

Enter MEPHISTOPHELES.

Mephistopheles. As thou, O Lord, once more art kind enough
 To interest Thyself in our affairs, 30
 And ask, 'How goes it with you there below?'
 And as indulgently at other times
 Thou tookest not my visits in ill part,
 Thou seest me here once more among Thy household,
 Though I should scandalize this company, 35
 You will excuse me if I do not talk
 In the high style which they think fashionable;
 My pathos certainly would make You laugh too,
 Had You not long since given over laughing,
 Nothing know I to say of suns and worlds; 40
 I observe only how men plague themselves;—
 The little god o' the world keeps the same stamp,
 As wonderful as on creation's day:—
 A little better would he live, hadst Thou
 Not given him a glimpse of Heaven's light 45
 Which he calls reason, and employs it only
 To live more beastlily than any beast.
 With reverence to Your Lordship be it spoken,
 He's like one of those long-legged grasshoppers,
 Who flits and jumps about, and sings for ever 50
 The same old song i' the grass. There let him lie,
 Burying his nose in every heap of dung.

The Lord. Have you no more to say? Do you come here
 Always to scold, and cavil, and complain?
 Seems nothing ever right to you on earth? 55

Mephistopheles. No, Lord! I find all there, as ever, bad
 at best.
 Even I am sorry for man's days of sorrow;
 I could myself almost give up the pleasure
 Of plaguing the poor things.

38 certainly would *edd.* 1839; would certainly 1824.
 1824; beastily *edd.* 1839.

47 beastlily

There flames a flashing destruction
 Before the path of the thunderbolt.
 But Thy servants, Lord, revere
 The gentle alternations of Thy day.

Chorus. Thy countenance gives the Angels strength,
 Though none can comprehend Thee:
 And all Thy lofty works
 Are excellent as at the first day.

Such is a literal translation of this astonishing chorus; it is impossible to represent in another language the melody of the versification; even the volatile strength and delicacy of the ideas escape in the crucible of translation, and the reader is surprised to find a *caput mortuum*.—
 [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

The Lord. Knowest thou Faust?

Mephistopheles. The Doctor?

The Lord. Ay; My servant Faust.

Mephistopheles. In truth 60

He serves You in a fashion quite his own;
And the fool's meat and drink are not of earth.
His aspirations bear him on so far
That he is half aware of his own folly,
For he demands from Heaven its fairest star, 65
And from the earth the highest joy it bears,
Yet all things far, and all things near, are vain
To calm the deep emotions of his breast.

The Lord. Though he now serves Me in a cloud of error,
I will soon lead him forth to the clear day. 70
When trees look green, full well the gardener knows
That fruits and blooms will deck the coming year.

Mephistopheles. What will You bet?—now I am sure of win-
ning—
Only, observe You give me full permission
To lead him softly on my path.

The Lord. As long 75
As he shall live upon the earth, so long
Is nothing unto thee forbidden—Man
Must err till he has ceased to struggle.

Mephistopheles. Thanks.
And that is all I ask; for willingly 80
I never make acquaintance with the dead.
The full fresh cheeks of youth are food for me,
And if a corpse knocks, I am not at home.
For I am like a cat—I like to play
A little with the mouse before I eat it.

The Lord. Well, well! it is permitted thee. Draw thou 85
His spirit from its springs; as thou find'st power,
Seize him and lead him on thy downward path;
And stand ashamed when failure teaches thee
That a good man, even in his darkest longings,
Is well aware of the right way.

Mephistopheles. Well and good. 90
I am not in much doubt about my bet,
And if I lose, then 'tis Your turn to crow;
Enjoy Your triumph then with a full breast.
Ay; dust shall he devour, and that with pleasure,
Like my old paramour, the famous Snake. 95

The Lord. Pray come here when it suits you; for I never
Had much dislike for people of your sort.
And, among all the Spirits who rebelled,
The knave was ever the least tedious to Me.
The active spirit of man soon sleeps, and soon 100

He seeks unbroken quiet; therefore I
 Have given him the Devil for a companion,
 Who may provoke him to some sort of work,
 And must create forever.—But ye, pure
 Children of God, enjoy eternal beauty;—
 Let that which ever operates and lives
 Clasp you within the limits of its love;
 And seize with sweet and melancholy thoughts
 The floating phantoms of its loveliness.

105

[*Heaven closes; the Archangels exeunt.*]

Mephistopheles. From time to time I visit the old fellow,
 And I take care to keep on good terms with Him.
 Civil enough is the same God Almighty,
 To talk so freely with the Devil himself.

111

SCENE II.—MAY-DAY NIGHT. *The Hartz Mountain, a desolate
 Country.* FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES.

Mephistopheles. Would you not like a broomstick? As for me
 I wish I had a good stout ram to ride;
 For we are still far from the appointed place.

Faust. This knotted staff is help enough for me,
 Whilst I feel fresh upon my legs. What good
 Is there in making short a pleasant way?
 To creep along the labyrinths of the vales,
 And climb those rocks, where ever-babbling springs,
 Precipitate themselves in waterfalls,
 Is the true sport that seasons such a path.
 Already Spring kindles the birchen spray,
 And the hoar pines already feel her breath:
 Shall she not work also within our limbs?

5

10

Mephistopheles. Nothing of such an influence do I feel.
 My body is all wintry, and I wish
 The flowers upon our path were frost and snow.
 But see how melancholy rises now,
 Dimly uplifting her belated beam,
 The blank unwelcome round of the red moon,
 And gives so bad a light, that every step
 One stumbles 'gainst some crag. With your permission,
 I'll call on Ignis-fatuus to our aid:
 I see one yonder burning jollily.
 Halloo, my friend! may I request that you
 Would favour us with your bright company?
 Why should you blaze away there to no purpose?
 Pray be so good as light us up this way.

15

20

25

Ignis-fatuus. With reverence be it spoken, I will try

To overcome the lightness of my nature ;
Our course, you know, is generally zigzag. 30

Mephistopheles. Ha, ha! your worship thinks you have to deal
With men. Go straight on, in the Devil's name,
Or I shall puff your flickering life out.

Ignis-fatuus. Well,
I see you are the master of the house ;
I will accommodate myself to you. 35
Only consider that to-night this mountain
Is all enchanted, and if Jack-a-lantern
Shows you his way, though you should miss your own,
You ought not to be too exact with him.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, and IGNIS-FATUUS, in alternate Chorus.

The limits of the sphere of dream, 40
The bounds of true and false, are past.
Lead us on, thou wandering Gleam,
Lead us onward, far and fast,
To the wide, the desert waste.

But see, how swift advance and shift 45
Trees behind trees, row by row,—
How, clift by clift, rocks bend and lift
Their frowning foreheads as we go.
The giant-snouted crags, ho! ho!
How they snort, and how they blow! 50

Through the mossy sods and stones,
Stream and streamlet hurry down—
A rushing throng! A sound of song
Beneath the vault of Heaven is blown!
Sweet notes of love, the speaking tones 55
Of this bright day, sent down to say
That Paradise on Earth is known,
Resound around, beneath, above.
All we hope and all we love 60
Finds a voice in this blithe strain,
Which wakens hill and wood and rill,
And vibrates far o'er field and vale,
And which Echo, like the tale
Of old times, repeats again.

To-whoo! to-whoo! near, nearer now 65
The sound of song, the rushing throng!
Are the screech, the lapwing, and the jay,
All awake as if 'twere day?
See, with long legs and belly wide,

33 shall puff 1824 ; will blow 1822.

48 frowning] fawning 1822.

A salamander in the brake! 70
 Every root is like a snake,
 And along the loose hillside,
 With strange contortions through the night,
 Curls, to seize or to affright;
 And, animated, strong, and many, 75
 They dart forth polypus-antennae,
 To blister with their poison spume
 The wanderer. Through the dazzling gloom
 The many-coloured mice, that thread
 The dewy turf beneath our tread, 80
 In troops each other's motions cross,
 Through the heath and through the moss;
 And, in legions intertangled,
 The fire-flies flit, and swarm, and throng,
 Till all the mountain depths are spangled. 85

Tell me, shall we go or stay?
 Shall we onward? Come along!
 Everything around is swept
 Forward, onward, far away!
 Trees and masses intercept 90
 The sight, and wisps on every side
 Are puffed up and multiplied.

Mephistopheles. Now vigorously seize my skirt, and gain
 This pinnacle of isolated crag.
 One may observe with wonder from this point, 95
 How Mammon glows among the mountains.

Faust. Ay—
 And strangely through the solid depth below
 A melancholy light, like the red dawn,
 Shoots from the lowest gorge of the abyss
 Of mountains, lightning hitherward: there rise 100
 Pillars of smoke, here clouds float gently by;
 Here the light burns soft as the enkindled air,
 Or the illumined dust of golden flowers;
 And now it glides like tender colours spreading;
 And now bursts forth in fountains from the earth; 105
 And now it winds, one torrent of broad light,
 Through the far valley with a hundred veins;
 And now once more within that narrow corner
 Masses itself into intensest splendour.
 And near us, see, sparks spring out of the ground, 110
 Like golden sand scattered upon the darkness;
 The pinnacles of that black wall of mountains
 That hems us in are kindled.

Mephistopheles. Rare: in faith!

Does not Sir Mammon gloriously illuminate
 His palace for this festival?—it is
 A pleasure which you had not known before. 115
 I spy the boisterous guests already.

Faust. How
 The children of the wind rage in the air!
 With what fierce strokes they fall upon my neck!

Mephistopheles.
 Cling tightly to the old ribs of the crag. 120
 Beware! for if with them thou warrest
 In their fierce flight towards the wilderness,
 Their breath will sweep thee into dust, and drag
 Thy body to a grave in the abyss.
 A cloud thickens the night. 125

Hark! how the tempest crashes through the forest!
 The owls fly out in strange affright;
 The columns of the evergreen palaces
 Are split and shattered;
 The roots creak, and stretch, and groan; 130
 And ruinously overthrown,

The trunks are crushed and shattered
 By the fierce blast's unconquerable stress.
 Over each other crack and crash they all
 In terrible and intertangled fall; 135
 And through the ruins of the shaken mountain

The airs hiss and howl—
 It is not the voice of the fountain,
 Nor the wolf in his midnight prowl.
 Dost thou not hear? 140

Strange accents are ringing
 Aloft, afar, anear?
 The witches are singing!
 The torrent of a raging wizard song
 Streams the whole mountain along. 145

Chorus of Witches.
 The stubble is yellow, the corn is green,
 Now to the Brocken the witches go;
 The mighty multitude here may be seen
 Gathering, wizard and witch, below.
 Sir Urian is sitting aloft in the air; 150
 Hey over stock! and hey over stone!
 'Twixt witches and incubi, what shall be done?
 Tell it who dare! tell it who dare!

117 How 1824; Now 1822. 132 shattered] scattered Rossetti.
 150 Urian] Urean edd. 1824, 1839.

A Voice.

Upon a sow-swine, whose farrows were nine,
Old Baubo rideth alone.

155

Chorus.

Honour her, to whom honour is due,
Old mother Baubo, honour to you!
An able sow, with old Baubo upon her,
Is worthy of glory, and worthy of honour!
The legion of witches is coming behind,
Darkening the night, and outspeeding the wind—

160

A Voice.

Which way comest thou?

A Voice.

Over Ilsenstein ;

The owl was awake in the white moonshine ;
I saw her at rest in her downy nest,
And she stared at me with her broad, bright eyne.

165

Voices.

And you may now as well take your course on to Hell,
Since you ride by so fast on the headlong blast.

A Voice.

She dropped poison upon me as I passed.
Here are the wounds—

Chorus of Witches.

Come away! come along!

The way is wide, the way is long,
But what is that for a Bedlam throng?
Stick with the prong, and scratch with the broom.
The child in the cradle lies strangled at home,
And the mother is clapping her hands.—

170

Semichorus of Wizards I.

We glide in

Like snails when the women are all away ;
And from a house once given over to sin
Woman has a thousand steps to stray.

175

Semichorus II.

A thousand steps must a woman take,
Where a man but a single spring will make.

Voices above.

Come with us, come with us, from Felsensee.

180

165 eyne 1839, 2nd ed. ; eye 1822, 1824, 1839, 1st ed. 180 Felsensee
1862 (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 96) ; Felumee 1822 ; Felunsee edd. 1824, 1839.

Voices below.

With what joy would we fly through the upper sky!
We are washed, we are 'nointed, stark naked are we;
But our toil and our pain are forever in vain.

Both Choruses.

The wind is still, the stars are fled,
The melancholy moon is dead;
The magic notes, like spark on spark,
Drizzle, whistling through the dark.
Come away!

185

Voices below.

Stay, Oh, stay!

Voices above.

Out of the crannies of the rocks
Who calls?

190

Voices below.

Oh, let me join your flocks!
I, three hundred years have striven
To catch your skirt and mount to Heaven,—
And still in vain. Oh, might I be
With company akin to me!

195

Both Choruses.

Some on a ram and some on a prong,
On poles and on broomsticks we flutter along;
Forlorn is the wight who can rise not to-night.

A Half-Witch below.

I have been tripping this many an hour:
Are the others already so far before?
No quiet at home, and no peace abroad!
And less methinks is found by the road.

200

Chorus of Witches.

Come onward, away! aoint thee, aoint!
A witch to be strong must anoint—anoint—
Then every trough will be boat enough;
With a rag for a sail we can sweep through the sky,
Who flies not to-night, when means he to fly?

205

Both Choruses.

We cling to the skirt, and we strike on the ground;
Witch-legions thicken around and around;
Wizard-swarms cover the heath all over. [They descend.]

Mephistopheles.

What thronging, dashing, raging, rustling;
What whispering, babbling, hissing, bustling;

211

What glimmering, spurting, stinking, burning,
 As Heaven and Earth were overturning.
 There is a true witch element about us ;
 Take hold on me, or we shall be divided :—
 Where are you ?

215

Faust (from a distance). Here !

Mephistopheles.

What !

I must exert my authority in the house.
 Place for young Voland ! pray make way, good people.
 Take hold on me, doctor, and with one step
 Let us escape from this unpleasant crowd :
 They are too mad for people of my sort.
 Just there shines a peculiar kind of light—
 Something attracts me in those bushes. Come
 This way : we shall slip down there in a minute.

