

Ah, yes ! much more would start into his sight—  
The revelries and mysteries of night :  
And should I ever see them, I will tell you  
Such tales as needs must with amazement spell you.

These are the living pleasures of the bard :  
But richer far posterity's award.  
What does he murmur with his latest breath,  
While his proud eye looks through the film of death ?  
"What though I leave this dull and earthly mould,  
Yet shall my spirit lofty converse hold  
With after times.—The patriot shall feel  
My stern alarum, and unsheath his steel ;  
Or, in the senate thunder out my numbers  
To startle princes from their easy slumbers.  
The sage will mingle with each moral theme  
My happy thoughts sententious ; he will teem  
With lofty periods when my verses fire him,  
And then I'll stoop from heaven to inspire him.  
Lays have I left of such a dear delight  
That maids will sing them on their bridal night.  
Gay villagers, upon a morn of May,  
When they have tired their gentle limbs with play,  
And formed a snowy circle on the grass,  
And placed in midst of all that lovely lass  
Who chosen is their queen,—with her fine head  
Crownèd with flowers purple, white, and red :  
For there the lily, and the musk-rose, sighing,  
Are emblems true of hapless lovers dying :  
Between her breasts, that never yet felt trouble,  
A bunch of violets full blown, and double,  
Serenely sleep :—she from a casket takes  
A little book,—and then a joy awakes  
About each youthful heart,—with stifled cries,  
And rubbing of white hands, and sparkling eyes :



For she's to read a tale of hopes and fears ;  
One that I fostered in my youthful years :  
The pearls, that on each glist'ning circlet sleep,  
Gush ever and anon with silent creep,  
Lured by the innocent dimples. To sweet rest  
Shall the dear babe, upon its mother's breast,  
Be lulled with songs of mine. Fair world, adieu !  
Thy dales, and hills, are fading from my view :  
Swiftly I mount, upon wide spreading pinions,  
Far from the narrow bounds of thy dominions.  
Full joy I feel, while thus I cleave the air,  
That my soft verse will charm thy daughters fair,  
And warm thy sons !" Ah, my dear friend and brother,  
Could I, at once, my mad ambition smother  
For tasting joys like these, sure I should be  
Happier, and dearer to society.  
At times, 'tis true, I've felt relief from pain  
When some bright thought has darted through my brain :  
Through all that day I've felt a greater pleasure  
Than if I'd brought to light a hidden treasure.  
As to my sonnets, though none else should heed them,  
I feel delighted, still, that you should read them  
Of late, too, I have had much calm enjoyment,  
Stretched on the grass at my best loved employment  
Of scribbling lines for you. These things I thought  
While, in my face, the freshest breeze I caught.  
E'en now I'm pillowed on a bed of flowers  
That crowns a lofty cliff, which proudly towers  
Above the ocean-waves. The stalks, and blades,  
Chequer my tablet with their quivering shades.  
On one side is a field of drooping oats,  
Through which the poppies show their scarlet coats ;  
So pert and useless, that they bring to mind  
The scarlet coats that pester human-kind.  
And on the other side, outspread, is seen  
Ocean's blue mantle streaked with purple, and green.



Now 'tis I see a canvassed ship, and now  
 Mark the bright silver curling round her prow.  
 I see the lark down-dropping to his nest,  
 And the broad winged seagull never at rest;  
 For when no more he spreads his feathers free,  
 His breast is dancing on the restless sea,  
 Now I direct my eyes into the west,  
 Which at this moment is in sunbeams drest!  
 Why westward turn? 'Twas but to say adieu!  
 'Twas but to kiss my hand, dear George, to you!

August, 1816.

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TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.\*

Ort have you seen a swan superbly frowning,  
 And with proud breast his own white shadow crowning;  
 He slants his neck beneath the waters bright  
 So silently, it seems a beam of light  
 Come from the galaxy: anon he sports—  
 With outspread wings the Naiad Zephyr courts,  
 Or ruffles all the surface of the lake  
 In striving from its crystal face to take  
 Some diamond water drops, and them to treasure  
 In milky nest, and sip them off at leisure.  
 But not a moment can he there insure them,  
 Nor to such downy rest can he allure them:  
 For down they rush as though they would be free,  
 And drop like hours into eternity.  
 Just like that bird am I in loss of time,  
 Whene'er I venture on the stream of rhyme;  
 With shattered boat, oar snapt, and canvas rent,  
 I slowly sail, scarce knowing my intent;

---

\* Celebrated for his Shakspearian studies and for his excellent edition (in conjunction with Mary Cowden Clarke) of the plays.



Still scooping up the water with my fingers,  
In which a trembling diamond never lingers.

By this, friend Charles, you may full plainly see  
Why I have never penned a line to thee :  
Because my thoughts were never free and 'clear,  
And little fit to please a classic ear ;  
Because my wine was of too poor a savour  
For one whose palate gladdens in the flavour  
Of sparkling Helicon :—small good it were  
To take him to a desert rude, and bare,  
Who had on Baiæ's shore reclined at ease,  
While Tasso's page was floating in a breeze  
That gave soft music from Armida's bowers,  
Mingled with fragrance from her rarest flowers :  
Small good to one who had by Mulla's stream  
Fondled the maidens with the breasts of cream ;  
Who had beheld Belphebe in a brook,  
And lovely Una in a leafy nook,  
And Archimago leaning o'er his book :\*  
Who had of all that's sweet tasted, and seen,  
From silv'ry ripple, up to beauty's queen ;  
From the sequestered haunts of gay Titania  
To the blue dwelling of divine Urania :  
One, who, of late, had ta'en sweet forest walks  
With him who elegantly chats, and talks—  
The wronged Libertas—who has told you stories  
Of laurel chaplets, and Apollo's glories ;  
Of troops chivalrous prancing through a city,  
And tearful ladies made for love and pity :  
With many else which I have never known.  
Thus have I thought ; and days on days have flown  
Slowly, or rapidly—unwilling still  
For you to try my dull, unlearned quill.

---

\* See Spenser's "Fairy Queen."



Nor should I now, but that I've known you long ;  
That you first taught me all the sweets of song :  
The grand, the sweet, the terse, the free, the fine ;  
What swelled with pathos, and what right divine :  
Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,  
And float along like birds o'er summer seas ;  
Miltonian storms, and more, Miltonian tenderness ;  
Michael in arms, and more, meek Eve's fair slenderness.  
Who read for me the sonnet swelling loudly  
Up to its climax and then dying proudly ?  
Who found for me the grandeur of the ode,  
Growing, like Atlas, stronger from its load ?  
Who let me taste that more than cordial dram,  
The sharp, the rapier-pointed epigram ?  
Showed me that epic was of all the king,  
Round, vast, and spanning all like Saturn's ring ?  
You too upheld the veil from Clio's beauty,  
And pointed out the patriot's stern duty ;  
The might of Alfred, and the shaft of Tell ;  
The hand of Brutus, that so grandly fell  
Upon a tyrant's head. Ah ! had I never seen,  
Or known your kindness, what might I have been ?  
What my enjoyments in my youthful years,  
Bereft of all that now my life endears ?  
And can I e'er these benefits forget ?  
And can I e'er repay the friendly debt ?  
No, doubly no ;—yet should these rhymings please,  
I shall roll on the grass with twofold ease :  
For I have long time been my fancy feeding  
With hopes that you would one day think the reading  
Of my rough verses not an hour misspent ;  
Should it e'er be so, what a rich content !  
Some weeks have passed since last I saw the spires  
In lucent Thames reflected :—warm desires  
To see the sun o'erpeep the eastern dimness,  
And morning shadows streaking into slimness



Across the lawny fields and pebbly water ;  
To mark the time as they grow broad, and shorter ;  
To feel the air that plays about the hills,  
And sips its freshness from the little rills ;  
To see high, golden corn wave in the light  
When Cynthia smiles upon a summer's night,  
And peers among the cloudlet's jet and white,  
As though she were reclining in a bed  
Of bean blossoms, in heaven freshly shed.  
No sooner had I stepped into these pleasures  
Than I began to think of rhymes and measures :  
The air that floated by me seemed to say  
" Write ! thou wilt never have a better day."  
And so I did. When many lines I'd written,  
Though with their grace I was not oversmitten,  
Yet, as my hand was warm, I thought I'd better  
Trust to my feelings, and write you a letter.  
Such an attempt required an inspiration  
Of a peculiar sort—a consummation ;  
Which, had I felt, these scribblings might have been  
Verses from which the soul would never wean :  
But many days have passed since last my heart  
Was warmed luxuriously by divine Mozart ;  
By Arne delighted, or by Handel maddened ;  
Or by the song of Erin pierced and saddened :  
What time you were before the music sitting,  
And the rich notes to each sensation fitting.  
Since I have walked with you through shady lanes  
That freshly terminate in open plains,  
And revelled in a chat that ceased not  
When at nightfall among your books we got :  
No, nor when supper came, nor after that—  
Nor when reluctantly I took my hat ;  
No, nor till cordially you shook my hand  
Midway between our homes :—your accents bland  
Still sounded in my ears, when I no more



E

Could hear your footsteps touch the grav'ly floor.  
Sometimes I lost them, and then found again ;  
You changed the footpath for the grassy plain.  
In those still moments I have wished you joys  
That well you know to honour :—" Life's very toys  
With him," said I, "will take a pleasant charm ;  
It cannot be that ought will work him harm."  
These thoughts now come o'er me with all their might :  
Again I shake your hand—friend Charles, good night.

September, 1816.



## Early Sonnets.

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### I.

#### TO MY BROTHER GEORGE.

MANY the wonders I this day have seen :  
The sun, when first he kist away the tears  
That filled the eyes of morn ; the laurelled peers  
Who from the feathery gold of evening lean ;  
The ocean with its vastness, its blue green,  
Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes, its fears--  
Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears  
Must think on what will be, and what has been.  
E'en now, dear George, while this for you I write,  
Cynthia is from her silken curtains peeping  
So scantily, that it seems her bridal night,  
And she her half-discovered revels keeping.  
But what, without the social thought of thee,  
Would be the wonders of the sky and sea ?

