

POEMS
OF NATURE AND LIFE



D. R. WILLIAMSON



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Poems of nature and life.



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P O E M S

OF

N A T U R E A N D L I F E



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P O E M S

OF

N A T U R E A N D L I F E

THE
FIRST
SERIES

BY

DAVID R. WILLIAMSON

MINISTER OF KIRKMAIDEN, WIGTOWNSHIRE

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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TO
MY KIND FRIEND,
THE EARL OF ROSSLYN,
This Volume
IS RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY
INSCRIBED.

September 1888.

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POEMS OF NATURE AND LIFE.



ODE TO NATURE.

NATURE, my love is never far from thee !
I breathe thy spirit wheresoe'er I go ;
Whether my steps are by the whispering sea,
Or through the woodlands, where thy flowerets glow,
I find a freshness which is wholly thine,
A sweetness which thy soul alone can shed ;
To me thou art a living voice divine,
Though others deem that thou art dark and dead.

For thee I pined within the city's roar,
Where thy fair children droop, and fade, and die ;
I longed to hear thy waters on the shore
Melt to the music of their Summer sigh ;
Yet Memory in some lonely glen afar
Drank thy pure inspiration, as of old ;
While through the blue one solitary star
Trembled above the boughs of green and gold !

Eternal rapture glows within thy woods,
Where fragrance steals from Beauty's silent breast ;
Joy mingles with the murmur of thy floods,
Whose voice is music to the heart at rest ;
With thy wide-stretching plains the mind expands,
Or with thy mighty mountains soars serene ;
While light, like radiance from God's gracious hands
Floateth where'er thy fairest forms are seen.

How great the glory of thy vernal hours,
When beauty riseth into wondrous birth,

While the mild splendours of thy first-born flowers
Gleam through the green of the rejoicing earth !
How deep the silence of each pensive grove,
Mingled with breathings of the roses bright,
When Summer, like the great Redeemer's love,
Glides through the gladness of thy golden light !

But when thy favourite daughter, Autumn, reigns
Queen-like o'er realms that own her peaceful sway,
Is not this earth an Eden, while remains
Upon the fruitful fields her gentle ray ?
We know that Heaven is near us, while she lays
The gifts of her Creator at our feet ;
Or pours through all the dear delightful days
Those streams of life, where grace and goodness meet.

O mother of all lovely thoughts that spring
From loving souls, in presence of thy power !
Inspirer of all hopes that soar and sing
Bird-like, beneath thy beauty's silver shower !

O thou that with the joyful dost rejoice,
And sorrowest with the sorrowing—not in vain,
Be thou my consolation, till God's voice
Shall call my spirit to its home again !

THE AUTUMN OF LIFE.

THE old man sits at his cottage door,
In the gleam of the dying day ;
His heart is calm as the silent shore,
When the winds have passed away ;
His thoughts are still as the fragrant breeze
That whispers of peace to the azure seas.

His is the beauty of earth and air,
The glow of the twilight hours ;
He feels that glory everywhere
Is breathing from woodland flowers ;
And his heart grows young, though his years are old,
At the wondrous sight of the sunset gold !

For Memory comes with a gentle hand,
 And beareth on Fancy's wings
His thoughts to her own immortal land
 Where the Past for ever sings
Of joys that brightened the fair days fled,
Ere friendships faded with friends long dead.

And the Past, though sad, for the love that is gone,
 Is sweet to the old man's mind ;
Like the birds that sang in those years have flown
 The hopes he hath left behind ;
Yet Memory brings from each bygone day
Some gift of peace for his lonely way !

And the children love that old man dear,
 As he sits in the twilight there,
Listing a music they cannot hear,
 From the sea, and the voiceful air ;
And gather around, like gladsome flowers,
As he tells them tales of the vanished hours.

And so the Present is made more bright,
By the lessons the Past hath taught ;
As the east reflects the wondrous light
Of the west, by sunset brought :
And though his vision is growing dim,
God maketh his pathway bright to him.

His age is peace ; yet he joys to think
That a deeper than earth can know
Shall be his, when his tranquil soul shall drink
Of a balmier twilight glow
In that happier Home, where his thoughts at last
Shall yearn no more for the distant Past !

HYMN OF THE SNOWDROPS.

PARENT of peace, and Maker of all might !
We thank Thee for those pale and pensive flowers
Which Thou hast given, to gleam upon our sight,
After the darkness of the winter hours.

They come, the first fair children of the year,
To tell us that Thy love is with us still ;
That faith shall rise to conquer every fear
In all who wait with patience on Thy will.

Thou who didst bless the lilies of the field,
With moral beauty that shall bloom for aye,
Hast given not less to these a power to yield
Lessons of wisdom to our souls to-day.

Artless they shine ; but could we understand
The art that raised them into beauteous birth,
Then should we hold Creation by the hand ;
Then should we know the secret of the earth.

We may not grasp that wondrous Force which sways
The workings of this vast mysterious scene ;
We only see God's footprints on those ways
Where His creative form at first hath been.

Nor shall we know ourselves as we are known,
Till larger knowledge through this wandering night
Shall stream around us from that Unseen Throne
Of Truth, that turns all darkness into light !

TO MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Poet of peace, by gentlest thoughts attended,
Where'er thou movest on thine upward way,
Reverence and tenderness for ever blended
In thy great heart, which mourns all sad decay ;

Not lost to thee the pathos of the dying,
The dear remembrance of the peaceful dead !
Like some deep wind 'mid Autumn's ruins sighing,
Thy Muse bewails the beauty that has fled.

Not only mortal greatness that has perished
For ever from thy vision far away ;
Yet left behind a grandeur that is cherished
By those it led toward a nobler day ;

Not only such thy pensive song is singing

In strains half heard by this strange world of ours ;

But some poor bird, whose music no more bringing

The joys he warbled to the fields and flowers ;

Some favourite dog, whose last look of affection

Fixed on that master's face he knew so well ;

Unconquered love, through anguishing dejection

Expressing more than eloquence could tell ;

Even such as these some exquisite emotion

Have wakened in the regions of thy heart ;

Flooding thy frame, as o'er some boundless ocean

The sunlight streams, when sorrow-clouds depart !

More than the mightiest thoughts that man has given

In proud self-consciousness to charm mankind,

Are those meek lays, like golden rain from Heaven,

Which in the soul their inspiration find.

Not of ambition are thy songs begotten,
O lofty Bard! whose deathless theme is love ;
'Tis thine to glorify the world's forgotten,
To guard below what God has blessed above !

A POEM OF THE SEA.

'Tis morn : a softly moving breeze
Is rippling o'er the bay ;
As gladly towards the flashing seas
The fisher's boat makes way ;
How gloriously the snowy sail
Is bearing him along ;
While his proud heart that fears no gale
Is pouring forth in song !

From the low cot that nestles white
Beside the waving wood,
A tiny window looks in light
Upon the ocean-flood ;

And well the fisher knows that there
 Twain eyes of azure hue,
Sweet with the love for him they wear,
 Gaze o'er the waters blue.

How swiftly glides his boat away
 Into the distance dim !
While those fond eyes that mutely say
 “ I love thee,” follow him !
Till like a bird upon the wave
 It vanishes from view,
No more to bring the bold and brave
 Back to the sweet and true !

’Tis night ; the seas are one wide waste
 Of fiercely flying foam ;
A tempest terrible hath chased
 Peace from her ocean-home ;
Like thunder on the quivering strand
 The helpless waves are tossed ;

The winds are wailing o'er the land
Like spirits of the lost !

O dread and awful is the night
To her who watched so long
For him who never more may light
Her home with life and song !
In every sound the storm may bear,
As wild it wanders by,
Her eager fancy seems to hear
Her fisher's footsteps nigh !

'Tis morn ; and peace is bright again
On earth and whispering shore ;
And all is life and light again
That was so dark before ;
Yet joyless is that fisher's home
Beneath the glittering skies,
For no proud presence yet hath come
To cheer two weeping eyes !

A REVERIE.

HERE by the rippings of an Eastern sea
That seems to sound of days that are no more,
In every wave that melts upon the shore,
I sit and think of thee.

Thy presence moveth with me everywhere ;
My fancy floweth steadfast as a stream
Towards that lovely vale, where thou dost gleam
In memories ever fair.