220

225

Faust. Spirit of Contradiction ! Well, lead on—
 'Twere a wise feat indeed to wander out
 Into the Brocken upon May-day night,
 And then to isolate oneself in scorn,
 Disgusted with the humours of the time.

230

Mephistopheles. See yonder, round a many-coloured flame
 A merry club is huddled altogether :
 Even with such little people as sit there
 One would not be alone.

Faust. Would that I were
 Up yonder in the glow and whirling smoke,
 Where the blind million rush impetuously
 To meet the evil ones ; there might I solve
 Many a riddle that torments me !

235

Mephistopheles.

Yet

Many a riddle there is tied anew
 Inextricably. Let the great world rage !
 We will stay here safe in the quiet dwellings.
 'Tis an old custom. Men have ever built
 Their own small world in the great world of all.
 I see young witches naked there, and old ones
 Wisely attired with greater decency.
 Be guided now by me, and you shall buy
 A pound of pleasure with a dram of trouble.
 I hear them tune their instruments—one must
 Get used to this damned scraping. Come, I'll lead you
 Among them ; and what there you do and see,
 As a fresh compact 'twixt us two shall be.
 How say you now ? this space is wide enough—
 Look forth, you cannot see the end of it—
 An hundred bonfires burn in rows, and they

240

245

250

Who throng around them seem innumerable :
 Dancing and drinking, jabbering, making love, 255
 And cooking, are at work. Now tell me, friend,
 What is there better in the world than this?

Faust. In introducing us, do you assume
 The character of Wizard or of Devil? 260

Mephistopheles. In truth, I generally go about
 In strict incognito; and yet one likes
 To wear one's orders upon gala days.
 I have no ribbon at my knee; but here
 At home, the cloven foot is honourable. 265
 See you that snail there?—she comes creeping up,
 And with her feeling eyes hath smelt out something.
 I could not, if I would, mask myself here.
 Come now, we'll go about from fire to fire:
 I'll be the Pimp, and you shall be the Lover. 270

[*To some old Women, who are sitting round a heap of
 glimmering coals.*]

Old gentlewomen, what do you do out here?
 You ought to be with the young rioters
 Right in the thickest of the revelry—
 But every one is best content at home.

General.

Who dare confide in right or a just claim? 275
 So much as I had done for them! and now—
 With women and the people 'tis the same,
 Youth will stand foremost ever,—age may go
 To the dark grave unhonoured.

Minister.

Nowadays
 People assert their rights: they go too far; 280
 But as for me, the good old times I praise;
 Then we were all in all—'twas something worth
 One's while to be in place and wear a star;
 That was indeed the golden age on earth.

Parvenu.

We too are active, and we did and do 285
 What we ought not, perhaps; and yet we now
 Will seize, whilst all things are whirled round and round,
 A spoke of Fortune's wheel, and keep our ground.

Author.

Who now can taste a treatise of deep sense
 And ponderous volume? 'tis impertinence 290

264 my *wanting*, 1822. 275 right *edd.* 1824, 1839; night 1822.
 285 *Parvenu*: (Note) A sort of fundholder 1822, *edd.* 1824, 1839. 290
 ponderous 1824; wonderous 1822.

To write what none will read, therefore will I
To please the young and thoughtless people try.

Mephistopheles (*who at once appears to have grown very old*). I
find the people ripe for the last day,
Since I last came up to the wizard mountain;
And as my little cask runs turbid now,
So is the world drained to the dregs. 295

Pedlar-witch. Look here,
Gentlemen; do not hurry on so fast;
And lose the chance of a good pennyworth.
I have a pack full of the choicest wares
Of every sort, and yet in all my bundle 300
Is nothing like what may be found on earth;
Nothing that in a moment will make rich
Men and the world with fine malicious mischief—
There is no dagger drunk with blood; no bowl
From which consuming poison may be drained 305
By innocent and healthy lips; no jewel,
The price of an abandoned maiden's shame;
No sword which cuts the bond it cannot loose,
Or stabs the wearer's enemy in the back;
No—

Mephistopheles. Gossip, you know little of these times. 310
What has been, has been; what is done, is past,
They shape themselves into the innovations
They breed, and innovation drags us with it.
The torrent of the crowd sweeps over us:
You think to impel, and are yourself impelled. 315

Faust. What is that yonder?

Mephistopheles. Mark her well. It is
Lilith.

Faust. Who?

Mephistopheles. Lilith, the first wife of Adam.
Beware of her fair hair, for she excels
All women in the magic of her locks;
And when she winds them round a young man's neck, 320
She will not ever set him free again.

Faust.

There sit a girl and an old woman—they
Seem to be tired with pleasure and with play.

Mephistopheles.

There is no rest to-night for any one:
When one dance ends another is begun; 325
Come, let us to it. We shall have rare fun.

[*FAUST dances and sings with a girl, and MEPHISTOPHELES with
an old Woman.*]

Faust.

I had once a lovely dream
 In which I saw an apple-tree,
 Where two fair apples with their gleam
 To climb and taste attracted me.

330

The Girl.

She with apples you desired
 From Paradise came long ago:
 With you I feel that if required,
 Such still within my garden grow.

Procto-Phantasmist. What is this cursèd multitude about?
 Have we not long since proved to demonstration
 That ghosts move not on ordinary feet?
 But these are dancing just like men and women.

336

The Girl. What does he want then at our ball?

Faust.

Oh! he

Is far above us all in his conceit:
 Whilst we enjoy, he reasons of enjoyment;
 And any step which in our dance we tread,
 If it be left out of his reckoning,
 Is not to be considered as a step.

340

There are few things that scandalize him not:
 And when you whirl round in the circle now,
 As he went round the wheel in his old mill,
 He says that you go wrong in all respects,
 Especially if you congratulate him
 Upon the strength of the resemblance.

345

Procto-Phantasmist.

Fly!

350

Vanish! Unheard-of impudence! What, still there!
 In this enlightened age too, since you have been
 Proved not to exist!—But this infernal brood
 Will hear no reason and endure no rule.

355

Are we so wise, and is the *pond* still haunted?
 How long have I been sweeping out this rubbish
 Of superstition, and the world will not
 Come clean with all my pains!—it is a case
 Unheard of!

The Girl. Then leave off teasing us so.

Procto-Phantasmist. I tell you, spirits, to your faces now,
 That I should not regret this despotism
 Of spirits, but that mine can wield it not.
 To-night I shall make poor work of it,
 Yet I will take a round with you, and hope

361

327-334 So *Boscombe MS.* (*Westminster Review*, July, 1870); wanting, 1822, 1824, 1839. 335 *Procto-Phantasmist*] *Brocto-Phantasmist edd.* 1824, 1839. 355 *pond* wanting in *Boscombe MS.*

Before my last step in the living dance
To beat the poet and the devil together. 365

Mephistopheles. At last he will sit down in some foul puddle;
That is his way of solacing himself;
Until some leech, diverted with his gravity,
Cures him of spirits and the spirit together. 370

[*To FAUST, who has seceded from the dance.*

Why do you let that fair girl pass from you,
Who sung so sweetly to you in the dance?

Faust. A red mouse in the middle of her singing
Sprung from her mouth.

Mephistopheles. That was all right, my friend:
Be it enough that the mouse was not gray. 375
Do not disturb your hour of happiness
With close consideration of such trifles.

Faust. Then saw I—

Mephistopheles. What?

Faust. Seest thou not a pale,
Fair girl, standing alone, far, far away?
She drags herself now forward with slow steps, 380
And seems as if she moved with shackled feet:
I cannot overcome the thought that she
Is like poor Margaret.

Mephistopheles. Let it be—pass on—
No good can come of it—it is not well
To meet it—it is an enchanted phantom, 385
A lifeless idol; with its numbing look,
It freezes up the blood of man; and they
Who meet its ghastly stare are turned to stone,
Like those who saw Medusa.

Faust. Oh, too true!
Her eyes are like the eyes of a fresh corpse 390
Which no belovèd hand has closed, alas!
That is the breast which Margaret yielded to me—
Those are the lovely limbs which I enjoyed!

Mephistopheles. It is all magic, poor deluded fool!
She looks to every one like his first love. 395

Faust. Oh, what delight! what woe! I cannot turn
My looks from her sweet piteous countenance.
How strangely does a single blood-red line,
Not broader than the sharp edge of a knife,
Adorn her lovely neck!

Mephistopheles. Ay, she can carry 400
Her head under her arm upon occasion;
Perseus has cut it off for her. These pleasures
End in delusion.—Gain this rising ground,
It is as airy here as in a . . .

And if I am not mightily deceived,
I see a theatre.—What may this mean?

405

Attendant. Quite a new piece, the last of seven, for 'tis
The custom now to represent that number.

'Tis written by a Dilettante, and
The actors who perform are Dilettanti;
Excuse me, gentlemen; but I must vanish.
I am a Dilettante curtain-lifter.

410

JUVENILIA

QUEEN MAB

A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM, WITH NOTES

[An edition (250 copies) of *Queen Mab* was printed at London in the summer of 1813 by Shelley himself, whose name, as author and printer, appears on the title-page (see *Bibliographical List*). Of this edition about seventy copies were privately distributed. Sections i, ii, viii, and ix were afterwards rehandled, and the intermediate sections here and there revised and altered; and of this new text sections i and ii were published by Shelley in the *Alastor* volume of 1816, under the title, *The Daemon of the World*. The remainder lay unpublished till 1876, when sections viii and ix were printed by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., from a printed copy of *Queen Mab* with Shelley's MS. corrections. See *The Shelley Library*, pp. 36–44, for a description of this copy, which is in Mr. Forman's possession. Sources of the text are (1) the *editio princeps* of 1813; (2) text (with some omissions) in the *Poetical Works* of 1839, edited by Mrs. Shelley; (3) text (one line only wanting) in the 2nd edition of the *P. W.*, 1839 (same editor).

Queen Mab was probably written during the year 1812—it is first heard of at Lynmouth, August 18, 1812 (*Shelley Memorials*, p. 39)—but the text may be assumed to include earlier material.]

ECRASEZ L'INFAME!—*Correspondance de Voltaire.*

Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante
Trita solo; juvat integros accedere fonteis;
Atque haurire: juvatque novos decerpere flores.

Unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae.
Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus; et arctis
Religionum animos nodis exsolvere pergo.—*Lucret. lib*

Δος που στῶ, καὶ κοσμον κινήσω.—*Archimedes.*

TO HARRIET * * * * *

WHOSE is the love that gleaming through the world, Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn?	Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow?	5
Whose is the warm and partial praise, Virtue's most sweet reward?	Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on, And loved mankind the more?	

HARRIET! on thine:—thou wert my
purer mind;

Thou wert the inspiration of my
song; 10

Thine are these early wilding flowers,
Though garlanded by me.

Then press into thy breast this pledge
of love;

And know, though time may change
and years may roll,

Each floweret gathered in my heart
It consecrates to thine. 16

QUEEN MAB

I

How wonderful is Death,

Death and his brother Sleep!

One, pale as yonder waning moon
With lips of lurid blue;

The other, rosy as the morn 5
When throned on ocean's wave

It blushes o'er the world:

Yet both so passing wonderful!

Hath then the gloomy Power

Whose reign is in the tainted sepul-
chres 10

Seized on her sinless soul?

Must then that peerless form

Which love and admiration cannot
view

Without a beating heart, those azure
veins

Which steal like streams along a field
of snow, 15

That lovely outline, which is fair

As breathing marble, perish?

Must putrefaction's breath

Leave nothing of this heavenly
sight

But loathsomeness and ruin? 20

Spare nothing but a gloomy theme,

On which the lightest heart might
moralize?

Or is it only a sweet slumber

Stealing o'er sensation,

Which the breath of roseate morn-
ing

Chaseth into darkness? 25

Will Ianthe wake again,

And give that faithful bosom joy

Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch

Light, life and rapture from her
smile? 30

Yes! she will wake again,

Although her glowing limbs are
motionless,

And silent those sweet lips,

Once breathing eloquence,

That might have soothed a tiger's
rage, 35

Or thawed the cold heart of a con-
queror.

Her dewy eyes are closed,

And on their lids, whose texture fine
Scarce hides the dark blue orbs

beneath,

The baby Sleep is pillowed: 40

Her golden tresses shade

The bosom's stainless pride,

Curling like tendrils of the parasite

Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?

'Tis like the wondrous strain 46

That round a lonely ruin swells,

Which, wandering on the echoing
shore,

The enthusiast hears at evening:

'Tis softer than the west wind's
sigh; 50

'Tis wilder than the unmeasured
notes

Of that strange lyre whose strings

The genii of the breezes sweep:

Those lines of rainbow light

Are like the moonbeams when they
fall 55

Through some cathedral window, but
the tints

Are such as may not find

Comparison on earth.

Behold the chariot of the Fairy Queen!

Celestial coursers paw the unyielding
 air ; 60
 Their filmy pennons at her word they
 furl,
 And stop obedient to the reins of light :
 These the Queen of Spells drew in,
 She spread a charm around the spot,
 And leaning graceful from the aethereal
 car, 65
 Long did she gaze, and silently,
 Upon the slumbering maid.

Oh ! not the visioned poet in his
 dreams,
 When silvery clouds float through the
 'wilder'd brain,
 When every sight of lovely, wild and
 grand 70
 Astonishes, enraptures, elevates,
 When fancy at a glance combines
 The wondrous and the beautiful,—
 So bright, so fair, so wild a shape
 Hath ever yet beheld, 75
 As that which reined the coursers of
 the air,
 And poured the magic of her gaze
 Upon the maiden's sleep.

The broad and yellow moon
 Shone dimly through her form—
 That form of faultless symmetry ; 81
 The pearly and pellucid car
 Moved not the moonlight's line :
 'Twas not an earthly pageant :
 Those who had looked upon the
 sight, 85
 Passing all human glory,
 Saw not the yellow moon,
 Saw not the mortal scene,
 Heard not the night-wind's rush,
 Heard not an earthly sound, 90
 Saw but the fairy pageant,
 Heard but the heavenly strains
 That filled the lonely dwelling.

