left so late was into chaos hurl'd, —  
 Sprang from her station, on the winds apart,  
 And roll'd, a flame, the fiery Heaven athwart.  
 Methought, my sweet one, then I ceased to soar  
 And fell, — not swiftly as I rose before,  
 But with a downward, tremulous motion, through  
 Light, brazen rays, this golden star unto !  
 Nor long the measure of my falling hours :  
 For nearest of all stars was thine to ours, —  
 Dread star<sup>♠</sup> that came, amid a night of mirth,  
 A red Dædalion on the timid Earth.

“ We came, — and to thy Earth ; but not to us  
 Be given our lady's bidding to discuss :  
 We came, my love ; around, above, below,  
 Gay firefly of the night we come and go,  
 Nor ask a reason save the angel-nod  
*She* grants to us, as granted by her God.  
 But, Angelo, than thine gray Time unfurl'd  
 Never his fairy wing o'er fairer world !  
 Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes  
 Alone could see the phantom in the skies,  
 When first Al Aaraaf knew her course to be  
 Headlong thitherward o'er the starry sea ;  
 But when its glory swell'd upon the sky,  
 As glowing Beauty's bust beneath man's eye,  
 We paus'd before the heritage of men,  
 And thy star trembled, — as doth Beauty then ! ”

<sup>1</sup> Pennon — for pinion. — MILTON.



Thus, in discourse, the lovers whil'd away  
 The night that waned and waned and brought no  
 day.

They fell: for Heaven to them no hope imparts  
 Who hear not for the beating of their hearts.

*TO THE RIVER*

FAIR river! in thy bright, clear flow  
 Of crystal, wandering water,  
 Thou art an emblem of the glow  
 Of beauty — the unhidden heart —  
 The playful mazziness of art  
 In old Alberto's daughter;

But when within thy wave she looks,  
 Which glistens then, and trembles, —  
 Why, then, the prettiest of brooks  
 Her worshipper resembles;  
 For in his heart, as in thy stream,  
 Her image deeply lies, —  
 His heart which trembles at the beam  
 Of her soul-searching eyes.

*TAMERLANE.*

KIND solace in a dying hour!  
 Such, father, is not (now) my theme:  
 I will not madly deem that power

Of Earth may shrive me of the sin  
Unearthly pride hath revel'd in.

I have no time to dote or dream :  
You call it hope — that fire of fire !  
It is but agony of desire !

If I *can* hope — oh, God ! I can .  
Its fount is holier — more divine —  
I would not call thee fool, old man,  
But such is not a gift of thine.

Know thou the secret of a spirit  
Bow'd from its wild pride into shame.

Oh, yearning heart ! I did inherit  
Thy withering portion with the fame,  
The searing glory which hath shone  
Amid the jewels of my throne,  
Halo of Hell ! and with a pain  
Not Hell shall make me fear again !  
Oh, craving heart, for the lost flowers  
And sunshine of my summer hours !  
The undying voice of that dead time,  
With its interminable chime,  
Rings, in the spirit of a spell,  
Upon thy emptiness — a knell.

I have not always been as now :  
The fever'd diadem on my brow  
I claim'd and won usurpingly.  
Hath not the same fierce heirdom given  
Rome to the Cæsar — this to me ?  
The heritage of a kingly mind,  
And a proud spirit which hath striven  
Triumphantly with human kind.

On mountain soil I first drew life :  
 The mists of the Taglay have shed  
 Nightly their dews upon my head ;  
 And, I believe, the winged strife  
 And tumult of the headlong air  
 Have nestled in my very hair.

So late from Heaven — that dew — it fell  
 ('Mid dreams of an unholy night)  
 Upon me with a touch of Hell,  
 While the red flashing of the light  
 From clouds that hung like banners o'er,  
 Appeared to my half-closing eye  
 The pageantry of monarchy :  
 And the deep trumpet-thunder's roar  
 Came hurriedly upon me, telling  
 Of human battle, where my voice —  
 My own voice, silly child ! — was swelling  
 (Oh, how my spirit would rejoice,  
 And leap within me at the cry)  
 The battle-cry of Victory !

The rain came down upon my head  
 Unshelter'd ; and the heavy wind  
 Rend'ed me mad and deaf and blind.  
 It was but man, I thought, who shed  
 Laurels upon me : and the rush —  
 The torrent of the chilly air  
 Gurgled within my ear the crush  
 Of empires — with the captive's prayer —  
 The hum of suitors — and the tone  
 Of flattery round a sovereign's throne.