In every trembling lay that through the trees
The warbling birds pour soulfully along,
I seem to hear the sweetness of thy song
Float on the evening breeze.

With the fair sunrise of the golden morn
That blooms like Eden o'er yon eastern skies,
Cometh the glory of thy dewy eyes,
Of love and beauty born.

Through all the grandeur of the glowing day,
I feel the brightness of thy fancied face ;
It dwells amid the sweetness and the grace
Of light's departing ray.

And when the glory of the day has died
Like some fair dream of Heaven o'er the sea ;
And night arises, slowly, solemnly,
Dark-robed and starry-eyed ;

I love to think that as the yearning star
That gazeth steadfast on the world below,
So, wrapped around with night, thy fancies glow
Towards me from afar !

A POEM AT DEATH.

IMMORTAL Conqueror of mortal strife !
Who to our vision loomest far away
Beside the door of Heaven's eternal life,
And Hope's own boundless, everlasting day ;

Thine inexpressive silences we fear ;
Of thy dark form we dream, with speechless dread ;
Most awful to our shrinking thoughts appear
The soundless slumbers of thy gentle dead.

And yet our Faith should teach us otherwise ;
Should make thy peaceful presence star-like shine
'Mid sorrow's night, most radiant unto eyes
Wearied with watching for the Light divine.

O dumb and mighty Messenger of God !
That holdest His deep secrets in thy hand ;
Whom to have known is to have found the road
To heights of knowledge Time can not command ;

We love thee not ; and yet I do not know
If thou art not a veiled, familiar friend ;
We may not feel thee strange, when thou dost show
How blessed is thy mission in the end !

Why should the Mind's dim prison-house endure,
If with the dawning of thy wondrous ray,
On wings of liberty, to skies more pure,
The soul may rise, and wing its endless way ?

O teach us, Silent Spirit, so to live,
That when we reach those realms thy feet have trod,
We may be strong most hopefully to give
The meaning of our life-work unto God !

TO THE WOOD-SORREL.

EXQUISITE Floweret of the vernal hour,
 Whose tender sweetness steals upon our gaze,
 When the wild glory of the glittering shower
 Has faded in the sun's luxuriant rays ;

Meekest of all the blooms that God has given
 To star this marvellous mystery of earth
 With gentle gleams of that ideal Heaven,
 Where Love the beautiful found radiant birth,—

Even one so insignificant as thou
 May bring high thoughts to men of reverent mind ;
 For that meek loveliness thou wearest now
 Flowed from an Art our efforts fail to find.

That Power by which those wondrous worlds were
made,

In whose vast presence awe-inspired we stand,
Like thee that shrinkest in the woodland shade,
Was formed of one unseen, mysterious Hand.

The soul that shines in every wondrous star
Whose splendour thrills the darkness of the night,
As faith through sorrow pierces from afar,
When Knowledge fails, and Wisdom longs for light ;

The Force that sways the boundless ocean's tide,
That mingles with the river's ceaseless flow ;
Whose unexhausted energies provide
For all the countless lives that breathe below ;

He who ordained no life may ever die,
But shall subserve some wise end in decay ;
So that those clouds of Mystery which lie
Between our souls and Truth's dim-dawning day,

Are but as shadows cast upon the mind
From the immortal picture of His love ;—
Has given to such as these a power to bind
Our hearts to Him who dwells with light above !

A WISH.

O LADY, though I cannot sing,
“ May no dark Winter cloud thy year !
For in their train life’s shadows bring
A music which we may not hear ;
And angels mingle with the gloom
That flows from Heaven upon our way,
Yet in thy heart may Wisdom bloom,
And guide thy steps from day to day !

May love, the fairest flower of Time,
Sweet love, that makes all beauty dear,
The rose that shines in every clime
And through all seasons bright or drear ;

Deep love that draws perennial stream
From God's own breast to bless us here,
Like some eternal sunrise dream
To thy pure path be ever near !

And Faith, her sister ; may she stand
With Love in glory by thy side,
As seraphs from that golden Land
Where those fair sisters most abide,
To light thee onwards to that blest
Bright Region of most perfect peace,
Where God's immortal Sabbath rest
Bids all our earth-born passions cease !

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

“THERE is no death ! what seems so is transition ;”

So sang the Singer who has passed away

To those bright Regions where his larger vision

Gleams with the glories of God's deathless day.

Heaven is the richer for that noble spirit

Whose flower-like thoughts made glad our path so

long ;

And we the poorer ; yet we now inherit

The high example breathing through his song.

And yet 'tis sad to think that voice of Duty

Shall sound no more o'er all the grateful earth,

Telling us Virtue is more fair than Beauty,

In strains which touched the soul like second birth.

Not while our hearts their tenderest longings cherish

Shall the sweet children of his Muse decay ;

Their deep, impassioned pathos may not perish,

While Truth and Love shine steadfast on our way

For when our souls are tranquil with reflection

On those whom this dim world knows now no
more ;

Whose spotless lives are still their sure protection

In minds that their pure memories adore ;

Our thoughts will be of Him who, now departed

From mystery and sorrow, pain and woe,

Sings where the ever true and tender-hearted

Reap the glad harvest which they wrought below !

SONG OF THE MORNING.

THE lark is floating on waves of song
Unseen in the shining sky ;
On the wings of the wind are swept along
The strains that he pours on high ;
Like a seraph he sings, as his way he wings,
Of Love that can never die !

For dreary Night has dropped at last
In the arms of the virgin Day ;
The gloom that filled his face has passed,
And faded far away,
As the pure dew fades on the pale flower-blades,
In the radiant morning ray.

The bee is filling the beauteous bowers
With the hum of his joyful lay ;

As he steals the sweets of the fragrant flowers,
His deep voice seems to say—
“ Arise, O rose, for the dark night goes
To the kingdoms of decay !”

The blackbird thrills the heart of morn
With the floods of his cloudless glee ;
As he swings in the breeze on the tremulous thorn
In a musical ecstasy ;
While the fair ringdove is dreaming of love
In the depths of the dark fir-tree.

The roses rise with dreamy sighs
From sadness of the night ;
The wild birds sing, and the woodlands ring
With echoes of delight ;
The bright rills gleam, and the rivers stream
Like rainbows on their way ;
All things rejoice with varied voice,
For Night has passed away !

SONG OF THE EVENING.

THE sun is leading the dying day
Through the pearly gates of night ;
O'er the silent sea his farewell ray
Gleams in a golden light ;
All earth and air seem hushed in a prayer
Of peace, at the saddening sight.

Silence is brooding on hill and dale,
Like a bird with folded wings ;
One singer alone his dreamful tale
In the ear of evening sings,
When the pride of day has died away
At the touch of his lowly lay.

'Tis the deep sad voice of the nightingale
That melts in a a music-stream,
When the pensive face of evening pale
Glow in a sunset dream,
And the dim dew falls in soothing showers
On the eyes of the drooping flowers.

The trees stand still to list the song
That thrills from the soul of love ;
The winds are hushed the woods among ;
The plaint of the forest dove
Is silent, as his angel voice
Is bidding the heart rejoice.

O softly-still as a tender rill
In the breast of the woodland bright,
His welcome sweet he pours at will
To greet the coming night ;
While the stars glide into the heavens above,
At the sound of his songs of love.

The sun has sunk o'er the distant deep,
Like a king to his royal rest ;
The lark has sung himself to sleep
In the green of his grassy nest ;
Yet the nightingale pours his soul away
Through the gloom of the evening grey !

GEORGE GILFILLAN.

THE maiden moon, whose pure and pensive light
 Like some fair seraph's face illumed our way,
 Hath suddenly from our enraptured sight
 Withdrawn behind the cloud her wondrous ray.

And so with that great Spirit whom we love ;
 Though here his presence cheers our path no more,
 Yet far beyond the cloud of death above
 His soul streams glory on a fairer shore !

Bard-like he trod the earth, with eyes that shone
 With the deep glow of Inspiration's light,
 For ever gleaming towards th' Eternal Throne
 Like heavenly stars, through Time's wild wandering
 night !

High hopes for human fate were sparkling there ;
They saw beyond the mist and darkness here
The spotless Lamb to God the Father bear
The sweet life-flowers refreshed with Mercy's tear !

Though Heaven was in his gaze, there, too, was seen
The sweetness of all lowly things of earth :
Though with the stars his loftiest song hath been,
Not less he loved the blooms of humbler birth.