The Fairy's frame was slight, yon
 fibrous cloud,
 That catches but the palest tinge of
 even, 95

And which the straining eye can
 hardly seize
 When melting into eastern twilight's
 shadow,
 Were scarce so thin, so slight ; but
 the fair star
 That gems the glittering coronet of
 morn,
 Sheds not a light so mild, so power-
 ful, 100
 As that which, bursting from the
 Fairy's form,
 Spread a purpureal halo round the
 scene,
 Yet with an undulating motion,
 Swayed to her outline gracefully.

From her celestial car 105
 The Fairy Queen descended,
 And thrice she waved her wand
 Circled with wreaths of amaranth :
 Her thin and misty form
 Moved with the moving air, 110
 And the clear silver tones,
 As thus she spoke, were such
 As are unheard by all but gifted ear.

Fairy.

' Stars ! your balmiest influence
 shed ! 114
 Elements ! your wrath suspend !
 Sleep, Ocean, in the rocky bounds
 That circle thy domain !
 Let not a breath be seen to stir
 Around yon grass-grown ruin's
 height,
 Let even the restless gossamer 120
 Sleep on the moveless air !
 Soul of Ianthe ! thou,
 Judged alone worthy of the envied
 boon,
 That waits the good and the sincere ;
 that waits
 Those who have struggled, and with
 resolute will 125
 Vanquished earth's pride and mean-
 ness, burst the chains,
 The icy chains of custom, and have
 shone

The day-stars of their age ;—Soul of
Ianthe !

Awake ! arise !'

Sudden arose 130

Ianthe's Soul ; it stood

All beautiful in naked purity,
The perfect semblance of its bodily
frame.

Instinct with inexpressible beauty and
grace,

Each stain of earthliness 135

Had passed away, it reassumed
Its native dignity, and stood

Immortal amid ruin.

Upon the couch the body lay

Wrapped in the depth of slumber :

Its features were fixed and meaning-
less, 141

Yet animal life was there,

And every organ yet performed

Its natural functions : 'twas a sight

Of wonder to behold the body and soul.

The self-same lineaments, the same

Marks of identity were there : 147

Yet, oh, how different ! One aspires to
Heaven,

Pants for its sempiternal heritage,

And ever-changing, ever-rising still,

Wantons in endless being. 151

The other, for a time the unwilling
sport

Of circumstance and passion, struggles
on ;

Fleets through its sad duration rapidly :

Then, like an useless and worn-out
machine, 155

Rots, perishes, and passes.

Fairy.

'Spirit ! who hast dived so deep ;

Spirit ! who hast soared so high ;

Thou the fearless, thou the mild,

Accept the boon thy worth hath
earned, 160

Ascend the car with me.'

Spirit.

'Do I dream ? Is this new feeling

But a visioned ghost of slumber ?

If indeed I am a soul,

A free, a disembodied soul, 165

Speak again to me.'

Fairy.

'I am the Fairy MAB : to me 'tis given
The wonders of the human world to
keep :

The secrets of the immeasurable past,
In the unfailing consciences of men,
Those stern, unflattering chroniclers,
I find : 171

The future, from the causes which
arise

In each event, I gather : not the sting
Which retributive memory implants
In the hard bosom of the selfish man ;
Nor that ecstatic and exulting throb
Which virtue's votary feels when he
sums up 177

The thoughts and actions of a well-
spent day,

Are unforeseen, unregistered by me :
And it is yet permitted me, to rend 180

The veil of mortal frailty, that the
spirit,

Clothed in its changeless purity, may
know

How soonest to accomplish the great
end

For which it hath its being, and may
taste

That peace, which in the end all life
will share. 185

This is the meed of virtue ; happy
Soul,

Ascend the car with me !'

The chains of earth's immurement
Fell from Ianthe's spirit ;

They shrank and brake like bandages
of straw 190

Beneath a wakened giant's strength.
She knew her glorious change,

And felt in apprehension uncon-
trolled

New raptures opening round : 194

Each day-dream of her mortal life,
 Each frenzied vision of the slumbers
 That closed each well-spent day,
 Seemed now to meet reality.

The Fairy and the Soul proceeded ;
 The silver clouds departed ; 200
 And as the car of magic they ascended,
 Again the speechless music swelled,
 Again the coursers of the air
 Unfurled their azure pennons, and the
 Queen
 Shaking the beamy reins 205
 Bade them pursue their way.

The magic car moved on.
 The night was fair, and countless
 stars
 Studded Heaven's dark blue vault,—
 Just o'er the eastern wave 210
 Peeped the first faint smile of
 morn :—
 The magic car moved on—
 From the celestial hoofs
 The atmosphere in flaming sparkles
 flew,
 And where the burning wheels 215
 Eddied above the mountain's loftiest
 peak,
 Was traced a line of lightning.
 Now it flew far above a rock,
 The utmost verge of earth,
 The rival of the Andes, whose dark
 brow 220
 Lowered o'er the silver sea.

Far, far below the chariot's path,
 Calm as a slumbering babe,
 Tremendous Ocean lay.
 The mirror of its stillness showed 225
 The pale and waning stars,
 The chariot's fiery track,
 And the gray light of morn
 Tinging those fleecy clouds
 That canopied the dawn. 230
 Seemed it, that the chariot's way
 Lay through the midst of an immense
 concave,
 Radiant with million constellations,
 tinged

With shades of infinite colour,
 And semicircled with a belt 235
 Flashing incessant meteors.

The magic car moved on.
 As they approached their goal
 The coursers seemed to gather speed ;
 The sea no longer was distinguished ;
 earth 240
 Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere ;
 The sun's unclouded orb
 Rolled through the black concave ;
 Its rays of rapid light
 Parted around the chariot's swifter
 course, 245
 And fell, like ocean's feathery spray
 Dashed from the boiling surge
 Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on.
 Earth's distant orb appeared 250
 The smallest light that twinkles in the
 heaven ;
 Whilst round the chariot's way
 Innumerable systems rolled,
 And countless spheres diffused
 An ever-varying glory. 255
 It was a sight of wonder : some
 Were hornèd like the crescent moon ;
 Some shed a mild and silver beam
 Like Hesperus o'er the western sea ;
 Some dashed athwart with trains of
 flame, 260
 Like worlds to death and ruin driven ;
 Some shone like suns, and, as the
 chariot passed,
 Eclipsed all other light.

Spirit of Nature ! here !
 In this interminable wilderness 265
 Of worlds, at whose immensity
 Even soaring fancy staggers,
 Here is thy fitting temple.
 Yet not the lightest leaf
 That quivers to the passing breeze 270
 Is less instinct with thee :
 Yet not the meanest worm
 That lurks in graves and fattens on
 the dead
 Less shares thy eternal breath.

Spirit of Nature! thou! 275
 Imperishable as this scene,
 Here is thy fitting temple.

II

IF solitude hath ever led thy steps
 To the wild Ocean's echoing shore,
 And thou hast lingered there,
 Until the sun's broad orb
 Seemed resting on the burnished
 wave, 5

Thou must have marked the lines
 Of purple gold, that motionless
 Hung o'er the sinking sphere :
 Thou must have marked the billowy
 clouds

Edged with intolerable radiancy 10
 Towering like rocks of jet
 Crowned with a diamond wreath.
 And yet there is a moment,
 When the sun's highest point
 Peeps like a star o'er Ocean's western
 edge, 15

When those far clouds of feathery gold,
 Shaded with deepest purple, gleam
 Like islands on a dark blue sea ;
 Then has thy fancy soared above the
 earth,
 And furled its wearied wing 20
 Within the Fairy's fane.

Yet not the golden islands
 Gleaming in yon flood of light,
 Nor the feathery curtains
 Stretching o'er the sun's bright
 couch, 25

Nor the burnished Ocean waves
 Paving that gorgeous dome,
 So fair, so wonderful a sight
 As Mab's aethereal palace could afford.
 Yet likest evening's vault, that faery
 Hall! 30

As Heaven, low resting on the wave,
 it spread
 Its floors of flashing light,
 Its vast and azure dome,
 Its fertile golden islands
 Floating on a silver sea ; 35

Whilst suns their mingling beamings
 darted
 Through clouds of circumambient dark-
 ness,

And pearly battlements around
 Looked o'er the immense of Heaven.

The magic car no longer moved.
 The Fairy and the Spirit 41
 Entered the Hall of Spells :

Those golden clouds
 That rolled in glittering billows
 Beneath the azure canopy 45
 With the aethereal footsteps trembled
 not :

The light and crimson mists,
 Floating to strains of thrilling melody
 Through that unearthly dwelling,
 Yielded to every movement of the will.
 Upon their passive swell the Spirit
 leaned, 51

And, for the varied bliss that pressed
 around,

Used not the glorious privilege
 Of virtue and of wisdom.

'Spirit!' the Fairy said, 55
 And pointed to the gorgeous dome,
 'This is a wondrous sight
 And mocks all human grandeur ;
 But, were it virtue's only meed, to
 dwell

In a celestial palace, all resigned 60
 To pleasurable impulses, immured
 Within the prison of itself, the will
 Of changeless Nature would be unful-
 filled.

Learn to make others happy. Spirit,
 come !

This is thine high reward :—the past
 shall rise ; 65
 Thou shalt behold the present ; I will
 teach

The secrets of the future.'

The Fairy and the Spirit
 Approached the overhanging battle-
 ment.—

Below lay stretched the universe !
 There, far as the remotest line 71

That bounds imagination's flight,
 Countless and unending orbs
 In mazy motion intermingled,
 Yet still fulfilled immutably 75
 Eternal Nature's law.
 Above, below, around,
 The circling systems formed
 A wilderness of harmony ;
 Each with undeviating aim, 80
 In eloquent silence, through the depths
 of space
 Pursued its wondrous way.

There was a little light
 That twinkled in the misty distance :
 None but a spirit's eye 85
 Might ken that rolling orb ;
 None but a spirit's eye,
 And in no other place
 But that celestial dwelling, might
 behold
 Each action of this earth's inhabitants.
 But matter, space and time 91
 In those aëreal mansions cease to act ;
 And all-prevailing wisdom, when it
 reaps
 The harvest of its excellence, o'er-
 bounds
 Those obstacles, of which an earthly
 soul 95
 Fears to attempt the conquest.

The Fairy pointed to the earth.
 The Spirit's intellectual eye
 Its kindred beings recognized.
 The thronging thousands, to a passing
 view, 100
 Seemed like an ant-hill's citizens.
 How wonderful ! that even
 The passions, prejudices, interests,
 That sway the meanest being, the
 weak touch
 That moves the finest nerve, 105
 And in one human brain
 Causes the faintest thought, becomes
 a link
 In the great chain of Nature.

'Behold,' the Fairy cried,
 'Palmyra's ruined palaces !— 110

Behold ! where grandeur
 frowned ;
 Behold ! where pleasure smiled ;
 What now remains ?—the memory
 Of senselessness and shame—
 What is immortal there ? 115
 Nothing—it stands to tell
 A melancholy tale, to give
 An awful warning : soon
 Oblivion will steal silently
 The remnant of its fame. 120
 Monarchs and conquerors there
 Proud o'er prostrate millions trod—
 The earthquakes of the human race ;
 Like them, forgotten when the ruin
 That marks their shock is past.

'Beside the eternal Nile, 126
 The Pyramids have risen.
 Nile shall pursue his changeless way :
 Those Pyramids shall fall ;
 Yea ! not a stone shall stand to tell
 The spot whereon they stood ! 131
 Their very site shall be forgotten,
 As is their builder's name !

'Behold yon sterile spot ;
 Where now the wandering Arab's
 tent 135
 Flaps in the desert-blast.
 There once old Salem's haughty fane
 Reared high to Heaven its thousand
 golden domes,
 And in the blushing face of day
 Exposed its shameful glory. 140
 Oh ! many a widow, many an orphan
 cursed
 The building of that fane ; and many
 a father,
 Worn out with toil and slavery,
 implored
 The poor man's God to sweep it from
 the earth,
 And spare his children the detested
 task 145
 Of piling stone on stone, and poisoning
 The choicest days of life,
 To soothe a dotard's vanity.
 There an inhuman and uncultured race

Howled hideous praises to their
 Demon-God; 150
 They rushed to war, tore from the
 mother's womb
 The unborn child,—old age and
 infancy
 Promiscuous perished; their vic-
 torious arms
 Left not a soul to breathe. Oh! they
 were fiends:
 But what was he who taught them
 that the God 155
 Of nature and benevolence hath given
 A special sanction to the trade of
 blood?
 His name and theirs are fading, and
 the tales
 Of this barbarian nation, which im-
 posture
 Recites till terror credits, are pursu-
 ing 160
 Itself into forgetfulness.

'Where Athens, Rome, and Sparta
 stood,
 There is a moral desert now:
 The mean and miserable huts,
 The yet more wretched palaces, 165
 Contrasted with those ancient
 fanes,
 Now crumbling to oblivion;
 The long and lonely colonnades,
 Through which the ghost of Free-
 dom stalks,
 Seem like a well-known tune,
 Which in some dear scene we have
 loved to hear, 171
 Remembered now in sadness.
 But, oh! how much more
 changed,
 How gloomier is the contrast
 Of human nature there! 175
 Where Socrates expired, a tyrant's
 slave,
 A coward and a fool, spreads death
 around—
 Then, shuddering, meets his
 own.