My passions, from that hapless hour,  
 Usurp'd a tyranny which men  
 Have deem'd, since I have reach'd to power,  
 My innate nature : be it so.

But, father, there lived one who, then,  
 Then — in my boyhood — when their fire  
 Burn'd with a still intenser glow  
 (For passion must, with youth, expire)  
 E'en *then* who knew this iron heart  
 In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no words, alas ! to tell  
 The loveliness of loving well !  
 Nor would I now attempt to trace  
 The more than beauty of a face  
 Whose lineaments, upon my mind,  
 Are — shadows on th' unstable wind.  
 Thus I remember having dwelt  
 Some page of early lore upon,  
 With loitering eye, till I have felt  
 The letters — with their meaning — melt  
 To fantasies — with none.

Oh, she was worthy of a love !  
 Love, as in infancy was mine !  
 'Twas such as angel minds above  
 Might envy ; her young heart the shrine ,  
 On which my every hope and thought  
 Were incense, — then a goodly gift,  
 For they were childish and upright, —  
 Pure, — as her young example taught :  
 Why did I leave it, and, adrift,  
 Trust to the fire within for light ?

We grew in age — and love — together —  
 Roaming the forest and the wild ;  
 My breast her shield in wintry weather,  
 And when the friendly sunshine smil'd,  
 And she would mark the opening skies,  
 I saw no Heaven — but in her eyes.

Young Love's first lesson is — the heart :  
 For 'mid that sunshine, and those smiles,  
 When, from our little cares apart,  
 And laughing at her girlish wiles,  
 I'd throw me on her throbbing breast,  
 And pour my spirit out in tears ;  
 There was no need to speak the rest, —  
 ° No need to quiet any fears  
 Of her, — who ask'd no reason why,  
 But turn'd on me her quiet eye !

Yet *more* than worthy of the love  
 My spirit struggled with, and strove,  
 When, on the mountain-peak, alone,  
 Ambition lent it a new tone, —  
 I had no being but in thee.

The world, and all it did contain  
 In the earth — the air — the sea —  
 Its joy — its little lot of pain  
 That was new pleasure, — the ideal  
 Dim vanities of dreams by night,  
 And dimmer nothings which were real, —  
 (Shadows, and a more shadowy light !)  
 Parted upon their misty wings,  
 And so, confusedly, became  
 Thine image and — a name ! —  
 Two separate yet most intimate things.

I was ambitious. Have you known  
The passion, father? You have not!  
A cottager, I mark'd a throne  
Of half the world as all my own,  
And murmur'd at such lowly lot.  
But, just like any other dream,  
Upon the vapor of the dew  
My own had past, did not the beam  
Of beauty which did while it through  
The minute — the hour — the day — oppress  
My mind with double loveliness.

We walk'd together on the crown  
Of a high mountain which look'd down  
Afar from its proud natural towers  
Of rock and forest, on the hills, —  
The dwindled hills! — begirt with bowers,  
And spouting with a thousand rills.

I spoke to her of power and pride,  
But mystically, — in such guise  
That she might deem it nought beside  
The moment's converse. In her eyes  
I read, perhaps too carelessly,  
A mingled feeling with my own.  
The flush on her bright cheek, to me  
Seem'd to become a queenly throne  
Too well that I should let it be  
Light in the wilderness alone.

I wrapp'd myself in grandeur then,  
And donn'd a visionary crown:

Yet it was not that Fantasy  
 Had thrown her mantle over me;  
 But that, among the rabble — men,  
 Lion ambition is chain'd down,  
 And crouches to a keeper's hand:  
 Not so in deserts, where the grand —  
 The wild — the terrible — conspire  
 With their own breath to fan his fire.

Look round thee now on Samarcand!  
 Is she not queen of Earth? Her pride  
 Above all cities? In her hand  
 Their destinies? In all beside  
 'Of glory which the world hath known  
 Stands she not nobly and alone?  
 Falling, — her veriest stepping-stone  
 Shall form the pedestal of a throne!  
 And who her sovereign? Timour, — he  
 Whom the astonish'd people saw  
 Striding o'er empires haughtily, —  
 A diadem'd outlaw!