Through all the seasons of the changeful year
He felt the meaning of immortal love ;
Whether mild Summer on the early bier
Of Spring laid all the glories of the grove ;

Or Winter 'midst his utter loneliness
Mourned like a wild repentance o'er the dead ;
He found some hidden beauty still to bless ;
Some inner peace, by resignation led.

Within the gracious garden of his heart
Bloomed the eternal flowers of Truth divine ;
Their fragrance from our minds can ne'er depart ;
Their radiance in our memories shall shine !

Farewell, great heart ! though we may hear again
Thy voice no more, proclaiming " God is Love ;"
Yet through all gloom of sorrow and of pain
Thy life shall light us to the spheres above !

AN INVOCATION TO THE CITIZEN.

COME, O son of the city !

 Come from the dust and the din,
Where Pathos calls upon Pity,
 And sad is the soul in sin ;
Come from the breath of Art
 To the sweetness that Nature pours
From the depths of her tender heart
 O'er the lands of the shining shores !

Come from the dark and dismal street
 To the bright and glorious plain,
Where the silvery sunbeam's joyous feet
 Dance, when the sweetening rain

Has fled the flowers in the shady bowers,
And things smile again,
Like a lowly life, when care and strife
Have passed in a cloud of pain !

Come to the ways where Summer lays
A flower where'er she goes,
As a footprint fair to flourish there,
Till her gloomy Winter foes,
The mist and the rain, have crossed the main
From Northlands far away,
And the woodlands pale, and the wild winds wail,
As they see her dark decay.

Come from the scenes where Labour streams
In a sad and sullen tide,
To the woodlands wide, where the violets hide
From the sun's deep searching beams ;
Where the bright trees dream in the twilight gleam
O'er the clear and sparkling pool ;

And the glad rills dance in the strong sun's glance,
Like boys let loose from school !

Then come, O son of the city !

Come from the dust and the din,
Where Pathos calls upon Pity,

And sad is the soul in sin :

Come from the breath of Art

To the beauty that Nature pours,
From the depth of her tender heart,
O'er the lands of the shining shores !

A POEM OF LIFE.

THE earth is full of beauty and of sadness ;

Deep tones are heard in Nature's sweetest song
That tell her inspiration is not gladness ;—

To her great soul our smiles and tears belong.

And why should we lament that sorrow ever

Moans round our lives like some far-sounding sea ;
That from our hearts the shroud of fear can never
Depart ; that joy can never lasting be ?

Does not the sun's pure light beam most benignly

Through the dark shadows of the gloomiest bough ?
Does not the heavenly rainbow most divinely
Rise, when the sky is one black-bending brow ?

Would the great ocean's Summer face more brightly
Gleam on the glowing lands with warmer love,
Did his sad speech with softer sounds more lightly
Whisper of His deep voice who reigns above?

Do not those seeds of Spring's glad sweetness grow
Beneath the blackness of the Winter earth,
That yet, when th' inspiring breezes blow,
Shall rise like Hope, to tell of Beauty's birth?

From the proud breast of the supremest Singer,
Of Nature's choir the saddest sounds arise ;
'Tis when the cloud hath wept the lark doth wing her
Most rapturous way to th' exulting skies !

Does not the dewy loveliness of morn
Beam the more brightly for the night that lay
Like anguish on the earth, till he was borne
Dead from the threshold of triumphant day?

And so with human life : though sorrow seem
 To our weak hearts the cloud of life's sweet ray,
Yet it will bring more beauty than we dream
 To Memory, when it is far away !

Amidst the deepest night-shades that surround
 The darkest life, high Hope the glowworm gleams ;
E'en to that soul where saddest sins abound,
 She steals, arrayed in Revelation's beams.

The Valley of the Shadow that we bear
 Shall only make hereafter the more bright
That fadeless home of God, where never tear
 Shall dim the radiance of His holy light

There to the glorious gaze the Past shall shine
 In the deep meaning of forgotten pain ;
There all our sorrows shall be made divine,
 Where Death no end shall seem, but endless gain !

TO M. R. M.

BEAUTIFUL Singer of tender lays,
That linger long in the hearer's heart ;
Like the golden breath of the Summer days
Is the sweetening touch of thy matchless Art ;
In times of gloom, when the spirit seems
To lie like a load on the wearied breast,
Thy presence comes from a land of dreams,
And the sound of thy song is the voice of rest !

Winter is wailing around me here ;
Beauty hath vanished from land and sea ;
In dreary woodlands the leaves fall sere
From the shivering grasp of each desolate tree ;

The rapture of music is heard no more
Breathing of love from the blossoming bough ;
The singers are flown to a sunnier shore,
Whose strains bloom only in fancy *now*.

But thou, perennial Nightingale !
Through all the seasons art with us still ;
Though flowers have faded from wood and dale,
And mists are creeping from hill to hill ;
Yet nought can silence that stream of song
Wherewith thou makest all eyes gleam bright ;
For grief is banished, and hope grows strong,
Wherever thou pourest thy floods of light !

TO A BEAUTIFUL CHILD.

SWEET child whose softly streaming hair

Makes beautiful the breeze,

Like some light wave that rippleth fair

In Summer o'er the seas ;

There is no mist of sorrow

In those clear eyes of thine ;

No shadow of the morrow

Beclouds thy joy divine !

Thy face is sunshine in the air,

Where'er thy footsteps glide ;

No place is dark, if thou art there,

With Beauty by thy side :

As softly as the snowfall,

Thy tiny feet I hear ;

The joyous Graces know all
Their little dove-eyed dear !

Thy brow is beauteous as the snow
That glorifies the lands ;
And lovely as the blooms that blow,
Are thy white lily-hands ;
Thy cheeks are radiant roses,
Their silver leaves, thy hair ;
Meek Innocence reposes
In thy blue eyes so fair.

Yea surely flowers of God's own love
Are such pure souls as thine ;
Transplanted from the Vales above,
A moment here to shine :
Not long they linger lonely
On this dark earth of ours ;
For He can keep them only,
Who formed those gentle flowers !

A POEM OF THE TWILIGHT.

THE sun is sinking slowly
 Behind the purple hills ;
A twilight calm and holy
 The golden evening fills ;
Like some bright dream the glorious West
 Smiles o'er descending day,
As through the regions of sweet rest
 We wind our wondrous way.

The river with a slumbrous sound
 Is murmuring along ;
For its deep voice mild eve hath found
 A more enchanting song :

There is a wonder in the air,
A radiance on the sea ;
A fragrance as of flowers that wear
Their beauty all for me !

Why is the sky more lovely now
Than e'er I dreamed before ?
Is there new music from the bough,
New grandeur on the shore ?
No, 'tis thy presence, love, that makes
Each radiant thing more bright ;
For every drooping flower awakes,
To gladden in thy sight !

The roses rise more dewy fair,
When thou art by my side ;
A purer strain the streamlets bear,
As down the glen they glide ;
The clouds that 'midst ethereal blue
Move on their heavenly way,

Are more celestial in the view

Of thy dark eyes to-day !

O may thy light for ever shine

Upon my life as now ;

And heart with heart in love entwine,

As blooms upon the bough !

So every day shall make more dear

Thy beauty unto me ;

And all the glory of the year

Be glorified in thee !

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1881.

THROUGH the deep silence of this Winter day
My thoughts are with the Spirits of the Past ;
High hearts that like bright mornings waned away
Into effulgent memories that will last !

Old Year, now mingling with the mighty stream
That soundeth ever by the Throne of God ;
Musing on thee, my pensive soul doth dream
Of those who slumber with thee 'neath the sod.

Ah, where is she, the young, the gentle-eyed,
Whose heart was happiness, whose life was love ;
Whose path of peace was ever by the side
Of Him who bore her to His home above ?

And he, whose wealth of intellectual light
Made lovely with benign Religion's rays,
Passed from the prospect of our inward sight
To find that glory he had sought always?

We see but darkly through those mists that hang
O'er the vast music of that Unknown Sea,
Which sings the same mysterious song it sang,
Since first this wondrous life began to be.

Yet do we dream those spirits elsewhere
Bloom flower-like in some realm of perfect rest,
Breathing the sweetness of a purer air
In those fair regions that God's love hath blessed!

A POEM OF SUMMER.