Where Cicero and Antoninus lived,
 A cowed and hypocritical monk 180
 Prays, curses and deceives.
 'Spirit, ten thousand years
 Have scarcely passed away,
 Since, in the waste where now the
 savage drinks
 His enemy's blood, and aping Europe's
 sons, 185
 Wakes the unholy song of war,
 Arose a stately city,
 Metropolis of the western continent:
 There, now, the mossy column-
 stone, 189
 Indented by Time's unrelaxing grasp,
 Which once appeared to brave
 All, save its country's ruin;
 There the wide forest scene,
 Rude in the uncultivated loveliness
 Of gardens long run wild, 195
 Seems, to the unwilling sojourner,
 whose steps
 Chance in that desert has delayed,
 Thus to have stood since earth was
 what it is.
 Yet once it was the busiest haunt,
 Whither, as to a common centre,
 flocked 200
 Strangers, and ships, and merchan-
 dise:
 Once peace and freedom blessed
 The cultivated plain:
 But wealth, that curse of man,
 Blighted the bud of its prosperity: 205
 Virtue and wisdom, truth and liberty,
 Fled, to return not, until man shall
 know
 That they alone can give the bliss
 Worthy a soul that claims
 Its kindred with eternity. 210
 'There's not one atom of yon
 earth
 But once was living man;
 Nor the minutest drop of rain,
 That hangeth in its thinnest cloud,
 But flowed in human veins: 215
 And from the burning plains

Where Libyan monsters yell,
From the most gloomy glens
Of Greenland's sunless clime,
To where the golden fields 220
Of fertile England spread
Their harvest to the day,
Thou canst not find one spot
Whereon no city stood. 224

'How strange is human pride!
I tell thee that those living things,
To whom the fragile blade of grass,
That springeth in the morn
And perisheth ere noon,
Is an unbounded world; 230
I tell thee that those viewless beings,
Whose mansion is the smallest particle
Of the impassive atmosphere,
Think, feel and live like man;
That their affections and antipathies,
Like his, produce the laws 236
Ruling their moral state;
And the minutest throb
That through their frame diffuses
The slightest, faintest motion, 240
Is fixed and indispensable
As the majestic laws
That rule yon rolling orbs.'

The Fairy paused. The Spirit,
In ecstasy of admiration, felt 245
All knowledge of the past revived; the
events

Of old and wondrous times,
Which dim tradition interruptedly
Teaches the credulous vulgar, were un-
folded

In just perspective to the view; 250
Yet dim from their infinitude.

The Spirit seemed to stand
High on an isolated pinnacle;
The flood of ages combating below,
The depth of the unbounded universe
Above, and all around 256
Nature's unchanging harmony.

III

'FAIRY!' the Spirit said,
And on the Queen of Spells

Fixed her aethereal eyes,
'I thank thee. Thou hast given
A boon which I will not resign, and
taught 5

A lesson not to be unlearned. I know
The past, and thence I will essay to
glean

A warning for the future, so that man
May profit by his errors, and derive

Experience from his folly: 10
For, when the power of imparting joy
Is equal to the will, the human soul
Requires no other Heaven.'

Mab.

'Turn thee, surpassing Spirit!
Much yet remains unscanned. 15
Thou knowest how great is man,
× Thou knowest his imbecility:
Yet learn thou what he is:
Yet learn the lofty destiny
Which restless time prepares 20
For every living soul.

'Behold a gorgeous palace, that, amid
Yon populous city rears its thousand
towers

And seems itself a city. Gloomy
troops

Of sentinels, in stern and silent ranks,
Encompass it around: the dweller
there 26

Cannot be free and happy; hearest
thou not

The curses of the fatherless, the groans
Of those who have no friend? He
passes on:

The King, the wearer of a gilded chain
That binds his soul to abjectness, the
fool 31

Whom courtiers nickname monarch,
whilst a slave

Even to the basest appetites—that man
Heeds not the shriek of penury; he
smiles

At the deep curses which the destitute
Mutter in secret, and a sullen joy 36
Pervades his bloodless heart when
thousands groan

But for those morsels which his wantonness

Wastes in unjoyous revelry, to save
All that they love from famine : when
he hears 40

The tale of horror, to some ready-made
face

Of hypocritical assent he turns,
Smothering the glow of shame, that,
spite of him,

Flushes his bloated cheek.

Now to the meal
Of silence, grandeur, and excess, he
drags 45

His palled unwilling appetite. If gold,
Gleaming around, and numerous
viands culled

From every clime, could force the
loathing sense

To overcome satiety,—if wealth
The spring it draws from poisons
not,—or vice, 50

Unfeeling, stubborn vice, converteth
not

Its food to deadliest venom ; then that
king

Is happy ; and the peasant who fulfils
His unforced task, when he returns at
even,

And by the blazing faggot meets again
Her welcome for whom all his toil is
sped, 56

Tastes not a sweeter meal.

Behold him now
Stretched on the gorgeous couch ; his
fevered brain

Reels dizzily awhile : but ah ! too soon
The slumber of intemperance sub-
sides, 60

And conscience, that undying serpent,
calls

Her venomous brood to their noctur-
nal task.

Listen ! he speaks ! oh ! mark that
frenzied eye—

Oh ! mark that deadly visage.'

King.

'No cessation !

Oh ! must this last for ever ? Awful
Death, 65

I wish, yet fear to clasp thee !—Not
one moment

Of dreamless sleep ! O dear and
blessèd peace !

Why dost thou shroud thy vestal
purity

In penury and dungeons ? wherefore
lurkest

With danger, death, and solitude ; yet
shunn'st 70

The palace I have built thee ? Sacred
peace !

Oh visit me but once, but pitying shed
One drop of balm upon my withered
soul.'

The Fairy.

'Vain man ! that palace is the virtuous
heart,

And Peace defileth not her snowy
robes 75

In such a shed as thine. Hark ! yet
he mutters ;

His slumbers are but varied agonies,
They prey like scorpions on the
springs of life.

There needeth not the hell that bigots
frame

To punish those who err : earth in
itself 80

Contains at once the evil and the cure ;
And all-sufficing Nature can chastise
Those who transgress her law,—she
only knows

How justly to proportion to the fault
The punishment it merits.

Is it strange 85
That this poor wretch should pride
him in his woe ?

Take pleasure in his abjectness, and
hug

The scorpion that consumes him ? Is
it strange

That, placed on a conspicuous throne
of thorns,

Grasping an iron sceptre, and im-
mured 90

Within a splendid prison, whose stern
 bounds
 Shut him from all that's good or dear
 on earth,
 His soul asserts not its humanity?
 That man's mild nature rises not in war
 Against a king's employ? No—'tis
 not strange. 95
 He, like the vulgar, thinks, feels, acts
 and lives
 Just as his father did; the uncon-
 quered powers
 Of precedent and custom interpose
 Between a *king* and virtue. Stranger
 yet,
 To those who know not Nature, nor
 deduce 100
 The future from the present, it may
 seem,
 That not one slave, who suffers from
 the crimes
 Of this unnatural being; not one
 wretch,
 Whose children famish, and whose
 nuptial bed
 Is earth's un pitying bosom, rears an
 arm 105
 To dash him from his throne!
 Those gilded flies
 That, basking in the sunshine of a
 court,
 Fatten on its corruption!—what are
 they?
 —The drones of the community; they
 feed
 On the mechanic's labour: the starved
 hind 110
 For them compels the stubborn glebe
 to yield
 Its unshared harvests; and yon squalid
 form,
 Leaner than fleshless misery, that
 wastes
 A sunless life in the unwholesome
 mine, 114
 Drags out in labour a protracted death,
 To glut their grandeur; many faint
 with toil,

That few may know the cares and woe
 of sloth.
 'Whence, think'st thou, kings and
 parasites arose?
 Whence that unnatural line of drones,
 who heap
 Toil and unvanquishable penury 120
 On those who build their palaces, and
 bring
 Their daily bread?—From vice, black
 loathsome vice;
 From rapine, madness, treachery, and
 wrong;
 From all that 'genders misery, and
 makes
 Of earth this thorny wilderness; from
 lust, 125
 Revenge, and murder. . . . And when
 Reason's voice,
 Loud as the voice of Nature, shall have
 waked
 The nations; and mankind perceive
 that vice
 Is discord, war, and misery; that
 virtue
 Is peace, and happiness and harmony;
 When man's maturer nature shall dis-
 dain 131
 The playthings of its childhood;—
 kingly glare
 Will lose its power to dazzle; its
 authority
 Will silently pass by; the gorgeous
 throne
 Shall stand unnoticed in the regal
 hall, 135
 Fast falling to decay; whilst falsehood's
 trade
 Shall be as hateful and unprofitable
 As that of truth is now.
 Where is the fame
 Which the vainglorious mighty of the
 earth
 Seek to eternize? Oh! the faintest
 sound 140
 From Time's light footfall, the minutest
 wave

That swells the flood of ages, whelms
in nothing

The unsubstantial bubble. Ay! to-
day

Stern is the tyrant's mandate, red the
gaze

That flashes desolation, strong the
arm 145

That scatters multitudes. To-morrow
comes!

That mandate is a thunder-peal that
died

In ages past; that gaze, a transient
flash

On which the midnight closed, and on
that arm

The worm has made his meal.

The virtuous man, 150

Who, great in his humility, as kings
Are little in their grandeur; he who
leads

Invincibly a life of resolute good,
And stands amid the silent dungeon-
depths

More free and fearless than the tremb-
ling judge, 155

Who, clothed in venal power, vainly
strove

To bind the impassive spirit;—when
he falls,

His mild eye beams benevolence no
more:

Withered the hand outstretched but
to relieve;

Sunk Reason's simple eloquence, that
rolled 160

But to appal the guilty. Yes! the
grave

Hath quenched that eye, and Death's
relentless frost

Withered that arm: but the unfading
fame

Which Virtue hangs upon its votary's
tomb;

The deathless memory of that man,
whom kings 165

Call to their mind and tremble; the
remembrance

With which the happy spirit contem-
plates

Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth,
Shall never pass away.

'Nature rejects the monarch, not the
man; 170

The subject, not the citizen: for kings
And subjects, mutual foes, forever play
A losing game into each other's hands,
Whose stakes are vice and misery.
The man

Of virtuous soul commands not, nor
obeys. 175

Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obe-
dience,

Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom,
truth,

Makes slaves of men, and, of the human
frame,

A mechanized automaton.

When Nero, 180

High over flaming Rome, with savage
joy

Lowered like a fiend, drank with
enraptured ear

The shrieks of agonizing death, beheld
The frightful desolation spread, and felt

A new-created sense within his soul
Thrill to the sight, and vibrate to the

sound; 186

Think'st thou his grandeur had not
overcome

The force of human kindness? and,
when Rome,

With one stern blow, hurled not the
tyrant down,

Crushed not the arm red with her
dearest blood, 190

Had not submissive abjectness de-
stroyed

Nature's suggestions?

Look on yonder earth:

The golden harvests spring; the un-
failing sun

Sheds light and life; the fruits, the
flowers, the trees,

Arise in due succession ; all things
speak

195

Peace, harmony, and love. The uni-
verse,

In Nature's silent eloquence, declares
That all fulfil the works of love and
joy,—

All but the outcast, Man. He fabricates
The sword which stabs his peace ; he
cherisheth

200

The snakes that gnaw his heart ; he
raiseth up

The tyrant, whose delight is in his woe,
Whose sport is in his agony. Yon sun,
Lights it the great alone ? Yon silver
beams,

Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage
thatch

205

Than on the dome of kings ? Is mother
Earth

A step-dame to her numerous sons,
who earn

Her unshared gifts with unremitting
toil ;

A mother only to those puling babes
Who, nursed in ease and luxury, make
men

210

The playthings of their babyhood, and
mar,

In self-important childishness, that
peace

Which men alone appreciate ?

‘ Spirit of Nature ! no.

The pure diffusion of thy essence throbs
Alike in every human heart.

216

Thou, aye, erectest there

Thy throne of power unappealable :
Thou art the judge beneath whose
nod

Man's brief and frail authority

220

Is powerless as the wind

That passeth idly by.

Thine the tribunal which surpasseth
The show of human justice,

As God surpasses man.

225

‘ Spirit of Nature ! thou

Life of interminable multitudes ;

Soul of those mighty spheres
Whose changeless paths through
Heaven's deep silence lie ;

Soul of that smallest being,

230

The dwelling of whose life

Is one faint April sun-gleam ;—

Man, like these passive things,

Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth :

Like theirs, his age of endless peace,

Which time is fast maturing,

236

Will swiftly, surely come ;

And the unbounded frame, which thou
pervadest,

Will be without a flaw

Marring its perfect symmetry.

240

IV

‘ How beautiful this night ! the balmiest
sigh,

Which vernal zephyrs breathe in
evening's ear,

Were discord to the speaking quietude
That wraps this moveless scene.

Heaven's ebon vault,

Studded with stars unutterably bright,
Through which the moon's unclouded
grandeur rolls,

6

Seems like a canopy which love had
spread

To curtain her sleeping world. Yon
gentle hills,

Robed in a garment of untrodden
snow ;

Yon darksome rocks, whence icicles
depend,

10

So stainless, that their white and
glittering spires

Tinge not the moon's pure beam ; yon
castled steep,

Whose banner hangeth o'er the time-
worn tower

So idly, that rapt fancy deemeth it
A metaphor of peace ;—all form a scene

Where musing Solitude might love to
lift

16

Her soul above this sphere of earthli-
ness ;

<p>Where Silence undisturbed might watch alone, So cold, so bright, so still.</p>	<p>The falling beam, the shriek, the groan, the shout, The ceaseless clangour, and the rush of men</p>
<p> The orb of day, In southern climes, o'er ocean's wave- less field 20</p>	<p>Inebriate with rage :—loud, and more loud 45</p>
<p>Sinks sweetly smiling : not the faintest breath Steals o'er the unruffled deep ; the clouds of eve Reflect unmoved the lingering beam of day ; And vesper's image on the western main Is beautifully still. To-morrow comes : Cloud upon cloud, in dark and deepen- ing mass, 26</p>	<p>The discord grows ; till pale Death shuts the scene, And o'er the conqueror and the con- quered draws His cold and bloody shroud.—Of all the men Whom day's departing beam saw blooming there, In proud and vigorous health ; of all the hearts 50</p>
<p>Roll o'er the blackened waters ; the deep roar Of distant thunder mutters awfully ; Tempest unfolds its pinion o'er the gloom That shrouds the boiling surge ; the pitiless fiend, 30 With all his winds and lightnings, tracks his prey ; The torn deep yawns,—the vessel finds a grave Beneath its jagged gulf. Ah ! whence yon glare That fires the arch of Heaven ?—that dark red smoke Blotting the silver moon ? The stars are quenched 35</p>	<p>That beat with anxious life at sunset there ; How few survive, how few are beating now ! All is deep silence, like the fearful calm That slumbers in the storm's porten- tous pause ; Save when the frantic wail of widowed love 55 Comes shuddering on the blast, or the faint moan With which some soul bursts from the frame of clay Wrapped round its struggling powers. The gray morn Dawns on the mournful scene ; the sulphurous smoke Before the icy wind slow rolls away, And the bright beams of frosty morn- ing dance 61</p>
<p>In darkness, and the pure and spang- ling snow Gleams faintly through the gloom that gathers round ! Hark to that roar, whose swift and deaf'ning peals In countless echoes through the moun- tains ring, Startling pale Midnight on her starry throne ! 40</p>	<p>Along the spangling snow. There tracks of blood Even to the forest's depth, and scat- tered arms, And lifeless warriors, whose hard linea- ments Death's self could change not, mark the dreadful path 65</p>
<p>Now swells the intermingling din ; the jar Frequent and frightful of the bursting bomb ;</p>	<p>Of the outsallying victors : far behind, Black ashes note where their proud city stood.</p>

Within yon forest is a gloomy glen—
Each tree which guards its darkness
from the day,
Waves o'er a warrior's tomb.