Oh, human love! Thou spirit given,  
 On Earth, of all we hope in Heaven!  
 Which fall'st into the soul like rain  
 Upon the Siroc-wither'd plain,  
 And, failing in thy power to bless,  
 But leav'st the heart a wilderness!  
 Idea which bindest life around  
 With music of so strange a sound  
 And beauty of so wild a birth, —  
 Farewell! for I have won the Earth!

When Hope, the eagle that tower'd, could see  
No cliff beyond him in the sky,  
His pinions were bent droopingly,  
And homeward turn'd his sotten'd eye.  
'Twas sunset: when the sun will part  
There comes a sullenness of heart  
To him who still would look upon  
The glory of the summer sun.  
That soul will hate the ev'ning mist,  
So often lovely, and will list  
To the sound of the coming darkness (known  
To those whose spirits hearken) as one  
Who, in a dream of night, *would* fly,  
But *cannot*, from a danger nigh.

What though the moon — the white moon —  
Shed all the splendor of her noon,  
*Her* smile is chilly, and *her* beam,  
In that time of dreariness will seem  
(So like you gather in your breath)  
A portrait taken after death.  
And boyhood is a summer sun  
Whose waning is the dreariest one.  
For all we live to know is known,  
And all we seek to keep hath flown:  
Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall  
With the noonday beauty, — which is all.

I reach'd my home — my home no more!  
For all had flown who made it so.  
I pass'd from out its mossy door,



And, though my tread was soft and low,  
 A voice came from the threshold stone  
 Of one whom I had earlier known :

Oh, I defy thee, Hell, to show  
 On beds of fire that burn below,  
 A humbler heart — a deeper woe,

Father, I firmly do believe —

I *know* — for Death who comes for me  
 From regions of the blest afar,  
 Where there is nothing to deceive,  
 Hath left his iron gate ajar,  
 And rays of truth you cannot see  
 Are flashing through eternity, —  
 I do believe that Eblis hath  
 A snare in every human path :  
 Else how, when in the holy grove,  
 I wandered, of the idol, Love,  
 Who daily scents his snowy wings  
 With incense of burnt offerings  
 From the most unpolluted things,  
 Whose pleasant bowers are yet so riven  
 Above with trellis'd rays from Heaven,  
 No more may shun — no tiniest fly —  
 The lightning of his eagle eye, —  
 How was it that Ambition crept,  
 Unseen, amid the revels there,  
 Till, growing bold, he laughed and leapt  
 In the tangles of Love's very hair?

•  
•  
*FAIRY-LAND.*

DIM vales — and shadowy floods —  
 And cloudy-looking woods,  
 Whose forms we can't discover  
 For the tears that drip all over :  
 Huge moons there wax and wane, —  
 Again — again — again —  
 Every moment of the night, —  
 Forever changing places, —  
 And they put out the starlight  
 With the breath from their pale faces.  
 \*About twelve by the moon-dial,  
 One more filmy than the rest  
 Comes down — still down — and down  
 With its centre on the crown  
 Of a mountain's eminence,  
 While its wide circumference  
 In easy drapery falls  
 Over hamlets, over halls,  
 Wherever they may be :  
 O'er the strange woods — o'er the sea —  
 Over spirits on the wing —  
 Over every drowsy thing —  
 And buries them up quite  
 In a labyrinth of light ;  
 And then, how deep ! — oh, deep  
 Is the passion of their sleep.

In the morning they arise,  
 And their moony covering  
 Is soaring in the skies,  
 With the tempests as they toss,  
 Like — almost anything —  
 Or a yellow albatross.  
 They use that moon no more  
 For the same end as before, —  
 Videlicet, a tent,  
 Which I think extravagant :  
 Its atomies, however,  
 Into a shower dissever,  
 Of which those butterflies  
 Of Earth who seek the skies,  
 And so come down again  
 (Never-contented things !)  
 Have brought a specimen  
 Upon their quivering wings.

## TO L. M. S—.

OF all who hail thy presence as the morning, —  
 Of all to whom thine absence is the night, —  
 The blotting utterly from out high heaven  
 The sacred sun, — of all who, weeping, bless thee  
 Hourly for hope — for life — ah ! above all,  
 • For the resurrection of deep-buried faith  
 In Truth — in Virtue — in Humanity, —  
 Of all who, on Despair's unhallow'd bed  
 Lying down to die, have suddenly arisen  
 At thy soft-murmured words, “ Let there be light ! ”

At the soft-murmured words that were fulfilled  
 In the seraphic glancing of thine eyes, —  
 Of all who owe thee most, whose gratitude  
 Nearest resembles worship, — oh, remember  
 The truest — the most fervently devoted,  
 And think that these weak lines are written by him, —  
 By him who, as he pens them, thrills to think  
 His spirit is communing with an angel's.