THIS is the season of Love ;
She sings with the bird on the tree ;
Like the rainbow she bends from above,
O'er the earth and the tremulous sea ;
She gleams through the woodlands that shine
In the light of her comrade, the sun ;
Like her spirit the twilight divine
Glides earthwards when daylight is done.

This is the season when glory
Is breathing on mount and main ;
When the beautiful, olden story
Of Eden grows green again ;
When God seems walking at even,
In the cool of the lingering day ;

And the light and the love of Heaven
Are streaming once more on our way !

How fair are the new-old flowers
That glow like the emblems of joy
In the grace of the musical hours,
Whose praise is the birds' employ !
They rise from the graves where perished
The blooms of the last bright year,
Like the loved, lost ones we cherished,
Who have faded,—beyond all fear !

O season of sunny showers,
Whose silvery radiance sweet
Brings beauty to the bowers,
Spreads violets at our feet ;—
O could thy voice of gladness
Sing all our cares away,
In souls that own no sadness
Thy light should dwell alway !

MDLLE. THERESE TIETJENS.

THOSE glorious strains no more ! ah, can it be,
That she who swayed the human heart so long
With the deep passion of divinest song,
Has found the silence of Eternity ?

O nightingale, that through the starry night
Sendest the streams of melody and love,
Lament your silent Sister, while you light
The listening soul with raptures of the grove !

With passion pure and radiant as thine,
She sang the songs sublime of life and death ;
Of Hope, that faileth not with failing breath ;
Of Love, the golden-haired, with eyes divine.

With the fresh flowers of Pity in her hand
She came like sunshine to the lowly bed
Where life lay waiting for the Silent Land,
To soothe with sympathy the fevered head.

In light of gentleness she went her way,
While myriad tongues were shouting her renown ;
Scorning weak Pride's short-lived, deceitful ray,
The Queen of Song,—Humility her crown !

Like an immortal snowdrop o'er her tomb
Hangs sweet Benevolence, with pensive head ;
While Memory, by tenderest Sorrow led,
Waters the flowers of love that o'er her bloom.

That mighty Voice no more ! yet shall thy name
Make music in the regions of the mind ;
The Conqueror of heroes cannot bind
In chains the glory of a deathless fame !

Thy spell was potent ; never harp or lute
Poured purer raptures to the human heart ;
Thy glorious gift made Nature of thine art ;
Now in a deeper Voice that voice is mute !

“ I know that my Redeemer liveth.”—Who
More sweetly sang this high, seraphic strain ?
And now that great Redeemer in thy view
Stands to declare thy faith was not in vain !

“ Ah, death in thee ! ”¹ And shall thy voice no more
Rise like a fountain o’er the raptured ear ?
Yea, for when Death hath made all mystery clear,
Thy holier strains shall glad th’ eternal shore !

¹ “ Ah, che la morté ! ” is the most inspired and impassioned of the many grand solos in Signor Verdi’s “ Trovatore.” It was always one of Mdlle. Tietjens’s most impressive inspirations.

KESWICK LAKE, CUMBERLAND.

Do I indeed behold at last

The image of my dreams ?

Yea, that bright hope which starred the Past

Before my vision gleams ;

I stand at length in mute surprise

Upon this lake's lone shore ;

The fair, ideal picture lies

In future realms no more !

O lovely lake of Derwentwater,

How soothing is thy scene !

Thou sleepest, England's dearest daughter,

Amid her mountains green ;

The arms of grandeur fold thee round
In their embrace of love ;
Here Heaven's own peace a home hath found,
Like that which shines above.

The twilight of the year is mild
On thy pure breast to-day ;
Thou seemest Autumn's favourite child,
So still thy calm alway ;
Beneath thy crags' aspiring forms
How tranquil is thy rest !
Safe from the raging of the storms,
Thy beauty is most blest.

How grand thy gloom, when lightning streams
Across thy quivering face !
When thunder's mighty shadow seems
To darken all thy grace !
When showers are dancing o'er thy woe,
And thy great Guardians stand

Enthroned in clouds that come and go
In a mysterious land !

How deep thy rapture when the voice
Of tempests passed away ;

All Nature smiles, and groves rejoice
In light's returning ray !

How glorious Scafell's crest appears
Dark rising from his dales ;

While Skiddaw, hoary with his years,
Looms o'er the misty vales !

But when the fires of sunset glow
Upon thee from afar,

And wondrous in thy depths below
Is seen the evening star,—

O, then, in that calm, holy time
Thy peace is Paradise to me ;

I breathe the fragrance of that clime,
Where Death is dead, and Love is free !

IN MEMORIAM: MATTHEW ARNOLD.

PoET of English birth, of Grecian heart,
For ever from our presence passed away,
Leaving to men the greatness of thine Art
To lead them upwards to a larger day ;

I cannot comprehend that thou art gone ;
Still do I feel thy fervent hand in mine ;
Thy gracious form is near, yet greater grown—
For Death has made thine aspect more divine.

O sweet Consoler of each sorrowing life
That 'midst its darkness seeks the light of God ;
Assured that through this aimless, earthly strife
No path is peace save that which Love has trod ;

O earnest Soul that felt for other's pain
So deeply, that thou didst forget thine own ;
Striving by silent sympathy to gain
Their thoughts who dwell in this dark world alone ;

How fondly didst thou linger o'er the dead,
And bless the loved ones in their lonely grave ;
While thy meek Muse a fadeless fragrance shed
Around the memories of the pure and brave !

The reverence of that Spirit which did raise
From death a mortal friend, abode in thee ;
Now that thou art beyond all reach of praise,
May Christ, who died for men, thy comfort be !

Soft be thy sleep, O lover of mankind,
Far from those storms that rave around us here ;
For when thou dost awake, thy soul shall find
That Love whose strength has conquered every fear !

TO MY BOOKS.

SILENT Consolers of the loneliest days
Of sorrow and distress ! whose gracious power
Doth shed around us in immortal rays
The splendours of the Past : through storm and shower,
Sunshine and shadow, ye are with us still,
Touching our souls with your own calm repose,
Even as the glory of the rainbow throws
Its tenderness on sea and distant hill ;
More than mute memories are ye of those Minds,
That, blossoming 'mid the gloom of doubt and pain,
Gave to the world that majesty which binds
Our earth to heaven in Thought's celestial chain :
Ages may perish ; Kingdoms pass away ;
In you the soul, embalmed, defies decay !

THE BEAUTY OF DEATH.

DEATH makes all things more fair. When from the
frame

Of man his soul has faded far away,
A holy sweetness that life may not claim
Shines from his face with deep and tender ray ;
Like purest marble gleams the placid brow,
As if the calm of Heaven slumbered there ;
The mystery of pain hath vanished now ;
The eyes are closed, as if in gentle prayer.
The gracious glory of the fading grove,
Touched by the peaceful pathos of decay,
Is not so beautiful as those we love,
When they have found God's own eternal day.
Death has disclosed a beauty like to Thine,
O God ! whose grace hath made His voice divine !

TO THE TWILIGHT.

BEAUTIFUL Spirit of the Summer eve,
Thou art not wedded to the thoughtless mind !
With thee arise those tender moods that grieve
Over some vanished beauty which doth bind
The pensive Present to the fadeless Past ;
Thy deep, mysterious stillness well accords
(As music moves harmonious to sweet words),
With memories whose power to bless will last ;
Whose fragrance, fairer than all breath of flowers,
Comes with remembrance of the lovely dead ;
Thou glidest like God's presence 'midst those hours
When Labour unto rest by Love is led ;
Bringing to souls much wearied with the day,
Gleams of a joy that owns eternal ray !

“THERE SHALL BE NO MORE SEA.”

MYSTERIOUS Sea, whose holy Summer psalm
Fills with soft tenderness the pensive mind,
Steeping our fancies in a glorious calm
That Memory loves, when thou art left behind ;
O mighty Sea, with thunder in thy roar,
When Winter moans like anguish o'er the dead,
Whose snowy legions with fierce-sounding tread
Charge the stern forces of the steadfast shore ;
When Time like some dim scene hath passed away
From the pure prospect of the Silent Land,
Shall we not long to hear thy children play
With the white pebbles on the glittering strand ?
How fair beyond all human hope must be
That Heaven whose bright perfection knows not thee !

SORROW.