---

### II.

#### TO \* \* \* \* \*

HAD I a man's fair form, then might my sighs  
Be echoed swiftly through that ivory shell  
Thine ear, and find thy gentle heart ; so well  
Would passion arm me for the enterprise :



*good*

But ah ! I am no knight whose foeman dies ;  
 No cuirass glistens on my bosom's swell ;  
 I am no happy shepherd of the dell  
Whose lips have trembled with a maiden's eyes.  
 Yet must I dote upon thee—call thee sweet,  
 Sweeter by far than Hybla's honeyed roses  
 When steeped in dew rich to intoxication.  
 Ah ! I will taste that dew, for me 'tis meet,  
 And when the moon her pallid face discloses,  
 I'll gather some by spells and incantation.



### III. *not good.*

#### WRITTEN ON THE DAY THAT MR. LEIGH HUNT LEFT PRISON.\*

WHAT though, for showing truth to flattered state,  
 Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has he,  
 In his immortal spirit, been as free  
 As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.  
 Minion of grandeur ! think you he did wait ?  
 Think you he naught but prison walls did see  
 Till, so unwilling, thou unturn'dst the key ?  
 Ah, no ! far happier, nobler was his fate !  
 In Spenser's halls he strayed, and bowers fair,  
 Culling enchanted flowers ; and he flew  
 With daring Milton through the fields of air :  
 To regions of his own his genius true  
 Took happy flights. Who shall his fame impair  
 When thou art dead, and all thy wretched crew ?

---

\* Leigh Hunt, born 1784, was editor of the *Indicator*, and author of "Rimini" and other poems. He died 1859. He had been imprisoned on a charge of libel against the Prince Regent, whom he had called in his paper, the *Examiner*, "an Adonis of fifty."



IV. *good.*

How many bards gild the lapses of time !  
 A few of them have ever been the food  
 Of my delighted fancy—I could brood  
 Over their beauties, earthly or sublime :  
 And often, when I sit me down to rhyme,  
 These will in throngs before my mind intrude :  
 But no confusion, no disturbance rude  
 Do they occasion ; 'tis a pleasing chime.  
 So the unnumbered sounds that evening store ;  
 The songs of birds—the whisp'ring of the leaves—  
 The voice of waters—the great bell that heaves  
 With solemn sound—and thousand others more,  
 That distance of recognizance bereaves,  
 Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

V. *indifferent.*

## TO A FRIEND WHO SENT ME SOME ROSES.

As late I rambled in the happy fields,  
What time the skylark shakes the tremulous dew  
From his lush clover covert ;—when anew  
 Adventurous knights take up their dinted shields :  
 I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,  
 A fresh-blown musk-rose ; 'twas the first that threw  
 Its sweets upon the summer : graceful it grew  
 As is the wand that queen Titania wields.  
 And, as I feasted on its fragrancy,  
 I thought the garden-rose it far excelled :  
 But when, O Wells ! thy roses came to me  
 My sense with their deliciousness was spelled :  
 Soft voices had they, that with tender plea  
 Whispered of peace, and truth, and friendliness unquelled.

*very good.*



## VI.

TO G. A. W.

NYMPH of the downward smile, and sidelong glance.  
 In what diviner moments of the day  
 Art thou most lovely? When gone far astray  
 Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance?  
 Or when serenely wand'ring in a trance  
 Of sober thought? Or when starting away,  
 With careless robe, to meet the morning ray,  
 Thou spar'st the flowers in thy mazy dance?  
 Haply 'tis when thy ruby lips part sweetly,  
 And so remain, because thou listenest :  
 But thou to please wert nurtured so completely  
 That I can never tell what mood is best.  
 I shall as soon pronounce which Grace more neatly  
 Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

## VII.

O SOLITUDE ! if I must with thee dwell,  
 Let it not be among the jumbled heap  
 Of murky buildings ; climb with me the steep,--  
 Nature's observatory—whence the delli,  
 Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,  
 May seem a span ; let me thy vigils keep  
 'Mongst boughs pavilioned, where the deer's swift leap  
Startles the wild bee from the foxglove bell.  
 But though I'll gladly trace these scenes with thee,  
 Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,  
 Whose words are images of thoughts refined,  
 Is my soul's pleasure ; and it sure must be  
 Almost the highest bliss of human kind,  
 When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.



VIII. *Good.*

## TO MY BROTHERS.

SMALL busy flames play through the fresh laid coals,  
And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep  
Like whispers of the household gods that keep  
A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.  
And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,  
Your eyes are fixed, as in poetic sleep,  
Upon the lore so voluble and deep,  
That aye at fall of night our care condole.  
This is your birthday, Tom, and I rejoice  
That thus it passes smoothly, quietly.  
Many such eves of gently whisp'ring noise  
May we together pass, and calmly try  
What are this world's true joys,—ere the great voice,  
From its fair face, shall bid our spirits fly

November 18, 1816.

## IX.

KEEN, fitful gusts are whisp'ring here and there  
Among the bushes half leafless and dry ;  
The stars look very cold about the sky,  
And I have many miles on foot to fare.  
Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,  
Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,  
Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,  
Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair ;  
For I am brimful of the friendliness  
That in a little cottage I have found ;  
Of fair-haired Milton's eloquent distress,  
And all his love for gentle Lycid drowned ;  
Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,  
And faithful Petrarch gloriously crowned.



*extremely fine.* X.

To one who has been long in city pent,  
 'Tis very sweet to look into the fair  
 And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer  
 Full in the smile of the blue firmament.  
 Who is more happy, when, with hearts content,  
 Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair  
 Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair  
And gentle tale of love and languishment?  
 Returning home at evening, with an ear  
 Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye  
 Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,  
 He mourns that day so soon has glided by:  
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear  
That falls through the clear ether silently.

*very good.*

XI.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

MUCH have I travelled in the realms of gold,  
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
 Round many western islands have I been  
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.  
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told  
 That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;  
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene  
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:  
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
 When a new planet swims into his ken;  
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes  
 He stared at the Pacific—and all his men  
 Looked at each other with a wild surmise—  
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.



## XII.

## ON LEAVING SOME FRIENDS AT AN EARLY HOUR.

GIVE me a golden pen, and let me lean  
 On heaped-up flowers, in regions clear, and far ;  
 Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,  
Or hand of hymning angel, when 'tis seen  
The silver strings of heavenly harp atween :  
 And let there glide by many a pearly car,  
 Pink robes, and wavy hair, and diamond jar,  
 And half-discovered wings, and glances keen.  
 The while let music wander round my ears,  
 And as it reaches each delicious ending,  
 Let me write down a line of glorious tone,  
 And full of many wonders of the spheres :  
 For what a height my spirit is contending !  
 'Tis not content so soon to be alone.

XIII. *ind.*

## ADDRESSED TO HAYDON.\*

HIGH-MINDEDNESS, a jealousy for good,  
 A loving-kindness for the great man's fame,  
 Dwells here and there with people of no name,  
 In noisome alley, and in pathless wood :  
 And where we think the truth least understood,  
 Oft may be found a "singleness of aim,"  
 That ought to frighten into hooded shame  
 A money mong'ring, pitiable brood.

---

\* B. R. Haydon, the celebrated historical painter, born 1786, died 1846.



How glorious this affection for the cause  
 Of steadfast genius, toiling gallantly !  
 What when a stout unbending champion awes  
 Envy and Malice to their native sty ?  
 Unnumbered souls breathe out a still applause,  
 Proud to behold him in his country's eye.

---

 XIV.

## ADDRESSED TO THE SAME.

GREAT spirits now on earth are sojourning ;  
 He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,  
 Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,  
 Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing :  
 He of the rose, the violet, the spring,  
 The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake :  
 And lo !—whose steadfastness would never take  
 A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.  
 And other spirits there are standing apart  
 Upon the forehead of the age to come ;  
 These, these will give the world another heart,  
 And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum  
 Of mighty workings ?——  
 Listen awhile, ye nations, and be dumb.

---

 XV.

## ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET.

THE poetry of earth is never dead :  
 When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,  
 And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run  
 From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead ;



That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead  
 In summer luxury,—he has never done  
 With his delights ; for when tired out with fun  
 He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.  
 The poetry of earth is ceasing never :

On a lone winter evening, when the frost

*good.* Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills  
 The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,

*true.* And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,

The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

December 30, 1816.

XVI. *indifferent.*

TO KOSCIUSKO.\*

GOOD Kosciusko, thy great name alone  
 Is a full harvest whence to reap high feeling ;  
 It comes upon us like the glorious pealing  
 Of the wide spheres—an everlasting tone.  
 And now it tells me, that in worlds unknown,  
 The name of heroes, burst from clouds concealing,  
 And changed to harmonies, for ever stealing  
 Through cloudless blue, and round each silver throne.  
 It tells me too, that on a happy day,  
 When some good spirit walks upon the earth,  
 Thy name with Alfred's, and the great of yore  
 Gently commingling, gives tremendous birth  
 To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far away  
 To where the great God lives for evermore.

---

\* The illustrious Polish patriot and general. He was born 1750, and headed the Poles in their efforts to free themselves from Russia in 1794. After heroic efforts and a temporary success, (having defended Warsaw for two months against the united forces of Prussia and Russia ; ) he was wounded and taken prisoner. At the end of two years' imprisonment he was released by the Emperor Paul, who offered him his sword ; but Kosciusko refused it, saying, " He had no need of a sword since he had no longer a country." Kosciusko died in exile in Switzerland, 1817.



## XVII.

HAPPY is England ! I could be content  
 To see no other verdure than its own ;  
 To feel no other breezes than are blown  
 Through its tall woods with high romances blent ;  
 Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment  
 For skies Italian, and an inward groan  
 To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,  
 And half forget what world or worldling meant.  
 Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters ;  
 Enough their simple loveliness for me,  
 Enough their whitest arms in silence clinging :  
 Yet do I often warmly burn to see  
 Beauties of deeper glance, and hear their singing,  
 And float with them about the summer waters.



## XVIII.

## ON THE ELGIN MARBLES.

My spirit is too weak ; mortality  
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,  
 And each imagined pinnacle and steep  
 Of godlike hardship tells me I must die  
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.  
 Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep,  
 That I have not the cloudy winds to keep  
 Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.  
 Such dim-conceived glories of the brain,  
 Bring round the heart an indescribable feud ;  
 So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,  
 That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude  
 Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main  
 A sun, a shadow of a magnitude.