## ROMANCE.

ROMANCE, who loves to nod and sing,<sup>o</sup>  
 With drowsy head and folded wing,  
 Among the green leaves as they shake  
 Far down within some shadowy lake,  
     To me a painted paroquet  
 Hath been a most familiar bird, —  
     Taught me my alphabet to say —  
 To lisp my very earliest word  
 While in the wild wood I did lie,  
 A child — with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal Condor years  
     So shake the very Heaven on high  
     With tumult as they thunder by,  
 I have no time for idle cares  
     Through gazing on the unquiet sky.  
 And when an hour with calmer wings  
 Its down upon my spirit flings —  
     That little time with lyre and rhyme

To while away — forbidden things !  
 My heart would feel to be a crime,  
 Unless it trembled with the strings.

*SPIRITS OF THE DEAD.*

THY soul shall find itself alone  
 'Mid dark thoughts of the gray tombstone :  
 Not one, of all the crowd, to pry  
 Into thine hour of secrecy

BE silent in that solitude  
 Which is not loneliness, — for then  
 The spirits of the dead who stood  
 In life before thee are again  
 In death around thee, — and their will  
 Shall overshadow thee : be still.

The night, though clear, shall frown, —  
 And the stars shall not look down  
 From their high thrones in Heaven,  
 With light like Hope to mortals given :  
 But their red orbs, without beam,  
 To thy weariness shall seem  
 As a burning and a fever  
 Which would cling to thee forever.  
 Now are thoughts thou shalt not banish, —  
 Now are visions ne'er to vanish :  
 From thy spirit shall they pass  
 No more — like dewdrops from the grass.

The breeze — the breath of God — is still ;  
 And the mist upon the hill  
 Shadowy — shadowy — yet unbroken,  
 Is a symbol and a token, —  
 How it hangs upon the trees,  
 A mystery of mysteries !

## TO

THE bowers whereat, in dreams, I see  
 The wantonest singing birds,  
 Are lips — and all thy melody  
 Of lip-begotten words.

Thine eyes, in Heaven of heart enshrin'd,  
 • Then desolately fall,  
 Oh, God! on my funereal mind  
 Like starlight on a pall.

Thy heart — *thy* heart — I wake and sigh,  
 And sleep to dream till day  
 Of the truth that gold can never buy —  
 Of the baubles that it may

## A DREAM.

IN visions of the dark night  
 I have dream'd of joy departed ;  
 But a waking dream of life and light  
 Hath left me broken-hearted.

Ah, what is not a dream by day  
To him whose eyes are cast  
On things around him with a ray  
Turned back upon the past?

That holy dream — that holy dream,  
While all the world were chiding,  
Hath cheered me as a lovely beam  
A lonely spirit guiding.

What tho' that light, thro' storm and night  
So trembled from afar, —  
What could there be more purely bright  
In Truth's day star?

*THE LAKE. — TO*

IN spring of youth it was my lot  
To haunt of the wide world a spot  
The which I could not love the less, —  
So lovely was the loveliness  
Of a wild lake, with black rock bound,  
And the tall pines that towered around.  
But when the night had thrown her pall  
Upon that spot, as upon all,  
And the mystic wind went by  
Murmuring in melody, —  
Then — ah, then I would awake  
To the terror of the lone lake.  
Yet that terror was not fright,  
But a tremulous delight, —

A feeling not the jewelled mine  
 Could teach or bribe me to define, —  
 Nor Love — although the Love were thine.

Death was in that poisonous wave,  
 And its gulf a fitting grave  
 For him who thence could solace bring  
 To his lone imagining, —  
 Whose solitary soul could make  
 An Eden of that dim lake.

## SONG.

I SAW thee on the bridal day,  
 When a burning blush came o'er thee,  
 Though happiness around thee lay,  
 The world all love before thee :

And in thine eye a kindling light  
 (Whatever it might be)  
 Was all on Earth my aching sight  
 Of Loveliness could see.

That blush, perhaps, was maiden shame, —  
 As such it well may pass, —  
 Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame  
 In the breast of him, alas !

Who saw thee on that bridal day,  
 When that deep blush *would* come o'er thee,  
 Though happiness around thee lay,  
 The world all love before thee.