THE purest blessedness that life can know
Is born of sorrow's strength. The vast cloud seems,
When it obscures the sun's benignant glow,
More powerful than the glory of his beams ;
He only grows the fairer, when the gloom
At length has slowly, sadly passed away.
So shall our pain appear beyond the tomb,
Touched into light by God's undying ray.
Then the sweet, solemn sadness of the Past
Shall bring a nobler meaning to the mind ;
The beauty of all mystery at last
In Love's fair dwelling-place our souls shall find ;
On the deep vision of the Blest shall shine
The truth that calm endurance is divine !

TO THE UNKNOWN SINGER.

I.

O YOUTHFUL Singer, singing from the heart
 Sweet, soulful songs, unnoticed and unknown !
 Around thy glad sunrise the shroud is thrown
 Of dark oblivion ; yet thy gentle art
 Is not in vain ;—does not the unknown stream
 Make pure the pathways of the unknown land ?
 Do not the trees o'er its bright beauty dream,
 And cheer it onwards to the distant strand ?
 Doth not the flower in the lone forest wild,
 Untrod by men, delight the wandering bee
 More than the loveliest plot that ever smiled
 In fairest gardens by the whispering sea ?
 The lowliest bloom that scents the lowliest sod,
 Lives in the grateful gaze of Nature's God !

TO THE UNKNOWN SINGER.

II.

THEN sing, O Singer ! of immortal Love,—
 That wondrous sun, in whose deep radiance shine
 The sacred rays of faith and peace divine !
 Sing Truth, that, like a rainbow from above,
 Bends with a god-like promise o'er the earth !
 Sing of high Hope, by meek-eyed Patience led,—
 That silent watcher by the lonely bed
 Where life is fading into glorious birth !
 Sing down the dark with softly sounding song,
 With thy glad music sanctify the bright ;
 And though thy strain be as a secret light
 Gleaming unnoticed 'midst the starry throng,
 Yet shall th' Eternal thy sweet presence know
 In that far-shining, universal glow !

TO A BEREAVED FRIEND.

I.

LADY, to whom thy God hath early given
That sacred sorrow for the beauteous dead,
Whose knowledge is so greatly born of Heaven,
That gracious souls like thine have oft been said
To bless amid their inward agony
The Hand that took their light of life away,
Though like the moaning of some restless sea
They mourned that loss which nothing could repay ;
There is a pain more powerful than all bliss,
To lift our natures nearer unto God ;
The deep voice of Bereavement whispers this,
When like the Holy Child whose feet have trod
The shadowed path which leads to deathless Love,
We rise through suffering to the Realms above !

TO A BEREAVED FRIEND.

II.

I KNOW that such consoling thoughts are thine,
O mourning Widow, weeping for thy dead ;
Tender amid thy tears gleams Hope divine,
To thy sad heart by Revelation led.
He is with thee, O loved one ! in thy woe,
Whose power hath swept all darkness from the grave ;
The flowers of Faith and Mercy bloom below
The boughs of Mystery that o'er them wave.
The wondrous calm upon the dying brow,
The light of glory in the last, long gaze,
Are but faint pictures of that peace which now
Is with the soul whose passion was thy praise.
May his meek spirit with thy love abide,
Till God's veiled Angel bring thee to his side !

TO THE PRIMROSE.

I.

PEACEFUL companion of the spotless lamb
 That fills with innocence the fields of Spring,
 When earthly love ascends on heavenward wing,
 And Contemplation breathes a holy calm ;
 Once more, like joy arising from the tomb
 Of Winter stern, thou gleamest into view ;
 Through all the dreary days of sullen gloom
 My hopes were onwards with thee, for I knew
 That He was faithful who so sweetly said,
 " While earth remains, the seasons shall not cease."
 Thus when loud winds were wailing o'er leaves dead,
 And fair flower-children born of Autumn's peace,
 Sweet Faith led gentle Memory by the hand
 To where thy glory filled the vernal land !

TO THE PRIMROSE.

II.

THROUGH the dark season of the varied year,
Thy sleep was calm and beauteous underneath
The cold and cheerless ground. O'er Nature death
Had breathed, and Beauty lay upon her bier.
But at the touch of His life-giving breath,
To whom all things of grace we love are dear,
Because they are His gifts, thou didst arise,
While soft winds sang the story of thy birth,
And birds with showers of music thrilled the skies,
Like some fair dream of sunlight o'er the earth.
So in the grave of silence Truth may sleep,
While Falsehood raves like Winter o'er her rest ;
But she shall rise serene, when God shall sweep
All darkness from the memories of the Blest !

TO A GREAT SINGER.

I.

Now, when bright birds with music in each heart
Fly from their far-off dreamlands to our shore,
Thou with the inspiration of thine Art,
Queen of immortal Melody ! once more
Dost glide like sunrise to the city's gloom,
To touch with sweetness as of that fair Land,
Whence first all streams of music from one Hand
Divinely came, the listening hearts of men ;
With deeper strains than through the vernal bloom
The bird of evening from the shadowy glen
Pours tremulously-glad,—the subject soul,
That dreams alone of beauty and of thee,
Is thrilled, while heavenly sounds arise and roll
Like showers of sunshine o'er a Summer sea !

TO A GREAT SINGER.

II.

NOR with thy purity of voice alone
Dost thou exalt and glorify the mind
Of him who feels thy spell. Upon the throne
Of Tragedy thy genius unconfined
Hath set thee gloriously, while crowds below
Pour to thine ears the passion of thy praise.
Fame is with thee where'er thy footsteps go ;
Anticipation fondly hears thy lays.
And when thy song, like some ethereal stream,
Now glad with rapturous joy's effulgent ray,
Now sweetly sad as twilight when the dream
Of heavenly sunset wanes, has died away—
In Memory's soul thy radiant raptures rise,
And fade, like rainbows in the silent skies !

TO THE SUN.

I.

O BEAUTEOUS parent of a lovely day !
That from the starry grandeur of the night
Pourest like some pure stream thy morning ray,
Filling the world with floods of amber light,
And making all things joyful with thy love ;
O couldst thou from thy presence wipe away
Those stains of sin and passion and decay,
So darkening all the earth that Heaven above
Is bright in vain to sorrow-blinded eyes ;
O couldst thou in the sounding city's gloom
Touch with thy life the drooping flower that dies
In hopeless yearning for thy glorious bloom ;
How much more sweetly would thy morn arise,
Like heavenly hope from darkness of the tomb !

TO THE SUN.

II.

BUT thou art pitiless : thy light falls sweet
Among the darksome yews that moan and wave
Like human anguish o'er the early grave ;
Thou minglest with the pathos of the street
Unsympathetic brightness of thy grace ;
'Midst the still sadness of the bed of death
Where all is silent, save the fleeting breath
Soon to become immortal, thy bright face
Gleams, all-relentless, on the lonely scene ;
Sorrow and sin thou see'st everywhere,
Where Happiness and Beauty might have been,
Sinking sad life in gulfs of deep despair,
And smilest calm ; on foul deformities
Thou gazest all unmoved, with golden eyes !

TO "HERMIONE."

MARVEL not, Lady, that a sense of pain
Should ofttimes touch the brightness of thy lay,
Even as the sad voice of the sounding main
Breathes through the gladness of some cloudless day.
Already dost thou hear the solemn Sea
Of Sorrow breaking on Time's steadfast shore ;
The pathos of a world's deep misery
For ever rising in its restless roar.
And thus thy music, rainbow-like, is born
Of Nature's intermingling smiles and tears ;
For thee the very dawning of thy morn
Is dimmed by thoughts of mortal cares and fears :
Yet Sympathy the beautiful is thine,
Whose light doth make all sadness seem divine !

TO A MUSICIAN.

I.

WHEN through the darkness of a Winter night
 I moved, my friend, towards thy glad abode,
 I scarce could have conceived that so much light
 Of music lay before me on my road ;
 Or that, while the wide waste of wrathful sea
 Was shuddering 'neath the cold and cruel blast,
 That swept the white sail from the moaning mast,
 Or shook the sere leaves from the swaying tree,
 Such joy awaited us ; such gladness pure,
 Poured from the depths of Melody divine ;
 Oh, would this inexpressive Muse of mine
 Could sing those radiant raptures which endure
 In Memory's mind !—The passion of thine Art
 Hath shed a wondrous splendour o'er my heart !