I see thee shrink, 70
Surpassing Spirit!—wert thou human
else?

I see a shade of doubt and horror fleet
Across thy stainless features: yet fear
not;

This is no unconnected misery,
Nor stands uncaused, and irretriev-
able. 75

Man's evil nature, that apology
Which kings who rule, and cowards
who crouch, set up

For their unnumbered crimes, sheds
not the blood

Which desolates the discord-wasted
land.

From kings, and priests, and states-
men, war arose, 80

Whose safety is man's deep unbettered
woe,

Whose grandeur his debasement. Let
the axe

Strike at the root, the poison-tree will
fall;

And where its venom'd exhalations
spread

Ruin, and death, and woe, where
millions lay 85

Quenching the serpent's famine, and
their bones

Bleaching unburied in the putrid blast,
A garden shall arise, in loveliness

Surpassing fabled Eden.

Hath Nature's soul,
That formed this world so beautiful,
that spread 90

Earth's lap with plenty, and life's
smallest chord

Strung to unchanging unison, that
gave

The happy birds their dwelling in the
grove,

That yielded to the wanderers of the
deep

The lovely silence of the unfathomed
main, 95

And filled the meanest worm that
crawls in dust

With spirit, thought, and love; on
Man alone,

Partial in causeless malice, wantonly
Heaped ruin, vice, and slavery; his soul

Blasted with withering curses; placed
afar 100

The meteor-happiness, that shuns hi
grasp,

But serving on the frightful gulf to
glare,

Rent wide beneath his footsteps?
Nature!—no!

Kings, priests, and statesmen, blast
the human flower

Even in its tender bud; their influence
darts 105

Like subtle poison through the blood-
less veins

Of desolate society. The child,
Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred
name,

Swells with the unnatural pride of
crime, and lifts

His baby-sword even in a hero's
mood. 110

This infant-arm becomes the bloodiest
scourge

Of devastated earth; whilst specious
names,

Learned in soft childhood's unsuspect-
ing hour,

Serve as the sophisms with which
manhood dims

Bright Reason's ray, and sanctifies the
sword 115

Upraised to shed a brother's innocent
blood.

Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim
that man

Inherits vice and misery, when Force
And Falsehood hang even o'er the
cradled babe,

Stifling with rudest grasp all natural
good. 120

' Ah ! to the stranger-soul, when first
it peeps
From its new tenement, and looks
abroad
For happiness and sympathy, how stern
And desolate a tract is this wide world !
How withered all the buds of natural
good ! 125

No shade, no shelter from the sweep-
ing storms
Of pitiless power ! On its wretched
frame,
Poisoned, perchance, by the disease
and woe
Heaped on the wretched parent whence
it sprung
By morals, law, and custom, the pure
winds 130
Of Heaven, that renovate the insect
tribes,
May breathe not. The untainting light
of day
May visit not its longings. It is bound
Ere it has life : yea, all the chains are
forged
Long ere its being : all liberty and love
And peace is torn from its defenceless-
ness ; 136
Cursed from its birth, even from its
cradle doomed
To abjectness and bondage !

' Throughout this varied and eternal
world
Soul is the only element : the block 140
That for uncounted ages has remained
The moveless pillar of a mountain's
weight
Is active, living spirit. Every grain
Is sentient both in unity and part,
And the minutest atom comprehends
A world of loves and hatreds ; these
beget 146
Evil and good : hence truth and false-
hood spring ;
Hence will and thought and action,
all the germs
Of pain or pleasure, sympathy or hate,

That variegate the eternal universe. 150
Soul is not more polluted than the
beams
Of Heaven's pure orb, ere round their
rapid lines
The taint of earth-born atmospheres
arise.

' Man is of soul and body, formed for
deeds
Of high resolve, on fancy's boldest
wing 155
To soar unwearied, fearlessly to turn
The keenest pangs to peacefulness,
and taste
The joys which mingled sense and
spirit yield.
Or he is formed for abjectness and
woe,
To grovel on the dunghill of his fears,
To shrink at every sound, to quench
the flame 161
Of natural love in sensualism, to know
That hour as blessed when on his worth-
less days
The frozen hand of Death shall set its
seal,
Yet fear the cure, though hating the
disease. 165
The one is man that shall hereafter be ;
The other, man as vice has made him
now.

' War is the statesman's game, the
priest's delight,
The lawyer's jest, the hired assassin's
trade,
And, to those royal murderers, whose
mean thrones 170
Are bought by crimes of treachery and
gore,
The bread they eat, the staff on which
they lean.
Guards, garbed in blood-red livery,
surround
Their palaces, participate the crimes
That force defends, and from a nation's
rage 175

Secure the crown, which all the curses
reach

That famine, frenzy, woe and penury
breathe.

These are the hired bravos who defend
The tyrant's throne—the bullies of his
fear :

These are the sinks and channels of
worst vice, 180

The refuse of society, the dregs
Of all that is most vile : their cold
hearts blend

Deceit with sternness, ignorance with
pride,

All that is mean and villanous, with rage
Which hopelessness of good, and self-
contempt, 185

Alone might kindle ; they are decked
in wealth,

Honour and power, then are sent abroad
To do their work. The pestilence
that stalks

In gloomy triumph through some
eastern land

Is less destroying. They cajole with gold,
And promises of fame, the thoughtless
youth 191

Already crushed with servitude : he
knows

His wretchedness too late, and cherishes
Repentance for his ruin, when his
doom

Is sealed in gold and blood ! 195

Those too the tyrant serve, who, skilled
to snare

The feet of Justice in the toils of law,
Stand, ready to oppress the weaker still ;
And right or wrong will vindicate for
gold,

Sneering at public virtue, which be-
neath 200

Their pitiless tread lies torn and
trampled, where

Honour sits smiling at the sale of truth.

'Then grave and hoary-headed hypo-
crites,

Without a hope, a passion, or a love,
Who, through a life of luxury and lies,
Have crept by flattery to the seats of
power, 206

Support the system whence their hon-
ours flow. . . .

They have three words :—well tyrants
know their use,

Well pay them for the loan, with usury
Torn from a bleeding world !—God,
Hell, and Heaven. 210

A vengeful, pitiless, and almighty fiend,
Whose mercy is a nickname for the rage
Of tameless tigers hungering for blood.

Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,
Where poisonous and undying worms
prolong 215

Eternal misery to those hapless slaves
Whose life has been a penance for its
crimes.

And Heaven, a meed for those who
dare belie

Their human nature, quake, believe,
and cringe

Before the mockeries of earthly power.

'These tools the tyrant tempers to his
work, 221

Wields in his wrath, and as he wills
destroys,

Omnipotent in wickedness : the while
Youth springs, age moulders, manhood
tamely does

His bidding, bribed by short-lived joys
to lend 225

Force to the weakness of his trembling
arm.

'They rise, they fall ; one generation
comes
Yielding its harvest to destruction's
scythe.

It fades, another blossoms : yet behold !
Red glows the tyrant's stamp-mark on
its bloom, 230

Withering and cankering deep its pas-
sive prime.

He has invented lying words and
 modes,
 Empty and vain as his own coreless
 heart ;
 Evasive meanings, nothings of much
 sound,
 To lure the heedless victim to the
 toils 235
 Spread round the valley of its paradise.

‘ Look to thyself, priest, conqueror, or
 prince !

Whether thy trade is falsehood, and
 thy lusts

Deep wallow in the earnings of the poor,
 With whom thy Master was:—or thou
 delight’st 240

In numbering o’er the myriads of thy
 slain,

All misery weighing nothing in the scale
 Against thy short-lived fame : or thou
 dost load

With cowardice and crime the groaning
 land,

A pomp-fed king. Look to thy
 wretched self ! 245

Ay, art thou not the veriest slave that
 e’er

Crawled on the loathing earth ? Are
 not thy days

Days of unsatisfying listlessness ?

Dost thou not cry, ere night’s long rack
 is o’er,

“ When will the morning come ? ” Is
 not thy youth 250

A vain and feverish dream of sen-
 sualism ?

Thy manhood blighted with unripe
 disease ?

Are not thy views of unregretted death
 Drear, comfortless, and horrible ? Thy
 mind, 254

Is it not morbid as thy nerveless frame,
 Incapable of judgement, hope, or love ?

And dost thou wish the errors to
 survive

That bar thee from all sympathies of
 good,

After the miserable interest
 Thou hold’st in their protraction ?
 When the grave 260

Has swallowed up thy memory and
 thyself,

Dost thou desire the bane that poisons
 earth

To twine its roots around thy confined
 clay,

Spring from thy bones, and blossom
 on thy tomb,

That of its fruit thy babes may eat and
 die ? 265

V

‘ THUS do the generations of the earth
 Go to the grave, and issue from the
 womb,

Surviving still the imperishable change
 That renovates the world ; even as the
 leaves

Which the keen frost-wind of the wan-
 ing year 5

Has scattered on the forest soil, and
 heaped

For many seasons there—though long
 they choke,

Loading with loathsome rottenness the
 land,

All germs of promise, yet when the
 tall trees

From which they fell, shorn of their
 lovely shapes, 10

Lie level with the earth to moulder
 there,

They fertilize the land they long de-
 formed,

Till from the breathing lawn a forest
 springs

Of youth, integrity, and loveliness,
 Like that which gave it life, to spring
 and die. 15

Thus suicidal selfishness, that blights
 The fairest feelings of the opening
 heart,

Is destined to decay, whilst from the
 soil

Shall spring all virtue, all delight, all
love,

And judgement cease to wage unnatural
war 20

With passion's unsubduable array.

Twin-sister of religion, selfishness!

Rival in crime and falsehood, aping all

The wanton horrors of her bloody play;

Yet frozen, unimpassioned, spiritless,

Shunning the light, and owning not its

name, 26

Compelled, by its deformity, to screen

With flimsy veil of justice and of right,

Its unattractive lineaments, that scare

All, save the brood of ignorance: at

once 30

The cause and the effect of tyranny;

Unblushing, hardened, sensual, and

vile;

Dead to all love but of its abjectness,

With heart impassive by more noble

powers

Than unshared pleasure, sordid gain,

or fame; 35

Despising its own miserable being,

Which still it longs, yet fears to dis-

enthral.

'Hence commerce springs, the venal
interchange

Of all that human art or nature yield;

Which wealth should purchase not, but

want demand, 40

And natural kindness hasten to supply

From the full fountain of its boundless

love,

For ever stifled, drained, and tainted

now.

Commerce! beneath whose poison-

breathing shade

No solitary virtue dares to spring, 45

But Poverty and Wealth with equal

hand

Scatter their withering curses, and un-

fold

The doors of premature and violent

death,

To pining famine and full-fed disease,

To all that shares the lot of human life,

Which poisoned, body and soul, scarce
drags the chain, 51

That lengthens as it goes and clanks
behind.

'Commerce has set the mark of selfish-

ness,

The signet of its all-enslaving power

Upon a shining ore, and called it gold:

Before whose image bow the vulgar

great, 56

The vainly rich, the miserable proud,

The mob of peasants, nobles, priests,

and kings,

And with blind feelings reverence the

power

That grinds them to the dust of misery.

But in the temple of their hireling

hearts 61

Gold is a living god, and rules in scorn

All earthly things but virtue.

'Since tyrants, by the sale of human
life,

Heap luxuries to their sensualism, and

fame 65

To their wide-wasting and insatiate

pride,

Success has sanctioned to a credulous

world

The ruin, the disgrace, the woe of war.

His hosts of blind and unresisting dupes

The despot numbers; from his cabinet

These puppets of his schemes he moves

at will, 71

Even as the slaves by force or famine

driven,

Beneath a vulgar master, to perform

A task of cold and brutal drudgery;—

Hardened to hope, insensible to fear, 75

Scarce living pulleys of a dead machine,

Mere wheels of work and articles of

trade,

That grace the proud and noisy pomp

of wealth!

'The harmony and happiness of man

Yields to the wealth of nations ; that
which lifts 80

His nature to the heaven of its pride,
Is bartered for the poison of his soul ;
The weight that drags to earth his
towering hopes,
Blighting all prospect but of selfish
gain,

Withering all passion but of slavish
fear, 85

Extinguishing all free and generous love
Of enterprise and daring, even the
pulse

That fancy kindles in the beating heart
To mingle with sensation, it destroys,—
Leaves nothing but the sordid lust of
self, 90

The grovelling hope of interest and
gold,

Unqualified, unmingled, unredeemed
Even by hypocrisy.

And statesmen boast
Of wealth ! The wordy eloquence, that
lives

After the ruin of their hearts, can gild
The bitter poison of a nation's woe, 96
Can turn the worship of the servile mob
To their corrupt and glaring idol, Fame,
From Virtue, trampled by its iron tread,
Although its dazzling pedestal be
raised 100

Amid the horrors of a limb-strewn field,
With desolated dwellings smoking
round.