## XIX.

## INCLOSING THE PRECEDING SONNET.

HAYDON ! forgive me that I cannot speak  
 Definitively of these mighty things ;  
 Forgive me, that I have not eagle's wings,  
 That what I want I know not where to seek.  
 And think that I would not be over-meeke,  
 In rolling out upfollowed thunderings,  
 Even to the steep of Heliconian springs,  
 Were I of ample strength for such a freak.  
 Think, too, that all these numbers should be thine ;  
 Whose else ? In this who touch thy vesture's hem ?  
 For, when men stared at what was most divine  
 With brainless idiotism and o'erwise phlegm,  
 Thou hadst beheld the full Hesperian shine  
 Of their star in the east, and gone to worship them !

## XX.

## A DREAM,

AFTER READING DANTE'S EPISODE OF PAULO AND FRANCESCA.

As Hermes once took to his feathers light,  
 When lulled Argus, baffled, swooned and slept ;  
 So on a Delphic reed my idle sprite  
 So played, so charmed, so conquered, so bereft  
 The dragon world of all its hundred eyes ;  
 And seeing it asleep, so fled away—  
 Not unto Ida, with its snow-cold skies ;  
 Nor unto Tempe, where Jove grieved a day—  
 But to that second circle of sad hell,  
 Where, 'mid the gust, the whirlwind, and the flow  
 Of rain and hailstones, lovers need not tell  
 Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw ;  
 Pale were the lips I kissed, and fair the form  
 I floated with about that melancholy storm.



## Sleep and Poetry.

---

“As I lay in my bed slepe full unmete  
Was unto me, but why that I ne might  
Rest I ne wist, for there n’as erthly wight  
[As I suppose] had more of hertis ese  
Than I, for I n’ad sicknesse nor disese.”—CHAUCER.

WHAT is more gentle than a wind in summer?  
What is more soothing than the pretty hummer  
That stays one moment in an open flower,  
And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower?  
What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing  
In a green island, far from all men’s knowing?  
More healthful than the leafiness of dales?  
More secret than a nest of nightingales?  
More serene than Cordelia’s countenance?  
More full of visions than a high romance?  
What, but thee, Sleep? Soft closer of our eyes!  
Low murmurer of tender lullabies!  
Light hoverer around our happy pillows!  
Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows!  
Silent entangler of a beauty’s tresses!  
Most happy listener! when the morning blesses  
Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes  
That glance so brightly at the new sunrise.

But what is higher beyond thought than thee?  
Fresher than berries of a mountain tree?  
More strange, more beautiful, more smooth, more regal,  
Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim-seen eagle?



What is it? And to what shall I compare it?  
It has a glory, and naught else can share it :  
The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy,  
Chasing away all worldliness and folly ;  
Coming sometimes like fearful claps of thunder,  
Or the low rumblings earth's regions under ;  
And sometimes like a gentle whispering  
Of all the secrets of some wondrous thing  
That breathes about us in the vacant air ;  
So that we look around with prying stare,  
Perhaps to see shapes of light, aërial limning,  
And catch soft floatings from a faint-heard hymning ;  
To see the laurel wreath, on high suspended,  
That is to crown our name when life is ended.  
Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice,  
And from the heart up-springs, rejoice ! rejoice !  
Sounds which will reach the Framers of all things,  
And die away in ardent mutterings.

No one who once the glorious sun has seen,  
And all the clouds, and felt his bosom clean  
For his great Maker's presence, but must know  
What 'tis I mean, and feel his being glow :  
Therefore no insult will I give his spirit,  
By telling what he sees from native merit.

O Poesy ! for thee I hold my pen  
That am not yet a glorious denizen  
Of thy wide heaven—Should I rather kneel  
Upon some mountain-top until I feel  
A glowing splendour round about me hung,  
And echo back the voice of thine own tongue?  
O Poesy ! for thee I grasp my pen  
That am not yet a glorious denizen  
Of thy wide heaven ; yet, to my ardent prayer,  
Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air,



Smoothed for intoxication by the breath  
Of flowering bays, that I may die a death  
Of luxury, and my young spirit follow  
The morning sunbeams to the great Apollo,  
Like a fresh sacrifice ; or if I can bear  
The o'erwhelming sweets, 'twill bring to me the fair  
Visions of all places : a bowery nook  
Will be elysium—an eternal book  
Whence I may copy many a lovely saying  
About the leaves, and flowers—about the playing  
Of nymphs in woods, and fountains ; and the shade  
Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid ;  
And many a verse from so strange influence  
That we must ever wonder how and whence  
It came. Also imaginings will hover  
Round my fireside, and haply there discover  
Vistas of solemn beauty, where I'd wander  
In happy silence, like the clear meander  
Through its lone vales ; and where I found a spot  
Of awfuller shade, or an enchanted grot,  
Or a green hill o'erspread with chequered dress  
Of flowers, and fearful from its loveliness,  
Write on my tablets all that was permitted,  
All that was for our human senses fitted.  
Then the events of this wide world I'd seize  
Like a strong giant, and my spirit tease  
Till at its shoulders it should proudly see  
Wings to find out an immortality.

Stop and consider ! life is but a day ;  
A fragile dewdrop on its perilous way  
From a tree's summit ; a poor Indian's sleep  
While his boat hastens to the monstrous steep  
Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan ?  
Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown ;



The reading of an ever-changing tale ;  
The light uplifting of a maiden's veil ;  
A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air ;  
A laughing schoolboy, without grief or care,  
Riding the springy branches of an elm.

O for ten years, that I may overwhelm  
Myself in poesy ; so I may do the deed  
That my own soul has to itself decreed.  
Then will I pass the countries that I see  
In long perspective, and continually  
Taste their pure fountains. First the realm I'll pass  
Of Flora, and old Pan : sleep in the grass,  
Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,  
And choose each pleasure that my fancy sees ;  
Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady places,  
To woo sweet kisses from averted faces—  
Play with their fingers, touch their shoulders white  
Into a pretty shrinking with a bite  
As hard as lips can make it : till agreed,  
A lovely tale of human life we'll read.  
And one will teach a tame dove how it best  
May fan the cool air gently o'er my rest ;  
Another, bending o'er her nimble tread,  
Will set a green robe floating round her head,  
And still will dance with ever varied ease,  
Smiling upon the flowers and the trees :  
Another will entice me on, and on  
Through almond blossoms and rich cinnamon ;  
Till in the bosom of a leafy world  
We rest in silence, like two gems upcurled  
In the recesses of a pearly shell.

And can I ever bid these joys farewell ?  
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,  
Where I may find the agonies, the strife



Of human hearts : for lo ! I see afar,  
O'er sailing the blue cragginess, a car  
And steeds with streamy manes—the charioteer  
Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear :  
And now the numerous tramlings quiver lightly  
Along a huge cloud's ridge ; and now with sprightly  
Wheel downward come they into fresher skies,  
Tipt round with silver from the sun's bright eyes.  
Still downward with capacious whirl they glide ;  
And now I see them on a green hill's side  
In breezy rest among the nodding stalks.  
The charioteer with wondrous gesture talks  
To the trees and mountains ; and there soon appear  
Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear,  
Passing along before a dusky space  
Made by some mighty oaks : as they would chase  
Some ever-fleeting music, on they sweep.  
Lo ! how they murmur, laugh, and smile, and weep :  
Some with upholden hand and mouth severe ;  
Some with their faces muffled to the ear  
Between their arms ; some, clear in youthful bloom,  
Go glad and smilingly athwart the gloom ;  
Some looking back, and some with upward gaze ;  
Yes, thousands in a thousand different ways  
Flit onward—now a lovely wreath of girls  
Dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls ;  
And now broad wings. Most awfully intent  
The driver of those steeds is forward bent,  
And seems to listen : O that I might know  
All that he writes with such a hurrying glow.

The visions all are fled—the car is fled  
Into the light heaven, and in their stead  
A sense of real things comes doubly strong,  
And, like a muddy stream, would bear along



My soul to nothingness : but I will strive  
Against all doubtings, and will keep alive  
The thought of that same chariot, and the strange  
Journey it went.

Is there so small a range  
In the present strength of manhood, that the high  
Imagination cannot freely fly  
As she was wont of old? prepare her steeds,  
Paw up against the light, and do strange deeds  
Upon the clouds? Has she not shown us all?  
From the clear space of ether, to the small  
Breath of new buds unfolding? From the meaning  
Of Jove's large eyebrow, to the tender greening  
Of April meadows? Here her altar shone,  
E'en in this isle; and who could paragon  
The fervid choir that lifted up a noise  
Of harmony, to where it aye will poise  
Its mighty self of convoluting sound,  
Huge as a planet, and like that roll round,  
Eternally around a dizzy void?  
Ay, in those days the Muses were nigh cloyed  
With honours; nor had any other care  
Than to sing out and soothe their wavy hair.

Could all this be forgotten? Yes, a schism  
Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,  
Made great Apollo blush for this his land.  
Men were thought wise who could not understand  
His glories: with a puling infant's force  
They swayed about upon a rocking-horse,  
And thought it Pegasus. Ah, dismal souled!  
The winds of heaven blew, the ocean rolled  
Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue  
Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew  
Of summer nights collected still to make  
The morning precious: beauty was awake!



Why were ye not awake? But ye were dead  
 To things ye knew not of,—were closely wed  
 To musty laws lined out with wretched rule  
 And compass vile : so that ye taught a school  
 Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,  
 Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,  
 Their verses tallied. Easy was the task :  
 A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask  
 Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race !  
 That blasphemed the bright Lyrist to his face,  
 And did not know it,—no, they went about,  
 Holding a poor, decrepit standard out,  
 Marked with most flimsy mottoes, and in large  
 The name of one Boileau !\*

O ye whose charge

It is to hover round our pleasant hills !  
 Whose congregated majesty so fills  
 My boundly reverence, that I cannot trace  
 Your hallowed names, in this unholy place,  
 So near those common folk ; did not their shames  
 Affright you? Did our old lamenting Thames  
 Delight you? Did ye never cluster round  
 Delicious Avon, with a mournful sound,  
 And weep? Or did ye wholly bid adieu  
 To regions where no more the laurel grew?  
 Or did ye stay to give a welcoming  
 To some lone spirits who could proudly sing  
 Their youth away, and die? 'Twas even so :  
 But let me think away those times of woe :  
 Now 'tis a fairer season ; ye have breathed  
 Rich benedictions o'er us ; ye have wreathed

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\* A celebrated French poet and satirist. He wrote "*L'Art poetique*," "*Le Lutrin*," &c. "*Boileau is the analogue of Pope*," says Hallam, "in French literature. The '*Art of Poetry*' has been the model of the '*Essay on Criticism*.' Few poems more resemble each other." He was born 1636, died 1711.