## TO HELEN.

HELEN, thy beauty is to me  
 Like those Nicean barks of yore,  
 That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,  
 The weary, wayworn wanderer bore  
 To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,  
 Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,  
 Thy Naiad airs have brought me home  
 To the glory that was Greece  
 And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche  
 How statue-like I see thee stand!  
 The agate lamp within thy hand,  
 Ah! Psyche, from the regions which  
 Are Holy Land!

## ALONE.

FROM childhood's hour I have not been  
 As others were, — I have not seen  
 As others saw, — I could not bring  
 My passions from a common spring.  
 From the same source I have not taken

My sorrow ; I could not awaken  
My heart to joy at the same tone ;  
And all I loved, I loved alone.  
*Then* — in my childhood — in the dawn  
Of a most stormy life was drawn  
From every depth of good and ill  
The mystery which binds me still :  
From the torrent, or the fountain,  
From the red cliff of the mountain,  
From the sun that round me roll'd  
In its autumn tint of gold, —  
From the lightning in the sky  
As it pass'd me flying by, —  
From the thunder and the storm,  
And the cloud that took the form  
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)  
Of a demon in my view.



## THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION.

CHARLES DICKENS, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of "Barnaby Rudge," says: "By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his 'Caleb Williams' backwards? He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done."

I cannot think this the *precise* mode of procedure on the part of Godwin, — and indeed what he acknowledges, is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens's idea, — but the author of "Caleb Williams" was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its *dénouement* before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis,

or one is suggested by an incident of the day, — or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative, designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or aurtorial comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an *effect*. Keeping originality *always* in view, — for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest. — I say to myself, in the first place, “Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?” Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone, — whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone, — afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would — that is to say, who could — detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say; but, perhaps, the aurtorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers — poets in espe-

cial — prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy — an ecstatic intuition — and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought — at the true purposes seized only at the last moment — at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view — at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable — at the cautious selections and rejections — at the painful erasures and interpolations — in a word, at the wheels and pinions — the tackle for scene-shifting — the step-ladders and demon-traps — the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary *histrion*.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell, are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor at any time the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions; and, since the interest of an analysis, or reconstruction, such as I have considered a *desideratum*, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analyzed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the *modus operandi* by which some of my own works were put together. I select "The Raven," as most generally known. It is my design to render

it manifest that no one point in its composition is referrible either to accident or intuition,— that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion, with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem, *per se*, the circumstance — or say the necessity — which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of composing a poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression; for if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and everything like totality is at once destroyed. But since, *ceteris paribus*, no poet can afford to dispense with *anything* that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones, — that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychal necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one half of the “Paradise Lost” is essentially prose, — a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions, — the whole being de-

prived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity, of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art, — the limit of a single sitting, — and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as “Robinson Crusoe,” (demanding no unity,) this limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit, — in other words, to the excitement or elevation, — again, in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect: this, with one proviso — that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical, taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper *length* for my intended poem, — a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed: and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted,



and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration, — the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect, — they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul* — *not* of intellect, or of heart — upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating “the beautiful.” Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes, — that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment, — no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to is *most readily* attained in the poem. Now the object, Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable, to a certain extent, in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a *homeliness* (the truly passionate will comprehend me) which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul. It by no means follows from anything here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be intro-

duced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem, — for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast, — but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the *tone* of its highest manifestation, — and all experience has shown that this tone is one of *sadness*. Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a keynote in the construction of the poem, — some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects, — or more properly *points*, in the theatrical sense, — I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the *refrain*. The universality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis.\* I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the *refrain*, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force

of monotone—both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity—of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought—that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation of the *application* of the *refrain*,—the *refrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the *nature* of my *refrain*. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the *refrain* itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence, would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best *refrain*.

The question now arose as to the *character* of the word. Having made up my mind to a *refrain*, the division of the poem into stanzas was, of course, a corollary,—the *refrain* forming the close to each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt—and these considerations inevitably led me to the long *o* as the most sonorous vowel, in connection with *r* as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predeter-

mined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact, it was the very first which presented itself.

The next *desideratum* was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word "Nevermore." In observing the difficulty which I at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the pre-assumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by a *human* being. — I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a *non-reasoning* creature capable of speech; and, very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a Raven, as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended *tone*.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven — the bird of ill omen — monotonously repeating the one word, "Nevermore," at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object *supremeness*, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself, "Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the *universal* understanding of mankind, is the *most* melancholy?" Death — was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?"