The man of ease, who, by his warm
fireside,

To deeds of charitable intercourse,
And bare fulfilment of the common
laws 105

Of decency and prejudice, confines
The struggling nature of his human
heart,

Is duped by their cold sophistry ; he
sheds

A passing tear perchance upon the
wreck

Of earthly peace, when near his dwell-
ing's door 110

The frightful waves are driven,—when
his son

Is murdered by the tyrant, or religion
Drives his wife raving mad. But the
poor man,

Whose life is misery, and fear, and
care ;

Whom the morn wakens but to fruit-
less toil ; 115

Who ever hears his famished offspring's
scream,

Whom their pale mother's uncomplain-
ing gaze

For ever meets, and the proud rich
man's eye

Flashing command, and the heart-
breaking scene

Of thousands like himself ;—he little
heeds 120

The rhetoric of tyranny ; his hate
Is quenchless as his wrongs ; he laughs
to scorn

The vain and bitter mockery of words,
Feeling the horror of the tyrant's
deeds,

And unrestrained but by the arm of
power, 125

That knows and dreads his enmity.

'The iron rod of Penury still compels
Her wretched slave to bow the knee to
wealth,

And poison, with unprofitable toil,
A life too void of solace to confirm 130

The very chains that bind him to his
doom.

Nature, impartial in munificence,
Has gifted man with all-subduing
will.

Matter, with all its transitory shapes,
Lies subjected and plastic at his feet,
That, weak from bondage, tremble as
they tread. 136

How many a rustic Milton has passed
by,

Stifling the speechless longings of his
heart,

In unremitting drudgery and care ! 139

How many a vulgar Cato has compelled
His energies, no longer tameless then,
To mould a pin, or fabricate a nail!

How many a Newton, to whose passive
ken

Those mighty spheres that gem infinity
Were only specks of tinsel, fixed in
Heaven

To light the midnights of his native
town!

‘ Yet every heart contains perfection’s
germ :

The wisest of the sages of the earth,
That ever from the stores of reason
drew

Science and truth, and virtue’s dread-
less tone,

Were but a weak and inexperienced
boy,

Proud, sensual, unimpassioned, unim-
bued

With pure desire and universal love,
Compared to that high being, of cloud-
less brain,

Untainted passion, elevated will, 155
Which Death (who even would linger
long in awe

Within his noble presence, and beneath
His changeless eyebeam) might alone
subdue.

Him, every slave now dragging through
the filth

Of some corrupted city his sad life, 160
Pining with famine, swoln with luxury,
Blunting the keenness of his spiritual
sense

With narrow schemings and unworthy
cares,

Or madly rushing through all violent
crime,

To move the deep stagnation of his
soul,—

Might imitate and equal.

But mean lust
Has bound its chains so tight around
the earth,

That all within it but the virtuous man

Is venal : gold or fame will surely reach
The price prefixed by selfishness, to all
But him of resolute and unchanging
will ;

Whom, nor the plaudits of a servile
crowd,

Nor the vile joys of tainting luxury,
Can bribe to yield his elevated soul
To Tyranny or Falsehood, though they
wield

With blood-red hand the sceptre of the
world.

‘ All things are sold : the very light of
Heaven

Is venal ; earth’s unsparing gifts of love,
The smallest and most despicable
things

That lurk in the abysses of the deep,
All objects of our life, even life itself,
And the poor pittance which the laws
allow

Of liberty, the fellowship of man,
Those duties which his heart of human
love

Should urge him to perform instinc-
tively,

Are bought and sold as in a public mart
Of undisguising selfishness, that sets
On each its price, the stamp-mark of
her reign.

Even love is sold ; the solace of all woe
Is turned to deadliest agony, old age 190
Shivers in selfish beauty’s loathing
arms,

And youth’s corrupted impulses pre-
pare

A life of horror from the blighting bane
Of commerce ; whilst the pestilence
that springs

From unenjoying sensualism, has filled
All human life with hydra-headed woes.

‘ Falsehood demands but gold to pay
the pangs

Of outraged conscience ; for the slavish
priest

Sets no great value on his hireling faith :

A little passing pomp, some servile
souls, 200
Whom cowardice itself might safely
chain,
Or the spare mite of avarice could bribe
To deck the triumph of their languid
zeal,
Can make him minister to tyranny.
More daring crime requires a loftier
meed : 205
Without a shudder, the slave-soldier
lends
His arm to murderous deeds, and steels
his heart,
When the dread eloquence of dying
men,
Low mingling on the lonely field of
fame,
Assails that nature, whose applause he
sells 210
For the gross blessings of a patriot mob,
For the vile gratitude of heartless
kings,
And for a cold world's good word,—
viler still !

'There is a nobler glory, which survives
Until our being fades, and, solacing 215
All human care, accompanies its
change ;
Deserts not virtue in the dungeon's
gloom,
And, in the precincts of the palace,
guides
Its footsteps through that labyrinth of
crime ;
Imbues his lineaments with dauntless-
ness, 220
Even when, from Power's avenging
hand, he takes
Its sweetest, last and noblest title—
death ;
—The consciousness of good, which
neither gold,
Nor sordid fame, nor hope of heavenly
bliss
Can purchase ; but a life of resolute
good, 225

Unalterable will, quenchless desire
Of universal happiness, the heart
That beats with it in unison, the brain,
Whose ever wakeful wisdom toils to
change
Reason's rich stores for its eternal weal.
'This commerce of sincerest virtue
needs 231
No mediative signs of selfishness,
No jealous intercourse of wretched
gain,
No balancings of prudence, cold and
long ;
In just and equal measure all is
weighed, 235
One scale contains the sum of human
weal,
And one, the good man's heart.

How vainly seek
The selfish for that happiness denied
To aught but virtue ! Blind and
hardened, they,
Who hope for peace amid the storms of
care, 240
Who covet power they know not how
to use,
And sigh for pleasure they refuse to
give,—
Madly they frustrate still their own
designs ;
And, where they hope that quiet to
enjoy
Which virtue pictures, bitterness of
soul, 245
Pining regrets, and vain repentances,
Disease, disgust, and lassitude, pervade
Their valueless and miserable lives.

'But hoary-headed Selfishness has felt
Its death-blow, and is tottering to the
grave : 250
A brighter morn awaits the human
day,
When every transfer of earth's natural
gifts
Shall be a commerce of good words and
works ;

When poverty and wealth, the thirst
of fame,
The fear of infamy, disease and woe,
War with its million horrors, and fierce
hell
256
Shall live but in the memory of Time,
Who, like a penitent libertine, shall
start,
Look back, and shudder at his younger
years.'

VI

ALL touch, all eye, all ear,
The Spirit felt the Fairy's burning
speech.
O'er the thin texture of its frame,
The varying periods painted changing
glows,
As on a summer even, 5
When soul-enfolding music floats
around,
The stainless mirror of the lake
Re-images the eastern gloom,
Mingling convulsively its purple hues
With sunset's burnished gold. 10
Then thus the Spirit spoke :
'It is a wild and miserable world !
Thorny, and full of care,
Which every fiend can make his prey
at will.
O Fairy ! in the lapse of years, 15
Is there no hope in store ?
Will yon vast suns roll on
Interminably, still illuming
The night of so many wretched souls,
And see no hope for them ? 20
Will not the universal Spirit e'er
Revivify this withered limb of Heaven ?'
The Fairy calmly smiled
In comfort, and a kindling gleam of hope
Suffused the Spirit's lineaments. 25
'Oh ! rest thee tranquil ; chase those
fearful doubts,
Which ne'er could rack an everlasting
soul,
That sees the chains which bind it to
its doom.

Yes ! crime and misery are in yonder
earth,
Falsehood, mistake, and lust ; 30
But the eternal world
Contains at once the evil and the cure :
Some eminent in virtue shall start up,
Even in perversesest time :
The truths of their pure lips, that
never die, 35
Shall bind the scorpion falsehood with
a wreath
Of ever-living flame,
Until the monster sting itself to death.
'How sweet a scene will earth be-
come !
Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-place,
Symphonious with the planetary
spheres ; 41
When man, with changeless Nature
coalescing,
Will undertake regeneration's work,
When its ungenial poles no longer point
To the red and baleful sun 45
That faintly twinkles there.
'Spirit ! on yonder earth,
Falsehood now triumphs ; deadly
power
Has fixed its seal upon the lip of truth !
Madness and misery are there ! 50
The happiest is most wretched ! Yet
confide,
Until pure health-drops, from the cup
of joy,
Fall like a dew of balm upon the world.
Now, to the scene I show, in silence
turn,
And read the blood-stained charter of
all woe, 55
Which Nature soon, with re-creating
hand,
Will blot in mercy from the book of
earth.
How bold the flight of Passion's wan-
dering wing,
How swift the step of Reason's firmer
tread,

How calm and sweet the victories of
 life, 60
 How terrorless the triumph of the
 grave!
 How powerless were the mightiest
 monarch's arm,
 Vain his loud threat, and impotent his
 frown!
 How ludicrous the priest's dogmatic
 roar!
 The weight of his exterminating curse
 How light! and his affected charity, 66
 To suit the pressure of the changing
 times,
 What palpable deceit!—but for thy aid,
 Religion! but for thee, prolific fiend,
 Who peoplest earth with demons, Hell
 with men, 70
 And Heaven with slaves!

 'Thou taintest all thou look'st upon!—
 the stars,
 Which on thy cradle beamed so brightly
 sweet,
 Were gods to the distempered playfulness
 Of thy untutored infancy: the trees, 75
 The grass, the clouds, the mountains,
 and the sea,
 All living things that walk, swim, creep,
 or fly,
 Were gods: the sun had homage, and
 the moon
 Her worshipper. Then thou becam'st,
 a boy,
 More daring in thy frenzies: every
 shape, 80
 Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,
 Which, from sensation's relics, fancy
 culls;
 The spirits of the air, the shuddering
 ghost,
 The genii of the elements, the powers
 That give a shape to Nature's varied
 works, 85
 Had life and place in the corrupt belief
 Of thy blind heart: yet still thy youth-
 ful hands

Were pure of human blood. Then
 manhood gave
 Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied
 brain;
 Thine eager gaze scanned the stupen-
 dous scene, 90
 Whose wonders mocked the knowledge
 of thy pride:
 Their everlasting and unchanging laws
 Reproached thine ignorance. Awhile
 thou stoodst
 Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst
 sum up
 The elements of all that thou didst
 know; 95
 The changing seasons, winter's leafless
 reign,
 The budding of the Heaven-breathing
 trees,
 The eternal orbs that beautify the night,
 The sunrise, and the setting of the
 moon,
 Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and
 disease, 100
 And all their causes, to an abstract
 point
 Converging, thou didst bend and called
 it God!
 The self-sufficing, the omnipotent,
 The merciful, and the avenging God!
 Who, prototype of human misrule,
 sits 105
 High in Heaven's realm, upon a golden
 throne,
 Even like an earthly king; and whose
 dread work,
 Hell, gapes for ever for the unhappy
 slaves
 Of fate, whom He created, in his sport,
 To triumph in their torments when
 they fell! 110
 Earth heard the name; Earth trembled,
 as the smoke
 Of His revenge ascended up to Heaven,
 Blotting the constellations; and the
 cries
 Of millions, butchered in sweet confi-
 dence

And unsuspecting peace, even when
the bonds

115

Of safety were confirmed by wordy oaths
Sworn in His dreadful name, rung
through the land ;

Whilst innocent babes writhed on thy
stubborn spear,

And thou didst laugh to hear the
mother's shriek

Of maniac gladness, as the sacred steel
Felt cold in her torn entrails !

121

'Religion ! thou wert then in manhood's
prime :

But age crept on : one God would not
suffice

For senile puerility ; thou framedst
A tale to suit thy dotage, and to glut

Thy misery-thirsting soul, that the mad
fiend

126

Thy wickedness had pictured might
afford

A plea for sating the unnatural thirst
For murder, rapine, violence, and
crime,

That still consumed thy being, even
when

130

Thou heardst the step of Fate ;— that
flames might light

Thy funeral scene, and the shrill
horrent shrieks

Of parents dying on the pile that
burned

To light their children to thy paths,
the roar

Of the encircling flames, the exulting
cries

135

Of thine apostles, loud commingling
there,

Might sate thine hungry ear

Even on the bed of death !

'But now contempt is mocking thy
gray hairs ;

Thou art descending to the darksome
grave,

140

Unhonoured and unpitied, but by those
Whose pride is passing by like thine,

and sheds,

Like thine, a glare that fades before
the sun

Of truth, and shines but in the dread-
ful night

That long has lowered above the ruined
world.