Fresh garlands : for sweet music has been heard  
In many places ;—some has been upstirred  
From out its crystal dwelling in a lake,  
By a swan's ebon bill ; from a thick brake,  
Nested and quiet in a valley mild,  
Bubbles a pipe ; fine sounds are floating wild  
About the earth : happy are ye and glad.

These things are doubtless : yet in truth we've had  
Strange thunders from the potency of song ;  
Mingled indeed with what is sweet and strong,  
From majesty : but in clear truth the themes  
Are ugly cubs, the Poets' Polyphemes  
Disturbing the grand sea. A drainless shower  
Of light is poesy ; 'tis the supreme of power ;  
'Tis might half slumb'ring on its own right arm.  
The very archings of her eyelids charm  
A thousand willing agents to obey,  
And still she governs with the mildest sway :  
But strength alone though of the Muses born  
Is like a fallen angel : trees uptorn,  
Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres  
Delight it ; for it feeds upon the burrs  
And thorns of life ; forgetting the great end  
Of poesy, that it should be a friend  
To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of man.

Yet I rejoice : a myrtle fairer than  
E'er grew in Paphos from the bitter weeds  
Lifts its sweet head into the air, and feeds  
A silent space with ever-sprouting green.  
All tenderest birds there find a pleasant screen,  
Creep through the shade with jaunty fluttering,  
Nibble the little cupped flowers and sing.  
Then let us clear away the choking thorns  
From round its gentle stem ; let the young fawns.



Yeanned in after times, when we are flown,  
Find a fresh sward beneath it, overgrown  
With simple flowers : let there nothing be  
More boisterous than a lover's bended knee ;  
Naught more ungentle than the placid look  
Of one who leans upon a closèd book ;  
Naught more untranquil than the grassy slopes  
Between two hills. All hail delightful hopes !  
As she was wont, th' imagination  
Into most lovely labyrinths will be gone,  
And they shall be accounted poet kings  
Who simply tell the most heart-easing things.  
O may these joys be ripe before I die.

Will not some say that I presumptuously  
Have spoken? that from hastening disgrace  
'Twere better far to hide my foolish face?  
That whining boyhood should with reverence bow  
Ere the dread thunderbolt could reach it? How :  
If I do hide myself, it sure shall be  
In the very fane, the light of Poesy :  
If I do fall, at least I will be laid  
Beneath the silence of a poplar shade ;  
And over me the grass shall be smooth shaven ;  
And there shall be a kind memorial graven.  
But off, Despondence ! miserable bane !  
They should not know thee, who athirst to gain  
A noble end, are thirsty every hour.  
What though I am not wealthy in the dower  
Of spanning wisdom ; though I do not know  
The shiftings of the mighty winds that blow  
Hither and thither all the changing thoughts  
Of man : though no great minist'ring reason sorts  
Out the dark mysteries of human souls  
To clear conceiving : yet there ever rolls



A vast idea before me, and I glean  
Therefrom my liberty; thence too I've seen  
The end and aim of Poesy. 'Tis clear  
As anything most true; as that the year  
Is made of the four seasons—manifest  
As a large cross, some old cathedral's crest,  
Lifted to the white clouds. Therefore should I  
Be but the essence of deformity,  
A coward, did my very eyelids wink  
At speaking out what I have dared to think.  
Ah! rather let me like a madman run  
Over some precipice; let the hot sun  
Melt my Dedalian wings, and drive me down  
Convulsed and headlong! Stay! an inward frown  
Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile.  
An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an isle,  
Spreads awfully before me. How much toil!  
How many days! what desperate turmoil!  
Ere I can have explored its widenesses.  
Ah, what a task! upon my bended knees,  
I could unsay those—no, impossible!  
Impossible!

For sweet relief I'll dwell  
On humbler thoughts, and let this strange assay  
Begun in gentleness die so away.  
E'en now all tumult from my bosom fades:  
I turn full-hearted to the friendly aids  
That smooth the path of honour; brotherhood,  
And friendliness, the nurse of mutual good.  
The hearty grasp that sends a pleasant sonnet  
Into the brain ere one can think upon it;  
The silence when some rhymes are coming out;  
And when they're come, the very pleasant rout:  
The message certain to be done to-morrow.  
'Tis perhaps as well that it should be to borrow



Some precious book from out its snug retreat,  
To cluster round it when we next shall meet.  
Scarce can I scribble on ; for lovely airs  
Are fluttering round the room like doves in pairs ;  
Many delights of that glad day recalling,  
When first my senses caught their tender falling.  
And with these airs come forms of elegance  
Stooping their shoulders o'er a horse's prance,  
Careless, and grand—fingers soft and round  
Parting luxuriant curls ; and the swift bound  
Of Bacchus from his chariot, when his eye  
Made Ariadne's cheek look blushing.  
Thus I remember all the pleasant flow  
Of words at opening a portfolio.

Things such as these are ever harbingers  
To trains of peaceful images : the stirs  
Of a swan's neck unseen among the rushes :  
A linnet starting all about the bushes :  
A butterfly, with golden wings broad parted  
Nestling a rose, convulsed as though it smarted  
With over-pleasure—many, many more,  
Might I indulge at large in all my store  
Of luxuries : yet I must not forget  
Sleep, quiet with his poppy coronet :  
For what there may be worthy in these rhymes  
I partly owe to him : and thus, the chimes  
Of friendly voices had just given place  
To as sweet a silence, when I 'gan retrace  
The pleasant day, upon a couch at ease.  
It was a poet's house who keeps the keys  
Of pleasure's temple. Round about were hung  
The glorious features of the bards who sung  
In other ages—cold and sacred busts  
Smiled at each other. Happy he who trusts



To clear Futurity his darling fame !  
Then there were fauns and satyrs taking aim  
At swelling apples with a frisky leap  
And reaching fingers, 'mid a luscious heap  
Of vine leaves. Then there rose to view a fane  
Of liny marble, and thereto a train  
Of nymphs approaching fairly o'er the sward :  
One, loveliest, holding her right hand toward  
The dazzling sunrise : two sisters sweet  
Bending their graceful figures till they meet  
Over the trippings of a little child :  
And some are hearing, eagerly, the wild  
Thrilling liquidity of dewy piping.  
See, in another picture, nymphs are wiping  
Cherishingly Diana's timorous limbs ;  
A fold of lawny mantle dabbling swims  
At the bath's edge, and keeps a gentle motion  
With the subsiding crystal : as when ocean  
Heaves calmly its broad swelling smoothness o'er  
Its rocky marge, and balances once more  
The patient weeds ; that now unshent by foam  
Feel all about their undulating home.

Sappho's meek head was there half smiling down  
At nothing ; just as though the earnest frown  
Of over-thinking had that moment gone  
From off her brow, and left her all alone.

Great Alfred's too, with anxious, pitying eyes,  
As if he always listened to the sighs  
Of the goaded world ; and Kosciusko's, worn  
By horrid suffrance—mightily forlorn.

Petrarch, outstepping from the shady green,  
Starts at the sight of Laura ; nor can wean  
His eyes from her sweet face. Most happy they !  
For over them was seen a free display



Of outspread wings, and from between them shone  
The face of Poesy : from off her throne  
She overlooked things that I scarce could tell.  
The very sense of where I was might well  
Keep Sleep aloof : but more than that there came  
Thought after thought to nourish up the flame  
Within my breast ; so that the morning light  
Surprised me even from a sleepless night ;  
And up I rose refreshed, and glad, and gay,  
Resolving to begin that very day  
These lines ; and howsoever they be done,  
I leave them as a father does his son.



# ENDYMION:

A POETIC ROMANCE.

“The stretched metre of an antique song.”

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Inscribed to the Memory  
OF  
THOMAS CHATTERTON.

---

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

KNOWING within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good; it will not—the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away; a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment; but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from



the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness; for I wish to try once more, before I bid it farewell.

Teignmouth, April 10, 1818.

## BOOK I.

good.

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever:  
 Its loveliness increases; it will never  
 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.  
 Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
 Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways  
 Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,  
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
 Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon  
 For simple sheep; and such are daffodils  
 With the green world they live in; and clear rills  
 That for themselves a cooling covert make  
 'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,  
 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:  
 And such too is the grandeur of the dooms



We have imagined for the mighty dead ;  
All lovely tales that we have heard or read :  
An endless fountain of immortal drink,  
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences  
For one short hour ; no, even as the trees  
That whisper round a temple become soon  
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,  
The passion poesy, glories infinite,  
Haunt us till they become a cheering light  
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,  
That, whether there be shine or gloom o'ercast,  
They always must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I  
Will trace the story of Endymion.  
The very music of the name has gone  
Into my being, and each pleasant scene  
Is growing fresh before me as the green  
Of our own valleys : so I will begin  
Now while I cannot hear the city's din ;  
Now while the early budders are just new,  
And run in mazes of the youngest hue  
About old forests ; while the willow trails  
Its delicate amber ; and the dairy pails  
Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year  
Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer  
My little boat, for many quiet hours,  
With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.  
Many and many a verse I hope to write,  
Before the daisies, vermeil rimmed and white,  
Hide in deep herbage ; and ere yet the bees  
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,  
I must be near the middle of my story.  
O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,



See it half finished : but let Autumn bold,  
With universal tinge of sober gold,  
Be all about me when I make an end.  
And now at once, adventuresome, I send  
My herald thought into a wilderness :  
There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress  
My uncertain path with green, that I may speed  
Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread  
A mighty forest ; for the moist earth fed  
So plenteously all weed-hidden roots  
Into o'er-hanging boughs, and precious fruits.  
And it had gloomy shades, sequestered deep,  
Where no man went ; and if from shepherd's keep  
A lamb strayed far a-down those inmost glens,  
Never again saw he the happy pens  
Whither his brethren, bleating with content  
Over the hills at every nightfall went.  
Among the shepherds, 'twas believed ever,  
That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever  
From the white flock, but passed unworried  
By angry wolf, or pard with prying head,  
Until it came to some unfooted plains  
Where fed the herds of Pan : ay, great his gains  
Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,  
Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny,  
And ivy banks ; all leading pleasantly  
To a wide lawn, whence one could only see  
Stems thronging all around between the swell  
Of turf and slanting branches : who could tell  
The freshness of the space of heaven above,  
Edged round with dark tree-tops ? through which a dove  
Would often beat its wings, and often too  
A little cloud would move across the blue.