TO A MUSICIAN.

II.

WHEN thou didst brightly celebrate the day
 When thou and she, thy constant joy, were wed ;
 When evening came, and all was glad and gay
 Within thy happy home, as if, unled,
 Pleasure had glided there ; when to the stream
 Of music, graceful forms were circling sweet
 To the soft-floating strains with joyful feet,
 And I was gliding with thee in a dream
 Of pensive contemplation through those lands
 Of Fancy, that make musical the mind ;
 "I know not why," thou saidst ; "God's gracious
 hands
 Have gently been upon me ; He is kind.
 Much have I read upon Life's changeful page,
 Yet Youth is ever with me in mine age !"

TO A MUSICIAN.

III.

O FRIEND, I thank thee for that soothing thought !
For it doth lead fair spirits unto me
That whisper, " God is good." Thy words have taught
The lesson of that peaceful purity
Which is the soul of Truth. For perfect Love,
Flowing from His own calm, immortal heart
Who loves for evermore, brings from above
Eternal Youth to dwell with noble Art.
Thy love of Nature knoweth not the touch
Of drooping age ; for thine is some sweet part
Of Heaven's own youth. Because thou lovest much
Those forms of beauty that may never know
Time's chilling breath, or Death's destructive dart,—
Therefore to thee their fadeless grace doth flow !

UNFULFILLED RENOWN.

I.

'Tis sad to see the woodland glories fade
In Winter's cruel breath, and list the sighs
Of ever-growing streams that thrill the skies
With solemn sounds, when leaves on earth are laid ;
Sad to behold the dark, deserted trees
Bending, as in unutterable woe
O'er their pale offspring, while their murmurs blow
Into the voice of the consoling breeze ;
But sadder far to watch the slow decay
Of some sweet youthful soul that lived for fame,
And found it not, because his music came
Too early on the great world's ear, to lay
Impression deep and strong.—No sunset flame
Of mighty triumph crowns *his* dying day !

UNFULFILLED RENOWN.

II.

O YET we hope the early night of death
Fades in the glory of a deathless day
To those who, pale consumptive, pass away,
Panting in vain to breathe the flowery breath
Of Fame, that feeds on great Parnassus hill ;
And that as Labour, feeble in his birth,
But strong in life, is sweetener of the earth—
So the sweet effort of their Muse may still
Be felt in Zion ; and a heavenly fame
Of purer rapture than is known below,
May follow those deep strains which softly flow
From harps that ever sound His sacred name,
Whose voiceless power, to work His gentle will,
Can make all good the end of seeming ill !

IN MEMORIAM: LADY AILSA.

MEEKEST of souls, whose gracious work is o'er ;
 Whose rest is now for ever by God's side,
 Where sorrow and where suffering nevermore
 Can turn to pain and pathos mortal pride ;
 The strength that dwells in earnest sympathy,
 The grace that glides with gentleness, was thine ;
 The sadness of deep natures came to thee
 Through love, and made thy being half-divine ;
 Like Him whose graciousness o'erflowed God's
 Heaven,
 That it might bless, and sanctify, and save,
 To thee, O earthly Saint ! was greatly given
 The power to snatch from Ruin's yawning grave
 Those lives whose silent gratitude shall be
 Thy deathless praise through all Eternity !

ODE TO TIME.

O VOICEFUL Son of calm Eternity !
Born at a breath of that immortal Soul
Whose sun-like spirit shines into our hearts
Through myriad clouds of mystery we see,
Touched by His heavenly radiance ; raise my Muse
To heights of inspiration while she sings,
Modest with veneration of the theme,
Deep-toned and tremulous 'neath the reverend awe
Of its great majesty, thy songs of praise.
When out of nothingness sublime arose
The clear realities of earth and sky ;
And into beauteous being sweetly came
That all too short-lived Paradise of peace,
Fairest of gardens, where the sunny streams

Flowed of bright beauty and humility,
Since seldom seen united upon earth ;
Where in angelic light of her own grace,
Pure with the spotlessness of love, all-veiled
In meekest shroud of innocence, more fair
Than consciousness, the mild and spotless Eve
With our great Sire first walked the ways of God ;
Thou from the bosom of Eternity
Arose to guide the restless stream of life
Through storms of dark affliction, paths of peace,
Deserts of deep despair, with oases
Of sacred hope, and many a fair mirage,
To that eternal Ocean whence it came.
Thou with the pure beginning of all things
We see around us, and all thoughts we feel
Didst rise to being ; when they cease to be
Thou too shalt fade, and, dying, leave no trace
Within the clear light of Eternity
Of all thy wondrous works.

But who shall dare

Ascribe to thee the praise that is thy due,
For all those mighty deeds? For unto thee
Are dedicated all the mountain-thoughts
Of the inspirèd soul. At thy command
Invention came, a captive to the mind
To work the will of man. Then continents,
Between whose glorious limits lay long lengths
Of solemn-sounding seas, united were
By the electric language, swept along
On wings that shame the pinions of the winds.
Steam poured his marvels o'er a wondering world,
When thou didst say: "Arise, O princely Power!
For Civilisation waits, and Commerce drags
Her grievous burdens through the paths of pain,
Groaning for thee. Arise, arise and sing
A mightier song to God,—that one great Source
Of all the marvellous triumphs of the mind."
To cheer thine onward march, pale Poesy
Pours like a bird her many-sounding song
Into the ears of Fame.—Philosophy

Peers through fair Fancy's telescope to scan
Thy hidden mysteries, or looks beyond
Into the regions of the Vast Unknown,
Where Truth hangs mystic as a dim-seen star,
In realms of utter night. Aspiring Fame
Through thy calm atmosphere essays to bear
The beauteous deeds of men to fadeless lands
Of Immortality ; but, heavy with the flight,
Droops wearily to earth. Oblivion falls
Like some fierce vulture on the drooping bird,
And Fame is seen no more !—Like withered leaves,
Sere with the dark of Winter, names decay
Within thy freezing breath ; and nought can come
Into Eternity with thee besides
The all-eternal Soul !

Thy giant hands

Have changed the winding pathways of the streams ;
Sunk islands in the ocean ; cast the hills
From their first-formed foundations, as a child
The bounding ball ; shattered the rocky shores

With raging seas ; stolen from volcanic hills
Their fiery life ; yet, when that Final Fate
Springs from the heavenly Heights on angel wings,
Fierce with devouring flame, in glorious light
Of His immortal Presence, earth and thou,
As dew-drops in the morning of your God
Shall melt away !

THE CHOSEN OF THE POETS.

THE time had come at length, when to the chiefs
 Of soaring Singers, queenly Fame should give
 According to their deeds. Sublime she sat
 Upon a lofty throne, on either side
 Encircled by those mighty Minds whose Muse,
 Endowed with her undying life, had braved
 The dissolution of the darksome grave.
 Fearing the direful doom of those who bear
 All their pure memory with them to the dust,
 Pass into dim Oblivion like pale stars
 Before the blaze of day, and leave no light
 Behind them that the great world may behold
 As ever-living beauty, three had come,
 With hope deep burning in their pensive hearts,

Like glow-worm in the night, to give account
Of their high deeds to Fame.

And first¹ of these

Was he who Truth and Chivalry had sung
In pure Arthurian verse, while others poured,
The darkness of their passions o'er the world.
Around his head was bound a circling wreath
Of verdant laurel, given by the Queen
Of that green Land which blossomed in the light
Of his belovèd Muse. Erect he stood,
A venerable Bard, in quiet pride
Of modesty, while veneration shone
Like sunshine through the hazel of his eyes.
Then softly said the Queen: "What hast thou
done,
That I should give thee Immortality?"
The Bard's deep voice fell on the silence sweet
Of that majestic Temple, as the sound
Of long waves melting on the Summer shore.
And slowly, as if weighing well his words,

¹ Tennyson.

That fell upon the ear like drops of rain
On a still Summer sea, he spake : “ O Fame !
That I have striven through my length of days
To sing of all things pure and beautiful
That this dim world of mystery can show,
Or man’s high life unfold, thou knowest well.
To elevate my Art ; to purify
The passionate sea of poetry that rolls
In grandeur round the world, with living springs
From the clear fount of Nature ; to disclose
Those hidden flowers of loveliness that lurk,
Minute yet beautiful, in lonely ways,
Known only to the searching soul that sees
A sweetness in the small things of the earth,—
Has been the one great glory of my life,
The music of my mind.”