From what I have already explained at some length, the answer here also is obvious, "When it most closely allies itself to *Beauty*: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world; and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topics are those of a bereaved lover."

I had now to combine the two ideas of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word "Nevermore." I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying, at every turn, the *application* of the word repeated; but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending, — that is to say, the effect of the *variation of application*. I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover — the first query to which the Raven should reply "Nevermore" — that I could make this first query a commonplace one — the second less so — the third still less, and so on — until at length the lover, startled from his original *nonchalance* by the melancholy character of the word itself — by its frequent repetition — and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it — is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character — queries whose solution he has passionately at heart — propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture

— propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which, reason assures him, is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote), but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modelling his questions as to receive from the *expected* “Nevermore” the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrow. Perceiving the opportunity thus afforded me, — or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction, — I first established in mind the climax, or concluding query, — that query in reply to which this word “Nevermore” should involve the utmost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here, then, the poem may be said to have its beginning — at the end, where all works of art should begin, — for it was here, at this point of my preconsiderations, that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza, —

“Prophet!” cried I, “thing of evil! — prophet still,  
if bird or devil!  
By that Heaven that bends above us — by that God  
we both adore! —  
Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if, within the distant  
Aiden,  
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name  
Lenore, —  
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels  
name Lenore.”

Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

I composed this stanza, at this point, first, that, by establishing the climax, I might the better vary,

and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover; and, secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the metre, and the length and general arrangement of the stanza, as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede, so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able, in the subsequent composition, to construct more vigorous stanzas, I should, without scruple, have purposely enfeebled them, so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.

And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected, in versification, is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere *rhythm*, it is still clear that the possible varieties of metre and stanza are absolutely infinite; and yet, *for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing.* The fact is, that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition. In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and although a positive merit of the highest class, demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

• Of course, I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or metre of "The Raven." The former is trochaic,—the latter is octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the *refrain* of the fifth verse, and terminating with

tetrameter catalectic. Less pedantically, the feet employed throughout (trochees) consist of a long syllable followed by a short—the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet, the second of seven and a half (in effect two thirds), the third of eight, the fourth of seven and a half, the fifth the same, the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines, taken individually, has been employed before, and what originality “The Raven” has, is in their combination into stanza: nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual, and some altogether novel effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the Raven,—and the first branch of this consideration was the *locale*. For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields; but it has always appeared to me that a close *circumscription of space* is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident—it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber,—in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished,—this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.



The *locale* being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird, — and the thought of introducing him through the window was inevitable. The idea of making the lover suppose, in the first instance, that the flapping of the wings of the bird against the shutter is a “tapping” at the door, originated in a wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader’s curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover’s throwing open the door, finding all dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked.

I made the night tempestuous, first, to account for the Raven seeking admission; and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber.

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage, — it being understood that the bust was absolutely *suggested* by the bird, — the bust of *Pallas* being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover; and, secondly, for the sonorousness of the word Pallas, itself.

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast, with the view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic — approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible — is given to the Raven’s entrance. He comes in “with many a flirt and flutter.”

Not the *least obeisance made he*, — not a moment stopped or stayed he, —

*But with mien of lord or lady*, perched above my chamber-door.

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out: —

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into  
smiling,

By the *grave and stern decorum of the countenance*  
*it wore*, —

“Though thy *crest be shorn and shaven*, thou,” I  
said, “art sure no craven, —

Ghastly, grim and ancient Raven, wandering from  
the nightly shore, —

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's  
Plutoman shore.”

• Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore.”

Much I marvelled *this ungainly fowl* to hear dis-  
course so plainly,

Though its answer little meaning — little relevancy  
bore;

For we cannot help agreeing that no living human  
being

*Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his*  
*chamber-door*, —

*Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his*  
*chamber-door*,

With such name as “Nevermore”

The effect of the *dénouement* being thus provided for, I immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most profound seriousness, — this tone commencing in the stanza directly following the one last quoted, with the line, —

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust,  
spoke only, etc.