145

'Throughout these infinite orbs of
mingling light,

Of which yon earth is one, is wide
diffused

A Spirit of activity and life,
That knows no term, cessation, or
decay ;

That fades not when the lamp of earthly
life,

150

Extinguished in the dampness of the
grave,

Awhile there slumbers, more than when
the babe

In the dim newness of its being feels
The impulses of sublunary things,

And all is wonder to unpractised
sense :

155

But, active, steadfast, and eternal,
still

Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the
tempest roars,

Cheers in the day, breathes in the
balmy groves,

Strengthens in health, and poisons in
disease ;

And in the storm of change, that cease-
lessly

160

Rolls round the eternal universe, and
shakes

Its undecaying battlement, presides,
Apportioning with irresistible law

The place each spring of its machine
shall fill ;

So that when waves on waves tumultu-
ous heap

165

Confusion to the clouds, and fiercely
driven

Heaven's lightnings scorch the up-
rooted ocean-fords,

Whilst, to the eye of shipwrecked
mariner,

Lone sitting on the bare and shudder-
 ing rock,
 All seems unlinked contingency and
 chance : 170
 No atom of this turbulence fulfils
 A vague and unnecessitated task,
 Or acts but as it must and ought to act.
 Even the minutest molecule of light,
 That in an April sunbeam's fleeting
 glow 175
 Fulfils its destined, though invisible
 work,
 The universal Spirit guides ; nor less,
 When merciless ambition, or mad zeal,
 Has led two hosts of dupes to battle-
 field,
 That, blind, they there may dig each
 other's graves, 180
 And call the sad work glory, does it rule
 All passions : not a thought, a will, an
 act,
 No working of the tyrant's moody mind,
 Nor one misgiving of the slaves who
 boast
 Their servitude, to hide the shame they
 feel, 185
 Nor the events enchaining every will,
 That from the depths of unrecorded
 time
 Have drawn all-influencing virtue, pass
 Unrecognized, or unforeseen by thee,
 Soul of the Universe ! eternal spring 190
 Of life and death, of happiness and
 woe,
 Of all that chequers the phantasmal
 scene
 That floats before our eyes in wavering
 light,
 Which gleams but on the darkness of
 our prison,
 Whose chains and massy walls 195
 We feel, but cannot see.
 'Spirit of Nature ! all-sufficing Power,
 Necessity ! thou mother of the world !
 Unlike the God of human error, thou
 Requir'st no prayers or praises ; the
 caprice 200

Of man's weak will belongs no more to
 thee
 Than do the changeful passions of his
 breast
 To thy unvarying harmony : the slave,
 Whose horrible lusts spread misery
 o'er the world,
 And the good man, who lifts, with
 virtuous pride, 205
 His being, in the sight of happiness,
 That springs from his own works ; the
 poison-tree,
 Beneath whose shade all life is withered
 up,
 And the fair oak, whose leafy dome
 affords
 A temple where the vows of happy
 love 210
 Are registered, are equal in thy sight :
 No love, no hate thou cherishest ;
 revenge
 And favouritism, and worst desire of
 fame
 Thou know'st not : all that the wide
 world contains
 Are but thy passive instruments, and
 thou 215
 Regard'st them all with an impartial
 eye,
 Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot
 feel,
 Because thou hast not human sense,
 Because thou art not human mind.
 ' Yes ! when the sweeping storm of
 time 220
 Has sung its death-dirge o'er the ruined
 fanes
 And broken altars of the almighty
 Fiend
 Whose name usurps thy honours, and
 the blood
 Through centuries clotted there, has
 floated down
 The tainted flood of ages, shalt thou
 live 225
 Unchangeable ! A shrine is raised to
 thee,

Which, nor the tempest-breath of
 time,
 Nor the interminable flood,
 Over earth's slight pageant rolling,
 Availeth to destroy,— 230
 The sensitive extension of the world.
 That wondrous and eternal fane,
 Where pain and pleasure, good and evil
 join,
 To do the will of strong necessity,
 And life, in multitudinous shapes,
 Still pressing forward where no term
 can be, 236
 Like hungry and unresting flame
 Curls round the eternal columns of its
 strength.'

VII

Spirit.

'I WAS an infant when my mother
 went
 To see an atheist burned. She took
 me there:
 The dark-robed priests were met
 around the pile;
 The multitude was gazing silently;
 And as the culprit passed with daunt-
 less mien, 5
 Tempered disdain in his unaltering
 eye,
 Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly
 forth:
 The thirsty fire crept round his manly
 limbs;
 His resolute eyes were scorched to
 blindness soon;
 His death-pang rent my heart! the
 insensate mob 10
 Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept.
 "Weep not, child!" cried my mother,
 "for that man
 Has said, There is no God.'"

Fairy.

'There is no God!
 Nature confirms the faith his death-
 groan sealed:

Let heaven and earth, let man's
 revolving race, 15
 His ceaseless generations tell their
 tale;
 Let every part depending on the chain
 That links it to the whole, point to
 the hand
 That grasps its term! let every seed
 that falls
 In silent eloquence unfold its store 20
 Of argument; infinity within,
 Infinity without, belie creation;
 The exterminable spirit it contains
 Is nature's only God; but human
 pride 24
 Is skilful to invent most serious names
 To hide its ignorance.

The name of God
 Has fenced about all crime with
 holiness,
 Himself the creature of His worshippers,
 Whose names and attributes and pas-
 sions change,
 Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God, or
 Lord, 30
 Even with the human dopes who build
 His shrines,
 Still serving o'er the war-polluted
 world
 For desolation's watchword; whether
 hosts
 Stain His death-blushing chariot-
 wheels, as on
 Triumphantly they roll, whilst Brah-
 mins raise 35
 A sacred hymn to mingle with the
 groans;
 Or countless partners of His power
 divide
 His tyranny to weakness; or the
 smoke
 Of burning towns, the cries of female
 helplessness,
 Unarmed old age, and youth, and
 infancy, 40
 Horribly massacred, ascend to Heaven
 In honour of His name; or, last and
 worst,

Earth groans beneath religion's iron
 age,
 And priests dare babble of a God of
 peace,
 Even whilst their hands are red with
 guiltless blood, 45
 Murdering the while, uprooting every
 germ
 Of truth, exterminating, spoiling all,
 Making the earth a slaughter-house !

'O Spirit ! through the sense
 By which thy inner nature was ap-
 prised 50

Of outward shows, vague dreams have
 rolled,
 And varied reminiscences have
 waked

Tablets that never fade ;
 All things have been imprinted
 there, -

The stars, the sea, the earth, the
 sky, 55

Even the unshapeliest lineaments
 Of wild and fleeting visions
 Have left a record there
 To testify of earth.

'These are my empire, for to me is
 given 60

The wonders of the human world to
 keep,

And Fancy's thin creations to endow
 With manner, being, and reality ;
 Therefore a wondrous phantom, from
 the dreams

Of human error's dense and purblind
 faith, 65

I will evoke, to meet thy questioning.
 Ahasuerus, rise !'

A strange and woe-worn wight
 Arose beside the battlement,
 And stood unmoving there. 70

His inessential figure cast no shade
 Upon the golden floor ;

His port and mien bore mark of many
 years,

And chronicles of untold ancientness
 Were legible within his beamless eye :

Yet his cheek bore the mark of
 youth ; 76

Freshness and vigour knit his manly
 frame ;

The wisdom of old age was mingled
 there

With youth's primaeval dauntless-
 ness ;

And inexpressible woe, 80
 Chastened by fearless resignation,
 gave

An awful grace to his all-speaking
 brow.

Spirit.

'Is there a God ?'

Ahasuerus.

'Is there a God !—ay, an almighty
 God,

And vengeful as almighty ! Once His
 voice 85

Was heard on earth : earth shuddered
 at the sound ;

The fiery-visaged firmament expressed
 Abhorrence, and the grave of Nature
 yawned

To swallow all the dauntless and the
 good

That dared to hurl defiance at His
 throne, 90

Girt as it was with power. None but
 slaves

Survived,—cold-blooded slaves, who
 did the work

Of tyrannous omnipotence ; whose
 souls

No honest indignation ever urged
 To elevated daring, to one deed 95

Which gross and sensual self did not
 pollute.

These slaves built temples for the
 omnipotent Fiend,

Gorgeous and vast : the costly altars
 smoked

With human blood, and hideous paeans
 rung

Through all the long-drawn aisles. A
 murderer heard 100

His voice in Egypt, one whose gifts
and arts

Had raised him to his eminence in
power,

Accomplice of omnipotence in crime,
And confidant of the all-knowing one.

These were Jehovah's words:—

'From an eternity of idleness 106
I, God, awoke; in seven days' toil
made earth

From nothing; rested, and created
man:

I placed him in a Paradise, and there
Planted the tree of evil, so that he 110
Might eat and perish, and My soul
procure

Wherewith to sate its malice, and to
turn,

Even like a heartless conqueror of the
earth,

All misery to My fame. The race of
men

Chosen to My honour, with impunity
May sate the lusts I planted in their
heart. 116

Here I command thee hence to lead
them on,

Until, with hardened feet, their con-
quering troops

Wade on the promised soil through
woman's blood,

And make My name be dreaded
through the land. 120

Yet ever-burning flame and ceaseless
woe

Shall be the doom of their eternal
souls,

With every soul on this ungrateful
earth,

Virtuous or vicious, weak or strong,—
even all

Shall perish, to fulfil the blind revenge
(Which you, to men, call justice) of
their God.' 126

The murderer's brow

Quivered with horror.

'God omnipotent,

Is there no mercy? must our punish-
ment

Be endless? will long ages roll away,
And see no term? Oh! wherefore
hast Thou made 131

In mockery and wrath this evil earth?
Mercy becomes the powerful—be but
just:

O God! repent and save.'

'One way remains:

I will beget a Son, and He shall bear
The sins of all the world; He shall
arise 136

In an unnoticed corner of the earth,
And there shall die upon a cross, and
purge

The universal crime; so that the few
On whom My grace descends, those
who are marked 140

As vessels to the honour of their God,
May credit this strange sacrifice, and
save

Their souls alive: millions shall live
and die,

Who ne'er shall call upon their
Saviour's name,

But, unredeemed, go to the gaping
grave. 145

Thousands shall deem it an old
woman's tale,

Such as the nurses frighten babes
withal:

These in a gulf of anguish and of
flame

Shall curse their reprobation endlessly,
Yet tenfold pangs shall force them to
avow, 150

Even on their beds of torment, where
they howl,

My honour, and the justice of their
doom.

What then avail their virtuous deeds,
their thoughts

Of purity, with radiant genius bright,
Or lit with human reason's earthly ray?

Many are called, but few will I elect.
Do thou My bidding, Moses!' 157

Even the murderer's cheek
Was blanched with horror, and his
 quivering lips
Scarce faintly uttered—'O almighty
 One,
I tremble and obey!' 160

'O Spirit! centuries have set their
 seal

On this heart of many wounds, and
 loaded brain,

Since the Incarnate came: humbly He
 came,

Veiling His horrible Godhead in the
 shape

Of man, scorned by the world, His
 name unheard, 165

Save by the rabble of His native town,
Even as a parish demagogue. He led
The crowd; He taught them justice,
 truth, and peace,

In semblance; but He lit within their
 souls

The quenchless flames of zeal, and
 blessed the sword 170

He brought on earth to satiate with
 the blood

Of truth and freedom His malignant
 soul.

At length His mortal frame was led to
 death.

I stood beside Him: on the torturing
 cross

No pain assailed His unterrestrial
 sense; 175

And yet He groaned. Indignantly I
 summed

The massacres and miseries which His
 name

Had sanctioned in my country, and I
 cried,

"Go! Go!" in mockery.

A smile of godlike malice reillumed

His fading lineaments.—"I go," He
 cried, 181

"But thou shalt wander o'er the
 unquiet earth

Eternally."—The dampness of the
 grave

Bathed my imperishable front. I fell,
And long lay tranced upon the
 charmèd soil. 185

When I awoke Hell burned within my
 brain,

Which staggered on its seat; for all
 around

The mouldering relics of my kindred
 lay,

Even as the Almighty's ire arrested
 them,

And in their various attitudes of death
My murdered children's mute and eye-
 less skulls 191

Glared ghastly upon me.

But my soul,
From sight and sense of the polluting
 woe

Of tyranny, had long learned to prefer
Hell's freedom to the servitude of
 Heaven. 195

Therefore I rose, and dauntlessly
 began

My lonely and unending pilgrimage,
Resolved to wage unweariable war

With my almighty Tyrant, and to hurl
Defiance at His impotence to harm 200

Beyond the curse I bore. The very
 hand

That barred my passage to the peace-
 ful grave

Has crushed the earth to misery, and
 given

Its empire to the chosen of His
 slaves.

These have I seen, even from the
 earliest dawn 205

Of weak, unstable and precarious
 power,

Then preaching peace, as now they
 practise war;

So, when they turned but from the
 massacre

Of unoffending infidels, to quench
Their thirst for ruin in the very blood

<p>That flowed in their own veins, and pitiless zeal 211 Froze every human feeling, as the wife Sheathed in her husband's heart the sacred steel, Even whilst its hopes were dreaming of her love ; And friends to friends, brothers to brothers stood 215 Opposed in bloodiest battle-field, and war, Scarce satiable by fate's last death- draught, waged, Drunk from the winepress of the Almighty's wrath ; Whilst the red cross, in mockery of peace, Pointed to victory ! When the fray was done, 220 No remnant of the exterminated faith Survived to tell its ruin, but the flesh, With putrid smoke poisoning the atmosphere, That rotted on the half-extinguished pile.</p> <p>'Yes ! I have seen God's worshippers unsheathe 225 The sword of His revenge, when grace descended, Confirming all unnatural impulses, To sanctify their desolating deeds ; And frantic priests waved the ill- omened cross O'er the unhappy earth : then shone the sun 230 On showers of gore from the upflash- ing steel Of safe assassination, and all crime Made stingless by the Spirits of the Lord, And blood-red rainbows canopied the land.</p> <p>'Spirit, no year of my eventful being Has passed unstained by crime and misery, 236</p>	<p>Which flows from God's own faith. I've marked His slaves With tongues whose lies are venomous, beguile The insensate mob, and, whilst one hand was red With murder, feign to stretch the other out 240 For brotherhood and peace ; and that they now Babble of love and mercy, whilst their deeds Are marked with all the narrowness and crime That Freedom's young arm dare not yet chastise, Reason may claim our gratitude, who now 245 Establishing the imperishable throne Of truth, and stubborn virtue, maketh vain The unprevailing malice of my Foe, Whose bootless rage heaps torments for the brave, Adds impotent eternities to pain, 250 Whilst keenest disappointment racks His breast To see the smiles of peace around them play, To frustrate or to sanctify their doom.</p> <p>'Thus have I stood,—through a wild waste of years Struggling with whirlwinds of mad agony, 255 Yet peaceful, and serene, and self- enshrined, Mocking my powerless Tyrant's horrible curse With stubborn and unalterable will, Even as a giant oak, which Heaven's fierce flame Had scathèd in the wilderness, to stand A monument of fadeless ruin there ; 261 Yet peacefully and movelessly it braves The midnight conflict of the wintry storm, As in the sunlight's calm it spreads</p>
---	---

Its worn and withered arms on high
To meet the quiet of a summer's noon.'

The Fairy waved her wand : 267
Ahasuerus fled

Fast as the shapes of mingled shade
and mist,

That lurk in the glens of a twilight
grove, 270

Flee from the morning beam :
The matter of which dreams are
made

Not more endowed with actual life
Than this phantasmal portraiture
Of wandering human thought. 275

VIII

The Fairy.

'THE Present and the Past thou hast
beheld :

It was a desolate sight. Now, Spirit,
learn

The secrets of the Future.—Time !
Unfold the brooding pinion of thy
gloom,

Render thou up thy half-devoured
babes, 5

And from the cradles of eternity,
Where millions lie lulled to their por-
tioned sleep

By the deep murmuring stream of pass-
ing things,

Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit,
behold

Thy glorious destiny !' 10

Joy to the Spirit came.