Then the Queen :

“ O noble Bard ! thy words are pure and true ;
Sweet with the unheard melodies of Peace.
Within my Temple thou shalt ever pour
Thy purity of song.”

And next came one,¹
Who sang the life of man in verse that bore
The freshness of the breezes to the mind.
Passion alone he needed, to have thrilled
The great heart of the world. Tall he stood,
Manly and modest, for his earnest soul
Was deep with meditation, and the love
Of all things peaceful blossomed in his gaze.
Reverently he spake: "O gracious Fame!
Though thy sweet smile is mine, thou knowest well
It was not my ambition. Ever filled
With lowliest love of sacred Truth, I wrought,
I fought for her alone. Well I know,
My Muse has not illumined all the world.
And why I am permitted thus to stand
One of three Singers of a glorious reign,
Thy chosen of so many who have sung
Of Love and Beauty, and some things less pure,—
I cannot clearly, wholly comprehend.

¹ Matthew Arnold.

A few high hearts alone have found a grace
In my calm numbers. Yet, O thanks to God!
I have not courted favour, wrought my way
Through flowers of flattery, to where I stand,
Waiting thy word to-day."

Then in a voice
Of sweetest music from her starry throne
She spake, while the mild moonlight of her gaze
Made glory in the Temple. Perfect peace
Waited upon her words. "O lofty Soul!
There is a secret sweetness in thy heart
That men have never known. Ascend and sing,
Rich with my wreath, a never-ending song."
And last¹ of these the grandeur of whose mind,
Mingled with purity of life, had gained
Admittance to that sacred Fane which lay
Open but to the noblest, came a Bard,
Whose song was sunshine in those city-streets,

¹ Robert Buchanan. This poem refers only to the poets of the Victorian age.

Where Pathos dwells with Sin. His high heart set
To music the deep sadness of the world.

A mildness dwelt within his glowing eyes,
A glory on his snowy brow.—Then Fame :
“ What hast thou done for immortality ? ”

As with a sad sea-cadence rose the voice
Of him who stood before her.—“ I have sung
Of scenes unsung before. My Muse has made
Sweet melody beside the lonely couch,
Where Poverty lay dying. I have found
A grandeur in the lowliest life that dwells
In depths of darkest misery and sin.”

Then lofty Fame : “ Great heart ! thy words are true.
More than the Bard art thou ; for thou hast been
The Poet’s friend. Across that roaring stream
Which foams between thee and the dark Unknown,
Thy hand was stretched to save the sinking soul.
Thy song was not in vain. Thy Muse has shed
A splendour in the dark ways of the world.
Thy strains shall rise in grandeur o’er thy grave ! ”

KILLIN.

ONCE more, as in the mirror of a dream
That holds the fairest pictures of the Past,
I view thy scenes of joy ; thy woods that flash
Like gleams of sunlight on the mountain's brow ;
Thy lonely lake, enfolded with the peace
Of mighty hills ; thy murmuring streams that make
Wild music 'midst the boughs ; thy village sweet
Beneath its guardian crags ; thy tranquil vales,
Where peacefulness with beauty ever dwells ;
Pleasure hath glided with me in my walks
Through thy green solitudes, where scarce a voice
Falls on the raptured ear, drinking serene
Those sounds of rural life that make more glad
The soul of Meditation, and uplift
The heart of him who hears to the calm heights.

Of speechless adoration, voiceless praise !
No Summer bloomed athwart thy woodland ways,
Or smiled in flowers, when first I gazed, and saw
Thy winding dale ; when first I moved alone
Amidst thy leafless woods—for Winter reigned
O'er all the region ; whitely stretched afar
The mountains, ghost-like, through a frosty sky ;
Hushed was the voice of each slow-gliding stream
Beneath an icy hand ; with gurgling sound
As if of suffocation 'neath the grasp
Of some fierce tyrant, all unseen they stole
Towards a deeper peace than that which breathed
On all things round ; pallidly the snow,
Like the white cloth that covereth the couch
Of hushful death, enshrouded the sad bier
Of Nature's beauty ; dim with eery drift,
Curved the pale paths from vale to frozen vale ;
Below the hoary Hills that mutely rose
Like mighty Meditations unexpressed
From the deep vale to Heaven, lifeless lay

The lonesome lake ; yet to the pensive soul
Whose love is Nature, joy serene was there ;
Grandeur stood on the mountains, lifting Thought
Into sublime emotion ; Fancy found
A glory in the sky, when the still snow
Dropt like the feathers of a fairy's wing
From the dark clouds upon the slumbering earth,
Or glimmered, dream-like, in the tremulous air ;
A rapture in each wondrous tree that stood
By the great artist of the Frost arrayed
As some pure bride, in splendour that outshone
The brightest splendour that fair summer brings
To glad the glittering lands.

High o'er the vale

Ben Lawers dwelt in marvellous majesty,
Like some eternal Destiny that knows
No touch of Time, gazing for evermore
Towards the skies, while round him moved the clouds
Like things of earth, that ever grow and fade
Before the face of calm Eternity.

In the dim distance, glorious as a crag
That towers vast above some lonely sea,
Arose the great Ben More ; no pyramid
Uplifts more grandeur from th' Egyptian plains
Than this exalted Mount, that from afar
Gleamed o'er the snowy vales, 'midst lesser hills
That stood like courtiers round their mighty king.
Farewell, proud scene ! Perchance no more mine eye
May gaze upon thy grandeur, raising thought
With thy dim-soaring monarchs to those heights
Where Contemplation broods ; whence wildly flow
From founts of inspiration the full floods
Of deep, impassioned Song : yet Memory long
Shall keep thy beauty ; mirrored in my mind
Whose dreams are of thy glory, wondrous flash
Thy rivulets to the dale ; through the fierce crags
Where Fancy loves to lean, thy cascades white
Crash in the listening glen ; while o'er thy vales
Imagination like a Summer sky
Is bending evermore !

THE POET.

PART I.

FAIR as a flow'ret that the gentle May
 Breathes into fragile life was his sweet soul
 Whose praise I sing. No high and haughty tower,
 Rearing its grandeur o'er the boundless lands
 Ruled by its master, owned his simple birth ;
 But the low cottage, nestling underneath
 The sheltering ash-tree, where the busy hand
 Went to the songs of labour, and the heart
 Free from the snares Ambition loves to lay
 For those who deem her lovely, breathed that peace
 Which fills the shades of mild Humility,
 Where dwells the lowly mind. His birth, unknown
 Beyond the limits of his native vale,

Was silent in the voices of the earth
As the small brook whose life is from the hill
To the deep-sounding stream that rolls below ;—
No farther did its fame extend ; his death
Has thrilled a world whose heart he could not move,
Till his had ceased to feel. No sunlight sweet
Of gracious sympathy from those that dwell
With rapture on the music of the Muse,
Hailing the Poet as a golden mean
'Twixt man and his Creator, a great Guide
Pointing from Time unto Eternity,—
Came to refresh his lowly soul that felt
The beauty of the earth, the love of Him
Who lives in all things pure ; and sang that love,
And beautified that beauty in his strains.
But as a kindred soul¹ so sweetly said,
In words that Memory loves, and keeps within
Her own immortal light—streams from within

¹ The late Thomas Tyrie, Edinburgh, whose exquisite poems appear in the eighth volume of 'Modern Scottish Poets.'

Watered the growing garden of his mind,
As the great Nile the ever-thirsting sands
Of Oriental regions ; his great soul
Shone like a sun through all the darksome clouds,
That loomed along the path to future fame.”
He was a Prophet, who was honoured not
In his own country. Much his parents loved
Their poet-child, but could not comprehend
His wondrous aspirations. For he sat
Wrapped in the silence of engrossing thought
At evening by the fire, when Winter reigned
O'er all the landscape, gazing steadfastly
At the fair visions Fancy placed before
His inner eyesight, silent as a cloud,
Brooding ere it descends in gentle rain
To soothe the fevered flowers. Much they gazed,—
His parents,—at their mute and pensive boy,
And wondered at his wonder ; searching vain
To find the secret source of all his thought
In things that lay around him. For to them

The river sounding on its sea-ward way
Was but a simple stream, suggesting nought
Save what it seemed ; the peaceful valley, filled
With the great power of sunset, spake in vain
Of heavenly dreams ; no marvellous rapture rose
With th' ascending sun. But *he* had learned
From Nature's self the love he longed to give
Reflection in fair verse, and felt within
His heart a music he would fain repeat,—
Sweet sounds they could not hear. And soon the

Muse

Began to guide his pen. His soul o'erflowed,
When through the cloudless skies of childhood rose
The great Parnassus, beckoning from afar
Where stood the mighty Chiefs of soaring song,
Rich with the wreath of Fame.