From this epoch the lover no longer jests, — no longer sees anything even of the fantastic in the Raven's demeanor. He speaks of him as a "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," and feels the "fiery eyes" burning into his "bosom's core." This revolution of thought, or fancy, on the lover's part, is intended to induce a similar one on the part of the reader, — to bring the mind into a proper frame for the *dénouement*, — which is now brought about as rapidly and as *directly* as possible.

With the *dénouement* proper — with the Raven's reply, "Nevermore," to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world — the poem, in its obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, everything is within the limits of the accountable, — of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word "Nevermore," and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm, to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams, — the chamber-window of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming of a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of the bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat out of the immediate reach of the student, who, amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's demeanor, demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven addressed, answers with its customary word, "Nevermore," — a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the

student, who, giving utterance aloud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl's repetition of "Nevermore." The student now guesses the state of the case, but is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer, "Nevermore." With the indulgence, to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration, in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination; and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skillfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness of nakedness, which repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required: first, some amount of complexity, or, more properly, adaptation; and, secondly, some amount of suggestiveness — some undercurrent, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that *richness* (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term) which we are too fond of confounding with *the ideal*. It is the *excess* of the suggested meaning — it is the rendering this the upper instead of the under current of the theme — which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem, — their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which has

preceded them. The undercurrent of meaning is rendered first apparent in the lines —

“Take thy beak from out *my heart*, and take thy  
form from off my door!”

Quoth the Raven, “Nevermore!”

It will be observed that the words “from out my heart” involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with the answer, “Nevermore,” dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the Raven as emblematical; but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza that the intention of making him emblematical of *Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance* is permitted distinctly to be seen. —

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, *still is*  
sitting,  
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber  
door;  
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that  
is dreaming.  
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his  
shadow on the floor, —  
And my soul *from out that shadow* that lies floating  
on the floor  
Shall be lifted — nevermore.

## THE POWER OF WORDS.

*Oinos.* — Pardon, Agathos, the weakness of a spirit new-fledged with immortality!

*Agathos.* — You have spoken nothing, my *Oinos*, for which pardon is to be demanded. Not even here is knowledge a thing of intuition. For wisdom, ask of the angels freely, that it may be given.

*Oinos.* — But in this existence, I dreamed that I should be at once cognizant of all things, and thus at once happy in being cognizant of all.

*Agathos.* — Ah, not in knowledge is happiness, but in the acquisition of knowledge! In forever knowing, we are forever blessed, but to know all, were the curse of a fiend.

*Oinos.* — But does not The Most High know all?

*Agathos.* — *That* (since He is the Most High) must be still the *one* thing unknown even to HIM.

*Oinos.* — But, since we grow hourly in knowledge must not *at last* all things be known?

*Agathos.* — "Look down into the abysmal distances! — attempt to force the gaze down the multitudinous vistas of the stars, as we sweep slowly through them thus — and thus — and thus!" Even the spiritual vision, is it not at all points, arrested by the continu-

ous golden walls of the universe? — the walls of the myriads of the shining bodies that mere number has appeared to blend into unity?

*Oinos*. — I clearly perceive that the infinity of matter is no dream.

*Agathos* — There are *no* dreams in Aidenn, but it is here whispered that, of this infinity of matter, the *sole* purpose is to afford infinite springs, at which the soul may allay the thirst *to know* which is forever unquenchable within it, since to quench it would be to extinguish the soul's self. Question me, then, my *Oinos*, freely and without fear. Come, we will leave to the left the loud harmony of the *Pléiades*, and swoop<sup>4</sup> outward from the throne into the starry meadows beyond Orion, where, for pansies and violets, and heart's-ease, are the beds of the triplicate and triple-tinted suns.

*Oinos* — And now, *Agathos*, as we proceed, instruct me! Speak to me in the earth's familiar tones! I understood not what you hinted to me, just now, of the modes or of the methods of what, during mortality, we were accustomed to call Creation. Do you mean to say that the Creator is not God?

*Agathos* — I mean to say that the Deity does not create

*Oinos*. — Explain!

*Agathos* — In the beginning *only*, He created. The seeming creatures which are now, throughout the universe, so perpetually springing into being, can only be considered as the mediate or indirect, not as the direct or immediate results of the Divine creative power.

*Oinos.* — Among men, my Agathos, this idea would be considered heretical in the extreme.

*Agathos.* — Among angels, my Oinos, it is seen to be simply true.