Full in the middle of this pleasantness  
There stood a marble altar, with a tress  
Of flowers budded newly ; and the dew  
Had taken fairy phantasies to strew  
Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,  
And so the dawned light in pomp receive.  
For 'twas the moon : Apollo's upward fire  
Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre  
Of brightness so unsullied, that therein  
A melancholy spirit well might win  
Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine  
Into the winds ; rain-scented eglantine  
Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun ;  
The lark was lost in him ; cold springs had run  
To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass ;  
Man's voice was on the mountains ; and the mass  
Of nature's lives and wonders pulsed tenfold,  
To feel this sunrise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the dawn  
Were busiest, into that self-same lawn  
All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped  
A troop of little children garlanded ;  
Who, gathering round the altar, seemed to pry  
Earnestly round as wishing to espy  
Some folk of holiday : nor had they waited  
For many moments, ere their ears were sated  
With a faint breath of music, which e'en then  
Filled out its voice, and died away again.  
Within a little space again it gave  
Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,  
To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking  
'Through copse-clad valleys,—ere their death, o'ertaking  
The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we



Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmered light  
 Fair faces and a rush of garments white,  
 Plainer and plainer showing, till at last  
 Into the widest alley they all passed,  
 Making directly for the woodland altar.  
 O kindly muse ! let not my weak tongue falter  
 In telling of this goodly company,  
 Of their old piety, and of their glee :  
 But let a portion of ethereal dew  
 Fall on my head, and presently unmew  
 My soul ; that I may dare, in wayfaring,  
 To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced along,  
 Bearing the burden of a shepherd's song ;  
 Each having a white wicker over-brimmed  
 With April's tender younglings : next, well trimmed,  
 A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt looks  
 As may be read of in Arcadian books ;  
 Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,  
 When the great Deity, for earth too ripe,  
 Let his divinity o'erflowing die  
 In music, through the vales of Thessaly :  
 Some idly trailed their sheep-hooks on the ground,  
 And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound  
 With ebon-tipped flutes : close after these,  
 Now coming from beneath the forest trees,  
 A venerable priest full soberly,  
 Begirt with minist'ring looks : alway his eye  
 Steadfast upon the matted turf he kept,  
 And after him his sacred vestments swept.  
 From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,  
 Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light ;  
 And in his left he held a basket full  
 Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull :



Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still  
Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.  
His aged head, crowned with beechen wreath,  
Seemed like a poll of ivy in the teeth  
Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd  
Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud  
Their share of the ditty. After them appeared,  
Up-followed by a multitude that reared  
Their voices to the clouds, a fair wrought car,  
Easily rolling so as scarce to mar  
The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown :  
Who stood therein did seem of great renown  
Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,  
Showing like Ganymede\* to manhood grown ;  
And, for those simple times, his garments were  
A chieftain king's : beneath his breast, half bare,  
Was hung a silver bugle, and between  
His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen.  
A smile was on his countenance ; he seemed,  
To common lookers on, like one who dreamed  
Of idleness in groves Elysian :  
But there were some who feelingly could scan  
A lurking trouble in his nether lip,  
And see that oftentimes the reins would slip  
Through his forgotten hands : then would they sigh,  
And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,  
Of logs piled solemnly. Ah, well-a-day,  
Why should our young Endymion pine away !

Soon the assembly, in a circle ranged,  
Stood silent round the shrine : each look was changed  
To sudden veneration : women meek  
Beckoned their sons to silence ; while each cheek

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\* The boy-cupbearer of Jupiter.



Of virgin bloom paled gently for slight fear.  
 Endymion too, without a forest peer,  
 Stood, wan, and pale, and with an awed face,  
 Among his brothers of the mountain chase.  
 In midst of all, the venerable priest  
 Eyed them with joy from greatest to the least,  
 And, after lifting up his aged hands,  
 Thus spake he : " Men of Latmos ! shepherd bands !  
 Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks :  
 Whether descended from beneath the rocks  
 That overtop your mountains ; whether come  
 From valleys where the pipe is never dumb ;  
 Or from your swelling downs, where sweet air stirs  
 Blue harebells lightly, and where prickly furze  
 Buds lavish gold ; or ye, whose precious charge  
 Nibbled their fill at ocean's very marge,  
 Whose mellow reeds are touched with sounds forlorn  
 By the dim echoes of old Triton's horn :  
 Mothers and wives ! who day by day prepare  
 The srip, with needments, for the mountain air ;  
 And all ye gentle girls who foster up  
 Udderless lambs, and in a little cup  
 Will put choice honey for a favoured youth :  
 Yea, every one attend ! for in good truth  
 Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.  
 Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than  
 Night-swollen mushrooms ? Are not our wide plains  
 Speckled with countless fleeces ? Have not rains  
 Greened over April's lap ? No howling sad  
 Sickens our fearful ewes ; and we have had  
 Great bounty from Endymion our lord.  
 The earth is glad : the merry lark has poured  
 His early song against yon breezy sky,\*  
 That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity."

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\* "The lark has sung his carol in the sky."—ROGERS (1820).



Thus ending, on the shrine he heaped a spire  
 Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire ;  
 Anon he stained the thick and spongy sod  
 With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.  
 Now while the earth was drinking it, and while  
 Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,  
 And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright  
 'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light  
 Spread greyly eastward, thus a chorus sang :

“ O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth hang  
 From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth  
 Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death  
 Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness ;  
 Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress  
 Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken ;  
 And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken  
 The dreary melody of bedded reeds—  
 In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds  
 The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth ;  
 Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth  
 Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx\*—do thou now,  
 By thy love's milky brow !  
 By all the trembling mazes that she ran,  
 Hear us, great Pan !

“ O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles  
 Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,  
 What time thou wanderest at eventide  
 Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side  
 Of thine enmossed realms : O thou, to whom  
 Broad-leaved fig trees even now foredoom  
 Their ripen'd fruitage ; yellow girted bees  
 Their golden honeycombs ; our village leas

---

\* A nymph of Arcadia, the daughter of the river Ladon. Flying from  
 Pan, she was, at her own request, turned into a reed.



Their fairest blossomed beans and popped corn ;  
The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,  
To sing for thee ; low creeping strawberries  
Their summer coolness ; pent-up butterflies  
Their freckled wings ; yea, the fresh budding year  
All its completions—be quickly near,  
By every wind that nods the mountain pine,  
O forester divine !

“ Thou, to whom every fawn and satyr flies  
For willing service ; whether to surprise  
The squatted hare while in half-sleeping fit ;  
Or upward ragged precipices flit  
To save poor lambkins from the eagle’s maw ;  
Or by mysterious enticement draw  
Bewildered shepherds to their path again ;  
Or to tread breathless round the frothy main,  
And gather up all fancifullest shells  
For thee to tumble into Naiads’ cells,  
And, being hidden, laugh at their outpeeping ;  
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,  
The while they pelt each other on the crown  
With silvery oak apples, and fir cones brown—  
By all the echoes that about thee ring,  
Hear us, O satyr king !

“ O Harkener to the loud-clapping shears,  
While ever and anon to his shorn peers  
A ram goes bleating : Winder of the horn,  
When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn  
Anger our huntsman : Breather round our farms,  
To keep off mildews, and all weather harms :  
Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,  
That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,  
And wither drearily on barren moors :



Dread opener of the mysterious doors  
Leading to universal knowledge—see,  
Great son of Dryope,\*  
The many that are come to pay their vows  
With leaves about their brows !

“ Be still the unimaginable lodge  
For solitary thinkings ; such as dodge  
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,  
Then leave the naked brain : be still the leaven,  
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth  
Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth :  
Be still a symbol of immensity ;  
A firmament reflected in a sea ;  
An element filling the space between ;  
An unknown—but no more : we humbly screen  
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,  
And giving out a shout most heaven rending,  
Conjure thee to receive our humble pæan,  
Upon thy Mount Lycean !”

Even while they brought the burden to a close,  
A shout from the whole multitude arose,  
That lingered in the air like dying rolls  
Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian shoals  
Of dolphins bob their noses through the brine.  
Meantime, on shady levels, mossy fine,  
Young companies nimbly began dancing  
To the swift treble pipe, and humming string.  
Ay, those fair living forms swam heavenly  
To tunes forgotten—out of memory :  
Fair creatures ! whose young children’s children bred  
Thermopylæ its heroes—not yet dead,

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\* Dryope, a nymph of Arcadia, the mother (Mercury was supposed to be the father) of Pan.



But in old marbles ever beautiful.  
High genitors, unconscious did they cull  
Time's sweet first-fruits—they danced to weariness,  
And then in quiet circles did they press  
The hillock turf, and caught the latter end  
Of some strange history, potent to send  
A young mind from its bodily tenement.  
Or they might watch the quoit-pitchers, intent  
On either side ; pitying the sad death  
Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath  
Of Zephyr slew him,\*—Zephyr penitent,  
Who now, ere Phoebus mounts the firmament,  
Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain.  
The archers, too, upon a wider plain,  
Beside the feathery whizzing of the shaft,  
And the dull twanging bowstring, and the raft  
Branch down sweeping from a tall ash top,  
Called up a thousand thoughts to envelope  
Those who would watch. Perhaps, the trembling knee  
And frantic gape of lonely Niobe,  
Poor, lonely Niobe ! when her lovely young  
Were dead and gone, and her caressing tongue  
Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip,  
And very, very deadliness did nip  
Her motherly cheeks. Aroused from this sad mood  
By one, who at a distance loud hallooed,  
Uplifting his strong bow into the air,  
Many might after brighter visions stare :

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\* Hyacinthus, a young Greek prince, greatly favoured by Apollo. Zephyrus (the west wind) is fabled to have been jealous ; and one day, when Apollo was playing quoits with Hyacinthus, he blew the quoit thrown by the god on the head of the young mortal, who was killed by the blow. Apollo, greatly grieved, made a flower spring from the blood of his lost favourite, which is called Hyacinth, from his name. The flower was said to bear on its leaves the letters *Ai, Ai*, the last cry of Hyacinthus. Yearly festivals were instituted by the Spartans in memory of the nephew of their king.