Eternal thirst

Was his for love, and tender sympathy.
Nor did he thirst in vain ; though many seemed
To scorn his music, for they felt it not.

He lived to sing, and singing, sang to live,—
For music was he made ; his only wish,
To raise to Fame the quiet scenes that knew
His humble birth. But sad Consumption came,
And led him tenderly to Death's dark dale
(Whose gloom he brightened with his dying song),
Ere the sweet wish was gained. Parnassus guards
His pure remains. "A morning with no noon,
A rose unblown," his life indeed ; but Fame
Has made the morning fadeless ; blown the bud
Into the perfect rose. His native vale
Gleams with a wondrous light ; his streamlets flow
Through the bright regions of immortal Song,
Pouring his peaceful praises evermore !

THE POET.

PART II.

'Twas early Spring ; meek buds were peering through
 The hopeful trees ; the earth was smiling gay
 With her first-born flowers, and all things told
 Of growing bloom, when first I viewed the grave
 Of the sweet Poet of Simplicity,
 With one¹ who, while the Singer sang on earth
 Those strains that sound the sweetest in our ears,
 With him went singing on his peaceful path
 Towards the Mount of Fame ; and cheered with hopes
 Of after-death renown his tender heart,
 When Death was solemnising all his song.

¹ William Freeland, the Glasgow poet-editor ; an accomplished journalist and a thoughtful *littérateur*.

Bright was the day ; from the all-silent sky
The sunshine glittered to the lands below,
Filling with light the faces of the streams
That rolled like streaks of silver to the sea.
The air hung silent, tremulous with the sun,
Beneath the dome of Heaven ; all things obeyed
The softening spell of Peace. One sound alone,
The rush and roaring of the distant trains
Speeding with voice of thunder on their way,
Burst on the silence like a sudden thought,
Then faded into distance like a dream
That comes and goes at intervals of night.
Pensive we passed to where the Poet lies,
Silent below the flowers he loved so well,
Far from the sounding City where he first
Felt the cold mist of death relaxing all
The energies of life, and breathed the prayer
That he might rest beside his natal stream,
Far from the cares and rivalries of men,
Beneath the spotless skies. There Summer weaves

Her flowery vestures o'er his dear remains,
And Winter falls in purity of snow
O'er his repose, who sweetly poured their praise
In purest verse. The crumbling, antique Aisle
Rising as if from out the shadowy Past
To view the deeds of Death, in pity seems
Gazing with speechless sympathy towards
His early grave, as he was wont to gaze
In a poetic dream, when Twilight filled
With dewy splendour all the peaceful flowers,
And mellow Silence walked the evening sky,
To meet the sadness of the coming night.
A stately Stone, reared by the tender strength
Of Sympathy and Friendship, stands to tell
His genius, music, sad consumption, death,
Whose name immortal shines for evermore
In golden letters in the Book of Fame.
No fitter resting-place for him whose song
Was Nature's love ! Calmly he sleeps among
Those scenes he sweetened with the fadeless light

Of his undying verse. Dim with distance rise
The hoary hills that elevate his song,—
Parents of wandering rills which wanton through
The glens that knew his footsteps, while more near,
His streamlets murmur on their sea-ward way,
And seem to him who loves their Poet's name,
The sweeter for his sake. So may they flow,
Wedded for ever to his earthly song,
While in the realms of light, he, greater grown,
Pours with a mightier Muse His perfect praise
From whom all music issues, and to Whom
It must return ; Who ever takes alone
But what He gives !

A SUNSET SCENE.

(FROM 'SABBATH EVE IN A VALLEY.')

Lo ! o'er the Western waves the golden Sun,
Mingling with his own glory in the deep,
Has sunk to rest, his daily labour o'er,
Leaving his glowing footprints in the sky.
A wondrous train of clouds of varied hue,
Dreaming along his glorious sea-ward way,
Attest his power. Upon the purple hills
His splendour still remains, and on the face
Of the sad sea his feet are beautiful.
As if to mourn his departing Friend,
The cuckoo from the bosom of the glen
Pours his far-echoing song ; the ringdove's moan
Grows deeper with the shadows of the grove ;

The silvery radiance leaves the pensive stream,
Deep-sounding through the vale ; tear-drops are seen
On the pale faces of the drooping flowers,—
All things are saddening into silent night.
The distance narrows ; and the far-seen hills
Seem ghosts dim-rising through a misty dream.
As still and silent as the pale primrose
Starts from the wakening earth at touch of Spring,
And fills with light the vale ; so sweet and still
The evening star creeps imperceptibly
Through the deep bosom of the deepening night,
And looks in love upon the lands below.
Soon like a garden, the all-silent sky
Breaks in a million starry blooms, that smile
Like hope-gleams through the sadness of the night
And gaze in wonder on the darkening earth.

AN AUTUMN HYMN.

PARENT of Time ! to work whose holy will
The world first rose to being, and all things
Moved to the music of Thy fadeless words
From dark, confusing chaos into life,
Clear with Thy glorious light ; whose Spirit moves
Through all Thy wondrous works, unfelt alone
By those who close their senses to Thy Truth,
Or wander from Thy ways ;—inspire my pen,
While in this bright perfection of the year,
Its glory thine, I pour Thy hymns of praise.
The season speaks Thy love ; the golden fields
Gleam grateful 'neath the gladness of the sun
From shore to peaceful shore ; the rivers flow
In mellow light along their lonely ways,

With voices sounding of Eternity,
In shadows of the grove ; the rainbows rise
Like marvellous wreaths of incense from the earth
To Thine eternal skies. The pale clouds glide
Through heavenly silence, preaching of Thy peace
To listening lands below. The mighty main,
Blushing beneath the glories of Thy heavens,
Loud sounds Thy praises o'er the glowing lands
With that deep tongue Thou gavest unto him
When Time began. The universal voice
Of all Thy great Creation sings of Thee !
I too would touch my feeble harp, and pour,
Modest 'neath all Thy matchless majesty,
Thy never-perfect praise. Thou madest man
In Thine all-spotless image ; Eden gave,
Fair emblem of Thine own enduring Home,
The Paradise of peace. But this he lost,
Lured by the soul-ensnaring strength of sin
Into a gloom, eternal, save for Him
Whose light of love has pierced its darkness through,

As morning shines through night ; Thy gentle Son,
Who came, the Shepherd to the flock that fled
Far from the heavenly Fold. O, lift us up
To heights of knowledge, whence our eyes may see
The far-extending greatness of Thy grace,
And His, the pure Redeemer of the world !

.

Thy greatness is to us a mystery ;
So dim and dreadful that our drooping souls
Are bound beneath its grandeur, as pale flowers
Beneath the weight of night. Yet Thy sweet love
Shines star-like midst that grandeur on our souls
Through all the devious courses of our lives.
We feel that Thou art gracious as great ;
For the clear moonlight of Thy perfect peace
Gleams steadfast through this mystic night of Time
Into the heart of Faith. When tossed about
On fierce Affliction's seas, with not a star
To guide our weary way, high thoughts of Thee
Sustain our trembling frames, and waft us past

The roaring tempest to the welcome shore.
In Thy pure light the last, long, dismal Dale
Seems but a solemn thought that looms before
Eternity of hope ; for Thy belovèd Son
Hath planted 'midst the terrors of the tomb
The first fair flower of Faith.

We ever see,

We feel Thee everywhere. Thou movest through
The restful regions of our nightly dreams,
Rich with the angel-ladders of Thy love ;
Thou risest with the radiance of the morn,
Thyself the deathless Dawn of heavenly light,
To wipe away the gloom ; Thy spirit dwells
Through all the glowing day ; the twilight calm
Bears the pure presence of Thy spotless peace.
All silent things in Nature have a voice
That tells us Thou art God !

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