*Oinos.* — I can comprehend you thus far, — that certain operations of what we term Nature, or the natural laws, will, under certain conditions, give rise to that which has all the *appearance* of creation. Shortly before the final overthrow of the earth, there were, I well remember, many very successful experiments in what some philosophers were weak enough to denominate the creation of animalculæ.

*Agathos.* — The cases of which you speak were, in fact, instances of the secondary creation, — and of the *only* species of creation which has ever been, since the first word spoke into existence the first

*Oinos.* — Are not the starry worlds that, from the abyss of nonentity, burst hourly forth into the heavens, — are not these stars, Agathos, the immediate handiwork of the King?

*Agathos.* — Let me endeavor, my Oinos, to lead you, step by step, to the conception I intend. You are well aware that, as no thought can perish, so no act is without infinite result. We moved our hands, for example, when we were dwellers on the earth, and, in so doing, we gave vibration to the atmosphere which engirdled it. This vibration was indefinitely extended, till it gave impulse to every particle of the earth's air, which thenceforward, *and forever*, was actuated by the one movement of the hand. This fact the mathematicians of our globe well knew.



They made the special effects, indeed, wrought in the fluid by special impulses, the subject of exact calculation; so that it became easy to determine in what precise period an impulse of given extent would engirdle the orb, and impress (forever) every atom of the atmosphere circumambient. Retrograding, they found no difficulty, from a given effect, under given conditions, in determining the value of the original impulse. Now the mathematicians who saw that the results of any given impulse were absolutely endless, and who saw that a portion of these results were accurately traceable through the agency of algebraic analysis, — who saw, too, the facility of the retrogradation, — these men saw, at the same time, that this species of analysis itself had within itself a capacity for indefinite progress, — that there were no bounds conceivable to its advancement and applicability, except within the intellect of him who advanced or applied it. But at this point our mathematicians paused.

*Oinos.* — And why, Agathos, should they have proceeded?

*Agathos.* — Because there were some considerations of deep interest beyond. It was deducible from what they knew, that, to a being of infinite understanding — one to whom the perfection of the algebraic analysis lay unfolded — there could be no difficulty in tracing every impulse given the air — and the ether through the air — to the remotest consequences at any even infinitely remote epoch of time. It is, indeed, demonstrable that every such impulse given the air, must, in the end, impress every

individual thing that exists *within the universe*; and the being of infinite understanding—the being whom we have imagined—might trace the remote undulations of the impulse—trace them upward and onward in their influences upon all particles of all matter—upward and onward forever in their modifications of old forms; or, in other words, *in their creation of new*, until he found them reflected—unimpressive *at last*—back from the throne of the Godhead. And not only could such a being do this, but at any epoch, should a given result be afforded him—should one of these numberless comets, for example, be presented to his inspection—he could have no difficulty in determining, by the analytic retrogradation, to what original impulse it was due. This power of retrogradation in its absolute fulness and perfection—this faculty of referring at *all* epochs *all* effects to *all* causes—is of course the prerogative of the Deity alone, but in every variety of degree, short of the absolute perfection, is the power itself exercised by the whole host of the Angelic Intelligences.

*Oinos*. — But you speak merely of impulses upon the air.

*Agathos*. — In speaking of the air, I referred only to the earth: but the general proposition has reference to impulses upon the ether,—which, since pervades (and alone pervades) all space, is thus the great medium of *creation*.

*Oinos*. — Then all motion, of whatever nature, creates? •

*Agathos*. — It must: but a true philosophy has

long taught that the source of all motion is thought, and the source of all thought is —

*Oinos.* — God

*Agathos.* — I have spoken to you, *Oinos*, as to a child of the fair Earth which lately perished — of impulses upon the atmosphere of the Earth.

*Oinos.* — You did.

*Agathos.* — And while I thus spoke, did there not cross your mind some thought of the *physical power of words*? Is not every word an impulse on the air?

*Oinos.* — But why, *Agathos*, do you weep? And why, oh why do your wings droop as we hover above this fair star, which is the greenest and yet most terrible of all we have encountered in our flight? Its brilliant flowers look like a fairy dream, but its fierce volcanoes like the passions of a turbulent heart.

*Agathos.* — They *are*! — they *are*! This wild star — it is now three centuries since, with clasped hands, and with streaming eyes, at the feet of my beloved — I spoke it — with a few passionate sentences — into birth. Its brilliant flowers *are* the dearest of all unfulfilled dreams, and its raging volcanoes *are* the passions of the most turbulent and unhallowed of hearts.