After the Argonauts, in blind amaze  
Tossing about on Neptune's restless ways,  
Until, from the horizon's vaulted side,  
There shot a golden splendour far and wide,  
Spangling those million poutings of the brine  
With quivering ore: 'twas even an awful shine  
From the exaltation of Apollo's bow;  
A heavenly beacon in their dreary woe.  
Who thus were ripe for high contemplating,  
Might turn their steps towards the sober ring  
Where sat Endymion and the aged priest  
'Mong shepherds gone in eld, whose looks increased  
The silvery setting of their mortal star.  
There they discoursed upon the fragile bar  
That keeps us from our homes ethereal;  
And what our duties there: to nightly call  
Vesper, the beauty-crest of summer weather;  
To summon all the downiest clouds together  
For the sun's purple couch; to emulate  
In minist'ring the potent rule of fate  
With speed of fire-tailed exhalations;  
To tint her pallid cheek with bloom, who cons  
Sweet poesy by moonlight: besides these,  
A world of other unguessed offices.  
Anon they wandered, by divine converse,  
Into Elysium; vying to rehearse  
Each one his own anticipated bliss.  
One felt heart-certain that he could not miss  
His quick gone love, among fair blossomed boughs,  
Where every zephyr-sigh pouts, and endows  
Her lips with music for the welcoming.  
Another wished, 'mid that eternal spring,  
To meet his rosy child, with feathery sails,  
Sweeping, eye-earnestly, through almond vales:  
Who, suddenly, should stoop through the smooth wind,  
And with the balmiest leaves his temples bind;



And, ever after, through those regions be  
His messenger, his little Mercury.  
Some were athirst in soul to see again  
Their fellow huntsmen o'er the wide champaign  
In times long past ; to sit with them, and talk  
Of all the chances in their earthly walk ;  
Comparing, joyfully, their plenteous stores  
Of happiness, to when upon the moors,  
Benighted, close they huddled from the cold,  
And shared their famished scrips. Thus all out-told  
Their fond imaginations,—saving him  
Whose eyelids curtained up their jewels dim,  
Endymion : yet hourly had he striven  
To hide the cankering venom, that had riven  
His fainting recollections. Now indeed  
His senses had swooned off : he did not heed  
The sudden silence, or the whispers low,  
Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe,  
Or anxious calls, or close of trembling palms,  
Or maiden's sigh, that grief itself embalms :  
But in the self-same fixed trance he kept,  
Like one who on the earth had never stept.  
Ay, even as dead-still as a marble man,  
Frozen in that old tale Arabian.

Who whispers him so pantingly and close?  
Peona, his sweet sister : of all those,  
His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she made,  
And breathed a sister's sorrow to persuade  
A yielding up, a cradling on her care.  
Her eloquence did breathe away the curse :  
She led him, like some midnight spirit nurse,  
Of happy changes in emphatic dreams,  
Along a path between two little streams,—  
Guarding his forehead, with her round elbow,  
From low-grown branches, and his footsteps slow









So she was gently glad to see him laid  
Under her favourite bower's quiet shade.

*Endymion.*



From stumbling over stumps and hillocks small ;  
Until they came to where these streamlets fall,  
With mingled bubblings and a gentle rush,  
Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush  
With crystal mocking of the trees and sky.  
A little shallop, floating there hard by,  
Pointed its beak over the fringed bank ;  
And soon it lightly dipt, and rose, and sank,  
And dipt again, with the young couple's weight,—  
Peona guiding, through the water straight,  
Towards a bowery island opposite ;  
Which gaining presently, she steered light  
Into a shady, fresh, and ripply cove,  
Where nested was an harbour, overwove  
By many a summer's silent fingering ;  
To whose cool bosom she was used to bring  
Her playmates, with their needle broidery,  
And minstrel memories of times gone by.

So she was gently glad to see him laid  
Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,  
On her new couch, new made of flower leaves,  
Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves  
When last the sun his autumn tresses shook,  
And the tanned harvesters rich armfuls took.  
Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest :  
But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest,  
Peona's busy hand against his lips,  
And still, a-sleeping, held her finger-tips  
In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps  
A patient watch over the stream that creeps  
Windingly by it, so the quiet maid  
Held her in peace : so that a whispering blade  
Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling  
Down in the bluebells, or a wren light rustling  
Among sere leaves and twigs, might all be heard.



O magic sleep ! O comfortable bird,  
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the mind  
Till it is hushed and smooth ! O unconfined  
Restraint ! imprisoned liberty ! great key  
To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,  
Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,  
Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves  
And moonlight ; ay, to all the mazy world  
Of silvery enchantment !—who, upfurled  
Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,  
But renovates and lives ?—Thus, in the bower,  
Endymion was calmed to life again.  
Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain,  
He said : “ I feel this thine endearing love  
All through my bosom : thou art as a dove  
Trembling its closed eyes and sleekèd wings  
About me ; and the pearliest dew not brings  
Such morning incense from the fields of May,  
As do those brighter drops that twinkling stray  
From those kind eyes,—the very home and haunt  
Of sisterly affection. Can I want  
Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such tears ?  
Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears  
That, any longer, I will pass my days  
Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise  
My voice upon the mountain-heights ; once more  
Make my horn parley from their foreheads hoar :  
Again my trooping hounds their tongues shall loll  
Around the breathed boar : again I'll poll  
The fair-grown yew tree, for a chosen bow :  
And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,  
Again I'll linger in a sloping mead  
To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed  
Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered sweet,  
And, if thy lute is here, softly entreat  
My soul to keep in its resolved course.”



Hereat Peona, in their silver source,  
Shut her pure sorrow drops with glad exclaim,  
And took a lute, from which there pulsing came  
A lively prelude, fashioning the way  
In which her voice should wander. 'Twas a lay  
More subtle cadenced, more forest wild  
Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child ;  
And nothing since has floated in the air  
So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare  
Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand ;  
For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spanned  
The quick invisible strings, even though she saw  
Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw  
Before the deep intoxication.  
But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon  
Her self-possession—swung the lute aside,  
And earnestly said : “ Brother, 'tis vain to hide  
That thou dost know of things mysterious,  
Immortal, starry ; such alone could thus  
Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinned in aught  
Offensive to the heavenly powers ? Caught  
A Paphian dove upon a message sent ?  
Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd bent,  
Sacred to Dian ? Haply, thou hast seen  
Her naked limbs among the alders green ;  
And that, alas ! is death. No, I can trace  
Something more high perplexing in thy face ! ”

Endymion looked at her, and pressed her hand,  
And said, “ Art thou so pale, who wast so bland  
And merry in our meadows ? How is this ?  
Tell me thine ailment : tell me all amiss !  
Ah ! thou hast been unhappy at the change  
Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed more strange ?  
Or more complete to overwhelm surmise ?  
Ambition is no sluggard : 'tis no prize,



That toiling years would put within my grasp,  
That I have sighed for : with so deadly gasp  
No man e'er panted for a mortal love.  
So all have set my heavier grief above  
These things which happen. Rightly have they done :  
I, who still saw the horizontal sun  
Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of the world,  
Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurled  
My spear aloft, as signal for the chase—  
I, who, for very sport of heart, would race  
With my own steed from Araby ; pluck down  
A vulture from his towery perching ; frown  
A lion into growling, loth retire—  
To lose, at once, all my toil-breeding fire,  
And sink thus low ! but I will ease my breast  
Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest.

“ This river does not see the naked sky,  
Till it begins to progress silverly  
Around the western border of the wood,  
Whence, from a certain spot, its winding flood  
Seems at the distance like a crescent moon :  
And in that nook, the very pride of June,  
Had I been used to pass my weary eves ;  
The rather for the sun unwilling leaves  
So dear a picture of his sovereign power,  
And I could witness his most kingly hour,  
When he doth lighten up the golden reins,  
And paces leisurely down amber plains  
His snorting four. Now when his chariot last  
Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,  
There blossomed suddenly a magic bed  
Of sacred dittany, and poppies red :  
At which I wondered greatly, knowing well  
That but one night had wrought this flowery spell ;



And, sitting down close by, began to muse  
What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I, Morpheus,  
In passing here, his owlet pinions shook ;  
Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook  
Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,  
Had dipt his rod in it : such garland wealth  
Came not by common growth. Thus on I thought,  
Until my head was dizzy and distraught.  
Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole  
A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul ;  
And shaping visions all about my sight  
Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light ;  
The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,  
And then were gulfed in a tumultuous swim :  
And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell  
The enchantment that afterwards befell ?  
Yet it was but a dream : yet such a dream  
That never tongue, although it overteem  
With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring,  
Could figure out and to conception bring  
All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay  
Watching the zenith, where the milky way  
Among the stars in virgin splendour pours ;  
And travelling my eye, until the doors  
Of heaven appeared to open for my flight ;  
I became loth and fearful to alight  
From such high soaring by a downward glance :  
So kept me steadfast in that airy trance,  
Spreading imaginary pinions wide.  
When, presently, the stars began to glide,  
And faint away, before my eager view :  
At which I sighed that I could not pursue,  
And dropt my vision to the horizon's verge ;  
And lo ! from opening clouds, I saw emerge  
The loveliest moon, that ever silvered o'er  
A shell from Neptune's goblet : she did soar



So passionately bright, my dazzled soul  
Commingling with her argent spheres did roll  
Through clear and cloudy, even when she went  
At last into a dark and vapoury tent—  
Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train  
Of planets all were in the blue again.  
To commune with those orbs, once more I raised  
My sight right upward : but it was quite dazed  
By a bright something, sailing down apace,  
Making me quickly veil my eyes and face :  
Again I looked, and, O ye deities,  
Who from Olympus watch our destinies !  
Whence that completed form of all completeness ?  
Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness ?  
Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where, O where  
Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair ?  
Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western sun ;  
Not—thy soft hand, fair sister ! let me shun  
Such follying before thee—yet she had,  
Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad ;  
And they were simply gordianed up and braided,  
Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,  
Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orbéd brow ;  
The which were blended in, I know not how,  
With such a paradise of lips and eyes,  
Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,  
That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings  
And plays about its fancy, till the stings  
Of human neighbourhood envenom all.  
Unto what awful power shall I call ?  
To what high fane ?—Ah ! see her hovering feet,  
More bluely veined, more soft, more whitely sweet  
Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose  
From out her cradle shell. The wind out-blows  
Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion ;  
'Tis blue, and over-spangled with a million



Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed,  
Over the darkest, lushest blue-bell bed,  
Handfuls of daisies."—"Endymion, how strange!  
Dream within dream!"—"She took an airy range,  
And then, towards me, like a very maid,  
Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,  
And pressed me by the hand: Ah! 'twas too much;  
Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,  
Yet held my recollection, even as one  
Who dives three fathoms where the waters run  
Gurgling in beds of coral: for anon,  
I felt upmounted in that region  
Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,  
And eagles struggle with the buffeting north  
That balances the heavy meteor-stone;  
Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone,  
But lapped and lulled along the dangerous sky.  
Soon, as it seemed, we left our journeying high,  
And straightway into frightful eddies swooped;  
Such as aye muster where grey time has scooped  
Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's side:  
There hollow sounds aroused me, and I sighed  
To faint once more by looking on my bliss—  
I was distracted; madly did I kiss  
The wooing arms which held me, and did give  
My eyes at once to death: but 'twas to live,  
To take in draughts of life from the gold fount  
Of kind and passionate looks; to count, and count  
The moments, by some greedy help that seemed  
A second self, that each might be redeemed  
And plundered of its load of blessedness.  
Ah, desperate mortal! I even dared to press  
Her very cheek against my crowned lip,  
And, at that moment, felt my body dip  
Into a warmer air: a moment more,  
Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store



Of newest joys upon that Alp. Sometimes  
A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,  
Loitered around us ; then of honey cells,  
Made delicate from all white-flower bells ;  
And once, above the edges of our nest,  
An arch face peeped,—an Oread as I guessed.

“ Why did I dream that sleep o’er-powered me  
In midst of all this heaven ? Why not see,  
Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,  
And stare them from me ? But, no, like a spark  
That needs must die, although its little beam  
Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream  
Fell into nothing—into stupid sleep.  
And so it was, until a gentle creep,  
A careful moving caught my waking ears,  
And up I started : Ah ! my sighs, my tears,  
My clenched hands ;—for lo ! the poppies hung  
Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung  
A heavy ditty, and the sullen day  
Had chidden herald Hesperus away,  
With leaden looks : the solitary breeze  
Blustered and slept, and its wild self did tease  
With wayward melancholy ; and I thought,  
Mark me, Peona ! that sometimes it brought  
Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus !  
Away I wandered—all the pleasant hues  
Of heaven and earth had faded : deepest shades  
Were deepest dungeons ; heaths and sunny glades  
Were full of pestilent light ; our taintless rills  
Seemed sooty, and o’erspread with upturned gills  
Of dying fish ; the vermeil rose had blown  
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns outgrown  
Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird  
Before my heedless footsteps stirred, and stirred



In little journeys, I beheld in it  
A disguised demon, missioned to knit  
My soul with under darkness ; to entice  
My stumblings down some monstrous precipice :  
Therefore I eager followed, and did curse  
The disappointment. Time, that aged nurse,  
Rocked me to patience. Now, thank gentle heaven !  
These things, with all their comfortings, are given  
To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,  
Sweer sister, help to stem the ebbing sea  
Of weary life."

Thus ended he, and both  
Sat silent : for the maid was very loth  
To answer ; feeling well that breathed words  
Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as swords  
Against the encased crocodile, or leaps  
Of grasshoppers against the sun. She weeps,  
And wonders ; struggles to devise some blame ;  
To put on such a look as would say, *Shame*  
*On this poor weakness !* but, for all her strife,  
She could as soon have crushed away the life  
From a sick dove. At length, to break the pause,  
She said with trembling chance : " Is this the cause ?  
This all ? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas !  
That one who through this middle earth should pass  
Most like a sojourning demigod, and leave  
His name upon the harp-string, should achieve  
No higher bard than simple maidenhood,  
Singing alone, and fearfully,—how the blood  
Left his young cheek ; and how he used to stray  
He knew not where ; and how he would say, *nay*,  
If any said 'twas love : and yet 'twas love ;  
What could it be but love ? How a ringdove  
Let fall a sprig of yew tree in his path ;



And how he died : and then, that love doth scathe  
The gentle heart, as northern blasts do roses ;  
And then the ballad of his sad life closes  
With sighs, and an alas !—Endymion !  
Be rather in the trumpet's mouth,—anon  
Among the winds at large—that all may hearken !  
Although, before the crystal heavens darken,  
I watch and dote upon the silver lakes  
Pictured in western cloudiness, that takes  
The semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands,  
Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted strands  
With horses prancing o'er them, palaces  
And towers of amethyst,—would I so tease  
My pleasant days, because I could not mount  
Into those regions ? The Morphean fount  
Of that fine element that visions, dreams,  
And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams  
Into its airy channels with so subtle,  
So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,  
Circled a million times within the space  
Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a trace,  
A tinting of its quality : how light  
Must dreams themselves be ; seeing they're more slight  
Than the mere nothing that engenders them !  
Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem  
Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick ?  
Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick  
For nothing but a dream ?"—Hereat the youth  
Looked up : a conflicting of shame and ruth  
Was in his plaited brow : yet his eyelids  
Widened a little, as when Zephyr bids  
A little breeze to creep between the fans  
Of careless butterflies : amid his pains  
He seemed to taste a drop of manna-dew,  
Full palatable : and a colour grew  
Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeful spake.



“Peona ! ever have I longed to slake  
My thirst for the world’s praises : nothing base,  
No merely slumberous phantasm, could unlace  
The stubborn canvas for my voyage prepared—  
Though now ’tis tattered ; leaving my bark bared  
And sullenly drifting : yet my higher hope  
Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope,  
To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.  
Wherein lies happiness ? In that which becks  
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,  
A fellowship with essence ; till we shine,  
Full alchemized, and free of space. Behold  
The clear religion of heaven ! Fold  
A rose-leaf round thy finger’s taperness,  
And soothe thy lips : hist, when the airy stress  
Of music’s kiss impregnates the free winds,  
And with a sympathetic touch unbinds  
Æolian magic from their lucid wombs :  
Then old songs waken from unclouded tombs ;  
Old ditties sigh above their father’s grave ;  
Ghosts of melodious prophesyings rave  
Round every spot where trod Apollo’s foot ;  
Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,  
Where long ago a giant battle was ;  
And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass  
In every place where infant Orpheus slept.  
Feel we these things ?—that moment have we stept  
Into a sort of oneness, and our state  
Is like a floating spirit’s. But there are  
Richer entanglements, enthrallments far  
More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,  
To the chief intensity : the crown of these  
Is made of love and friendship, and sits high  
Upon the forehead of humanity.  
All its more ponderous and bulky worth  
Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth



A steady splendour ; but at the tip-top,  
There hangs, by unseen film, an orb'd drop  
Of light, and that is love : its influence,  
Thrown in our eyes, genders a novel sense,  
At which we start and fret ; till in the end,  
Melting into its radiance, we blend,  
Mingle, and so become a part of it,—  
Nor with aught else can our souls interknit  
So wingedly : when we combine therewith,  
Life's self is nourished by its proper pith,  
And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.  
Ay, so delicious is the unsating food,  
That men, who might have towered in the van  
Of all the congregated world, to fan  
And winnow from the coming step of time  
All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime  
Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,  
Have been content to let occasion die,  
Whilst they did sleep in love's elysium.  
And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,  
Than speak against this ardent listlessness :  
For I have ever thought that it might bless  
The world with benefits unknowingly ;  
As does the nightingale, upperched high,  
And cloistered among cool and bunched leaves—  
She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives  
How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.  
Just so may love, although 'tis understood  
The mere commingling of passionate breath,  
Produce more than our searching witnesseth :  
What I know not : but who, of men, can tell  
That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell  
To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,  
The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,  
The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,  
The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,



Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,  
If human souls did never kiss and greet?

“ Now, if this earthly love has power to make  
Men’s being mortal, immortal ; to shake  
Ambition from their memories, and brim  
Their measure of content ; what merest whim,  
Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,  
To one, who keeps within his steadfast aim  
A love immortal, an immortal too.  
Look not so wildered ; for these things are true,  
And never can be born of atomies  
That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,  
Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I’m sure  
My restless spirit never could endure  
To brood so long upon one luxury,  
Unless it did, though fearfully, espy  
A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.  
My sayings will the less obscured seem,  
When I have told thee how my waking sight  
Has made me scruple whether that same night  
Was passed in dreaming. Harken, sweet Peona !  
Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,  
Which we should see but for these darkening boughs,  
Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged brows  
Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart,  
And meet so nearly, that with wings outraught,  
And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide  
Past them, but he must brush on every side.  
Some mouldered steps lead into this cool cell,  
Far as the slabbed margin of a well,  
Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye  
Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.  
Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their stalks set  
Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet



Edges them round, and they have golden pits :  
'Twas there I got them, from the gaps and slits  
In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my seat,  
When all above was faint with mid-day heat.  
And there in strife no burning thoughts to heed,  
I'd bubble up the water through a reed ;  
So reaching back to boyhood : make me ships  
Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder chips,  
With leaves stuck in them ; and the Neptune be  
Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily,  
When love-lorn hours had left me less a child,  
I sat contemplating the figures wild  
Of o'er-head clouds melting the mirror through.  
Upon a day, while thus I watched, by flew  
A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver ;  
So plainly characterized, no breeze would shiver  
The happy chance : so happy, I was fain  
To follow it upon the open plain,  
And, therefore, was just going ; when, behold !  
A wonder, fair as any I have told—  
The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,  
Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap  
Through the cool depth.—It moved as if to flee—  
I started up, when lo ! refreshfully,  
There came upon my face, in plenteous showers,  
Dewdrops, and dewy buds, and leaves and flowers,  
Wrapping all objects from my smothered sight,  
Bathing my spirit in a new delight.  
Ay, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss  
Alone preserved me from the drear abyss  
Of death, for the fair form had gone again.  
Pleasure is oft a visitant ; but pain  
Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth  
On the deer's tender haunches : late, and loth,  
'Tis scared away by slow returning pleasure.  
How sickening, how dark the dreadful leisure



Of weary days, made deeper exquisite,  
By a fore-knowledge of unslumbrous night!  
Like sorrow came upon me, heavier still,  
Than when I wandered from the poppy hill:  
And a whole age of lingering moments crept  
Sluggishly by, ere more contentment swept  
Away at once the deadly yellow spleen.  
Yes, thrice have I this fair enchantment seen;  
Once more been tortured with renewed life.  
When last the wintry gusts gave over strife  
With the conquering sun of spring, and left the skies  
Warm and serene, but yet with moistened eyes  
In pity of the shattered infant buds,—  
That time thou didst adorn, with amber studs,  
My hunting cap, because I laughed and smiled,  
Chatted with thee, and many days exiled  
All torment from my breast;—’twas even then,  
Straying about, yet, cooped up in the den  
Of helpless discontent,—hurling my lance  
From place to place, and following at chance,  
At last, by hap, through some young trees it struck,  
And, plashing among bedded pebbles, struck  
In the middle of a brook,—whose silver ramble  
Down twenty little falls, through reeds and bramble,  
Tracing along, it brought me to a cave,  
Whence it ran brightly forth, and white did lave  
The nether sides of mossy stones and rock,—  
’Mong which it gurgled blithe adieus, to mock  
Its own sweet grief at parting. Overhead,  
Hung a lush screen of drooping weeds, and spread  
Thick, as to curtain up some wood-nymph’s home.  
‘Ah! impious mortal, whither do I roam?’  
Said I, low voiced: ‘Ah, whither! ’Tis the grot  
Of Proserpine, when Hell, obscure and hot,  
Doth her resign; and where her tender hands  
She dabbles, on the cool and sluicy sands:



Or 'tis the cell of Echo, where she sits,  
And babbles thorough silence, till her wits  
Are gone in tender madness, and anon,  
Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone  
Of sadness. O that she would take my vows,  
And breathe them sighingly among the boughs,  
To sue her gentle ears for whose fair head,  
Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their bed,  
And weave them dyingly—send honey-whispers  
Round every leaf, that all those gentle lispers  
May sigh my love unto her pitying !  
O charitable Echo ! hear, and sing  
This ditty to her !—tell her'——so I stayed  
My foolish tongue, and listening, half afraid,  
Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,  
And blushing for the freaks of melancholy.  
Salt tears were coming, when I heard my name  
Most fondly lipped, and then these accents came :  
'Endymion ! the cave is secreter  
Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall stir  
No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light noise  
Of thy coming hand, the while it travelling cloy  
And trembles through my labyrinthine hair.'  
At that oppressed I hurried in.—Ah ! where  
Are those swift moments ? Whither are they fled ?  
I'll smile no more, Peona ; nor will wed  
Sorrow the way to death ; but patiently  
Bear up against it : so farewell, sad sigh ;  
And come instead demurest meditation,  
To occupy me wholly, and to fashion  
My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink.  
No more will I count over, link by link,  
My chain of grief : no longer strive to find  
A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind  
Blustering about my ears : ay, thou shalt see,  
Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be ;



What a calm round of hours shall make my days.  
There is a paly flame of hope that plays  
Where'er I look : but yet, I'll say 'tis naught—  
And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,  
Already, a more healthy countenance ?  
By this the sun is setting ; we may chance  
Meet some of our near-dwellers with my car."

This said, he rose, faint-smiling like a star  
Through autumn mists, and took Peona's hand :  
They stept into the boat, and launched from land.

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## BOOK II.

O SOVEREIGN power of love ! O grief ! O balm !  
All records, saving thine, come cool, and calm,  
And shadowy, through the mist of passèd years :  
For others, good or bad, hatred and tears  
Have become indolent ; but touching thine,  
One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth pine,  
One kiss brings honey-dew from buried days.  
The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,  
Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,  
Struggling, and blood, and shrieks—all dimly fades  
Into some backward corner of the brain ;  
Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain  
The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.  
Hence, pageant history ! hence, gilded cheat !  
Swart planet in the universe of deeds !  
Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds  
Along the pebbled shore of memory !  
Many old rotten-timbered boats there be



Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified  
To goodly vessels ; many a sail of pride,  
And golden keeled, is left unlaunched and dry.  
But wherefore this ? What care, though owl did fly  
About the great Athenian admiral's mast ?  
What care, though striding Alexander past  
The Indus with his Macedonian numbers ?  
Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers  
The gluttoned Cyclops, what care ? Juliet leaning  
Amid her window-flowers,—sighing,—weaning  
Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,  
Doth more avail than these : the silver flow  
Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,  
Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,  
Are things to brood on with more ardency  
Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully  
Must such conviction come upon his head,  
Who thus far, discontent, has dared to tread,  
Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,  
The path of love and poesy. But rest,  
In chafing restlessness, is yet more drear  
Than to be crushed, in striving to uprear  
Love's standard on the battlements of song.  
So once more days and nights aid me along,  
Like legioned soldiers.

Brain-sick shepherd prince,  
What promise hast thou faithful guarded since  
The day of sacrifice ? Or, have new sorrows  
Come with the constant dawn upon thy morrows ?  
Alas ! 'tis his old grief. For many days  
Has he been wandering in uncertain ways :  
Through wilderness, and woods of mossed oaks ;  
Counting his woe-worn minutes by the strokes  
Of the lone woodcutter ; and listening still,  
Hour after hour, to each lush-leaved rill.



Now he is sitting by a shady spring,  
And elbow-deep with feverish fingering  
Stems the upbursting cold : a wild rose tree  
Pavilions him in bloom, and he doth see  
A bud which snares his fancy : lo ! but now  
He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water : how !  
It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his sight ;  
And, in the middle, there is softly pight  
A golden butterfly ; upon whose wings  
There must be surely characterized strange things,  
For with wide eye he wonders, and smiles oft.

Lightly this little herald flew aloft,  
Followed by glad Endymion's clasped hands :  
Onward it flies. From languor's sullen bands  
His limbs are loosed, and eager, on he hies  
Dazzled to trace it in the sunny skies.  
It seemed he flew, the way so easy was ;  
And like a newborn spirit did he pass  
Through the green evening quiet in the sun,  
O'er many a heath, through many a woodland dun,  
Through buried paths, where sleepy twilight dreams  
The summer time away. One track unseams  
A wooded cleft, and, far away, the blue  
Of ocean fades upon him ; then, anew,  
He sinks adown a solitary glen,  
Where there was never sound of mortal men,  
Saving, perhaps, some snow-light cadences  
Melting to silence, when upon the breeze  
Some holy bark let forth an anthem sweet,  
To cheer itself to Delphi. Still his feet  
Went swift beneath the merry-winged guide,  
Until it reached a splashing fountain's side  
That, near a cavern's mouth, for ever poured  
Unto the temperate air : then high it soared,



And, downward, suddenly began to dip,  
As if, athirst with so much toil, 'twould sip  
The crystal spout-head : so it did, with touch  
Most delicate, as though afraid to smutch  
Even with mealy gold the waters clear.  
But, at that very touch, to disappear  
So fairy-quick, was strange ! Bewildered,  
Endymion sought around, and shook each bed  
Of covert flowers in vain ; and then he flung  
Himself along the grass. What gentle tongue,  
What whisperer disturbed his gloomy rest ?  
It was a nymph uprisen to the breast  
In the fountain's pebbly margin, and she stood  
'Mong lilies, like the youngest of the brood.  
To him her dripping hand she softly kist,  
And anxiously began to plait and twist  
Her ringlets round her fingers, saying : " Youth !  
Too long, alas, hast thou starved on the ruth,  
The bitterness of love : too long indeed,  
Seeing thou art so gentle. Could I weed  
Thy soul of care, by heavens, I would offer  
All the bright riches of my crystal coffer  
To Amphitrite ; all my clear-eyed fish,  
Golden, or rainbow-sided, or purplish,  
Vermilion-tailed, or finned with silvery gauze ;  
Yea, or my veined pebble-floor, that draws  
A virgin light to the deep ; my grotto-sands,  
Tawny and gold, oozed slowly from far lands  
By my diligent springs ; my level lilies, shells,  
My charming rod, my potent river spells ;  
Yes, everything, even to the pearly cup  
Meander gave me,—for I bubbled up  
To fainting creatures in a desert wild.  
But woe is me, I am but as a child  
To gladden thee ; and all I dare to say,  
Is, that I pity thee ; that on this day



I've been thy guide ; that thou must wander far  
In other regions, past the scanty bar  
To mortal steps, before thou canst be ta'en  
From every wasting sigh, from every pain,  
Into the gentle bosom of thy love.  
Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above :  
But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewell!  
I have a ditty for my hollow cell."

Hereat, she vanished from Endymion's gaze,  
Who brooded o'er the water in amaze :  
The dashing fount poured on, and where its pool  
Lay, half asleep, in grass and rushes cool,  
Quick waterflies and gnats were sporting still,  
And fish were dimpling, as if good nor ill  
Had fallen out that hour. The wanderer,  
Holding his forehead, to keep off the burr  
Of smothering fancies, patiently sat down ;  
And, while beneath the evening's sleepy frown  
Glowworms began to trim their starry lamps,  
Thus breathed he to himself : " Whoso encamps  
To take a fancied city of delight,  
O what a wretch is he ! and when 'tis his,  
After long toil and travelling, to miss  
The kernel of his hopes, how more than vile :  
Yet, for him there's refreshment even in toil ;  
Another city doth he set about,  
Free from the smallest pebble-bead of doubt  
That he will seize on trickling honeycombs :  
Alas, he finds them dry ; and then he foams,  
And onward to another city speeds.  
But this is human life : the war, the deeds,  
The disappointment, the anxiety,  
Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,  
All human ; bearing in themselves this good,  
That they are still the air, the subtle food,