Through the wide rent in Time's eternal
veil,

Hope was seen beaming through the
mists of fear :

Earth was no longer Hell ;

Love, freedom, health, had given
Their ripeness to the manhood of its
prime, 16

And all its pulses beat

Symphonious to the planetary spheres :

Then dulcet music swelled
Concordant with the life-strings of the
soul ; 20

It throbbed in sweet and languid beat-
ings there,

Catching new life from transitory
death,—

Like the vague sighings of a wind at
even,

That wakes the wavelets of the slumber-
ing sea

And dies on the creation of its breath,
And sinks and rises, fails and swells
by fits : 26

Was the pure stream of feeling
That sprung from these sweet
notes,

And o'er the Spirit's human sympathies
With mild and gentle motion calmly
flowed. 30

Joy to the Spirit came,—

Such joy as when a lover sees
The chosen of his soul in happiness,
And witnesses her peace
Whose woe to him were bitterer than
death, 35

Sees her unfaded cheek
Glow mantling in first luxury of health,
Thrills with her lovely eyes,
Which like two stars amid the heaving
main

Sparkle through liquid bliss. 40

Then in her triumph spoke the Fairy
Queen :

'I will not call the ghost of ages gone
To unfold the frightful secrets of its
lore ;

The present now is past,
And those events that desolate the
earth 45

Have faded from the memory of Time,
Who dares not give reality to that
Whose being I annul. To me is given
The wonders of the human world to
keep,

Space, matter, time, and mind.
Futurity 50

Exposes now its treasure; let the sight
Renew and strengthen all thy failing
hope.

O human Spirit! spur thee to the goal
Where virtue fixes universal peace,
And midst the ebb and flow of human
things, 55
Show somewhat stable, somewhat
certain still,
A lighthouse o'er the wild of dreary
waves.

'The habitable earth is full of bliss;
Those wastes of frozen billows that
were hurled
By everlasting snowstorms round the
poles, 60
Where matter dared not vegetate or
live,
But ceaseless frost round the vast
solitude
Bound its broad zone of stillness, are
unloosed;
And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy
isles
Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls
Its broad, bright surges to the sloping
sand, 66
Whose roar is wakened into echoings
sweet
Tomurmur through the Heaven-breath-
ing groves
And melodize with man's blest nature
there.

'Those deserts of immeasurable sand,
Whose age-collected fervours scarce
allowed 71
A bird to live, a blade of grass to
spring,
Where the shrill chirp of the green
lizard's love
Broke on the sultry silentness alone,
Now teem with countless rills and
shady woods, 75
Cornfields and pastures and white
cottages;
And where the startled wilderness be-
held

A savage conqueror stained in kindred
blood,
A tigress sating with the flesh of lambs
The unnatural famine of her toothless
cubs, 80
Whilst shouts and howlings through
the desert rang,
Sloping and smooth the daisy-spangled
lawn,
Offering sweet incense to the sunrise
smiles
To see a babe before his mother's door,
Sharing his morning's meal 85
With the green and golden basilisk
That comes to lick his feet.

'Those trackless deeps, where many a
weary sail
Has seen above the illimitable plain,
Morning on night, and night on morn-
ing rise, 90
Whilst still no land to greet the
wanderer spread
Its shadowy mountains on the sun-
bright sea,
Where the loud roarings of the
tempest-waves
So long have mingled with the gusty
wind
In melancholy loneliness, and swept 95
The desert of those ocean solitudes,
But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing
shriek,
The bellowing monster, and the rush-
ing storm,
Now to the sweet and many-mingling
sounds
Of kindest human impulses respond.
Those lonely realms bright garden-isles
begem, 101
With lightsome clouds and shining seas
between,
And fertile valleys, resonant with bliss,
Whilst green woods overcanopy the
wave,
Which like a toil-worn labourer leaps
to shore, 105
To meet the kisses of the flow'rets there.

'All things are recreated, and the
 flame
 Of consentaneous love inspires all life:
 The fertile bosom of the earth gives
 suck
 To myriads, who still grow beneath her
 care, 110
 Rewarding her with their pure perfect-
 ness:
 The balmy breathings of the wind
 inhale
 Her virtues, and diffuse them all
 abroad:
 Health floats amid the gentle atmo-
 sphere,
 Glows in the fruits, and mantles on the
 stream: 115
 No storms deform the beaming brow
 of Heaven,
 Nor scatter in the freshness of its
 pride
 The foliage of the ever-verdant trees;
 But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever
 fair,
 And Autumn proudly bears her matron
 grace, 120
 Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of
 Spring,
 Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy
 fruit
 Reflects its tint, and blushes into love.

'The lion now forgets to thirst for
 blood:
 There might you see him sporting in
 the sun 125
 Beside the dreadless kid; his claws
 are sheathed,
 His teeth are harmless, custom's force
 has made
 His nature as the nature of a lamb.
 Like passion's fruit, the nightshade's
 tempting bane
 Poisons no more the pleasure it be-
 stows: 130
 All bitterness is past; the cup of joy
 Unmingled mantles to the goblet's
 brim,

And courts the thirsty lips it fled
 before.
 'But chief, ambiguous Man, he that
 can know
 More misery, and dream more joy than
 all; 135
 Whose keen sensations thrill within his
 breast
 To mingle with a loftier instinct there,
 Lending their power to pleasure and to
 pain,
 Yet raising, sharpening, and refining
 each;
 Who stands amid the ever-varying
 world, 140
 The burthen or the glory of the earth;
 He chief perceives the change, his
 being notes
 The gradual renovation, and defines
 Each movement of its progress on his
 mind.

'Man, where the gloom of the long
 polar night 145
 Lowers o'er the snow-clad rocks and
 frozen soil,
 Where scarce the hardiest herb that
 braves the frost
 Basks in the moonlight's ineffectual
 glow,
 Shrank with the plants, and darkened
 with the night;
 His chilled and narrow energies, his
 heart, 150
 Insensible to courage, truth, or love,
 His stunted stature and imbecile
 frame,
 Marked him for some abortion of the
 earth,
 Fit compeer of the bears that roamed
 around,
 Whose habits and enjoyments were his
 own: 155
 His life a feverish dream of stagnant
 woe,
 Whose meagre wants, but scantily ful-
 filled,
 Apprised him ever of the joyless length

Which his short being's wretchedness
 had reached ;
 His death a pang which famine, cold
 and toil 160
 Long on the mind, whilst yet the vital
 spark
 Clung to the body stubbornly, had
 brought :
 All was inflicted here that Earth's re-
 venge
 Could wreak on the infringers of her
 law ;
 One curse alone was spared—the name
 of God. 165

'Nor where the tropics bound the
 realms of day
 With a broad belt of mingling cloud
 and flame,
 Where blue mists through the unmov-
 ing atmosphere
 Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and
 fed
 Unnatural vegetation, where the land
 Teemed with all earthquake, tempest
 and disease, 171
 Was Man a nobler being ; slavery
 Had crushed him to his country's blood-
 stained dust ;
 Or he was bartered for the fame of power,
 Which all internal impulses destroy-
 ing, 175
 Makes human will an article of trade ;
 Or he was changed with Christians for
 their gold,
 And dragged to distant isles, where to
 the sound
 Of the flesh-mangling scourge, he does
 the work
 Of all-polluting luxury and wealth,
 Which doubly visits on the tyrants'
 heads 181
 The long-protracted fulness of their
 woe ;
 Or he was led to legal butchery,
 To turn to worms beneath that burning
 sun,

Where kings first leagued against the
 rights of men, 185
 And priests first traded with the name
 of God.

'Even where the milder zone afforded
 Man

A seeming shelter, yet contagion there,
 Blighting his being with unnumbered
 ills,

Spread like a quenchless fire ; nor truth
 till late 190

Availed to arrest its progress, or create
 That peace which first in bloodless
 victory waved

Her snowy standard o'er this favoured
 clime :

There man was long the train-bearer of
 slaves,

The mimic of surrounding misery, 195

The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,
 The bloodhound of religion's hungry
 zeal.

'Here now the human being stands
 adorning

This loveliest earth with taintless body
 and mind ;

Blessed from his birth with all bland
 impulses, 200

Which gently in his noble bosom wake
 All kindly passions and all pure de-
 sires.

Him, still from hope to hope the bliss
 pursuing

Which from the exhaustless lore of
 human weal

Dawns on the virtuous mind, the
 thoughts that rise 205

In time-destroying infiniteness, gift
 With self-enshrined eternity, that
 mocks

The unprevailing hoariness of age,
 And man, once fleeting o'er the tran-
 sient scene

Swift as an unremembered vision,
 stands 210

Immortal upon earth : no longer now
 He slays the lamb that looks him in
 the face,
 And horribly devours his mangled
 flesh,
 Which, still avenging Nature's broken
 law,
 Kindled all putrid humours in his
 frame, 215
 All evil passions, and all vain belief,
 Hatred, despair, and loathing in his
 mind,
 The germs of misery, death, disease,
 and crime.
 No longer now the wingèd habitants,
 That in the woods their sweet lives sing
 away, 220
 Flee from the form of man ; but gather
 round,
 And prune their sunny feathers on the
 hands
 Which little children stretch in friendly
 sport
 Towards these dreadless partners of
 their play.
 All things are void of terror : Man has
 lost 225
 His terrible prerogative, and stands
 An equal amidst equals : happiness
 And science dawn though late upon
 the earth ;
 Peace cheers the mind, health reno-
 vates the frame ;
 Disease and pleasure cease to mingle
 here, 230
 Reason and passion cease to combat
 there ;
 Whilst each unfettered o'er the earth
 extend
 Their all-subduing energies, and wield
 The sceptre of a vast dominion there ;
 Whilst every shape and mode of matter
 lends 235
 Its force to the omnipotence of mind,
 Which from its dark mine drags the
 gem of truth
 To decorate its Paradise of peace.'

IX

'O HAPPY Earth ! reality of Heaven !
 To which those restless souls that
 ceaselessly
 Throng through the human universe,
 aspire ;
 Thou consummation of all mortal hope !
 Thou glorious prize of blindly-working
 will ! 5
 Whose rays, diffused throughout all
 space and time,
 Verge to one point and blend for ever
 there :
 Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-
 place !
 Where care and sorrow, impotence and
 crime,
 Languor, disease, and ignorance dare
 not come : 10
 O happy Earth, reality of Heaven !
 'Genius has seen thee in her passionate
 dreams,
 And dim forebodings of thy loveliness
 Haunting the human heart, have there
 entwined
 Those rooted hopes of some sweet place
 of bliss 15
 Where friends and lovers meet to part
 no more.
 Thou art the end of all desire and will,
 The product of all action ; and the
 souls
 That by the paths of an aspiring change
 Have reached thy haven of perpetual
 peace, 20
 There rest from the eternity of toil
 That framed the fabric of thy perfect-
 ness.
 'Even Time, the conqueror, fled thee
 in his fear ;
 That hoary giant, who, in lonely pride,
 So long had ruled the world, that
 nations fell 25
 Beneath his silent footstep. Pyramids,
 That for millenniums had withstood
 the tide

Of human things, his storm-breath
drove in sand
Across that desert where their stones
survived
The name of him whose pride had
heaped them there. 30
Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp,
Was but the mushroom of a summer
day,
That his light-wingèd footstep pressed
to dust :
Time was the king of earth : all things
gave way
Before him, but the fixed and virtuous
will, 35
The sacred sympathies of soul and
sense,
That mocked his fury and prepared his
fall.

‘Yet slow and gradual dawned the morn
of love ;
Long lay the clouds of darkness o’er
the scene,
Till from its native Heaven they rolled
away : 40
First, Crime triumphant o’er all hope
careered
Unblushing, undisguising, bold and
strong ;
Whilst Falsehood, tricked in Virtue’s
attributes,
Long sanctified all deeds of vice and
woe,
Till done by her own venomous sting
to death, 45
She left the moral world without a
law,
No longer fettering Passion’s fearless
wing,
Nor searing Reason with the brand of
God.
Then steadily the happy ferment
worked ;
Reason was free ; and wild though
Passion went 50
Through tangled glens and wood-em-
bosomed meads,

Gathering a garland of the strangest
flowers,
Yet like the bee returning to her queen,
She bound the sweetest on her sister’s
brow,
Who meek and sober kissed the sport-
ive child, 55
No longer trembling at the broken rod.

‘Mild was the slow necessity of death :
The tranquil spirit failed beneath its
grasp,
Without a groan, almost without a fear,
Calm as a voyager to some distant
land, 60
And full of wonder, full of hope as he.
The deadly germs of languor and
disease
Died in the human frame, and Purity
Blessed with all gifts her earthly wor-
shippers.
How vigorous then the athletic form of
age ! 65
How clear its open and unwrinkled
brow !
Where neither avarice, cunning, pride,
nor care,
Had stamped the seal of gray deformity
On all the mingling lineaments of time.
How lovely the intrepid front of youth !
Which meek-eyed courage decked with
freshest grace ; 71
Courage of soul, that dreaded not a
name,
And elevated will, that journeyed on
Through life’s phantasmal scene in fear-
lessness,
With virtue, love, and pleasure, hand
in hand. 75

‘Then, that sweet bondage which is
Freedom’s self,
And rivets with sensation’s softest tie
The kindred sympathies of human
souls,
Needed no fetters of tyrannic law :
Those delicate and timid impulses 80
In Nature’s primal modesty arose,

And with undoubted confidence disclosed

The growing longings of its dawning love,

Unchecked by dull and selfish chastity,
That virtue of the cheaply virtuous, 85
Who pride themselves in senselessness
and frost.

No longer prostitution's venom'd bane
Poisoned the springs of happiness and
life;

Woman and man, in confidence and
love,

Equal and free and pure together trod
The mountain-paths of virtue, which
no more 91

Were stained with blood from many a
pilgrim's feet.

'Then, where, through distant ages,
long in pride

The palace of the monarch-slave had
mocked

Famine's faint groan, and Penury's
silent tear, 95

A heap of crumbling ruins stood, and
threw

Year after year their stones upon the
field,

Wakening a lonely echo; and the
leaves

Of the old thorn, that on the topmost
tower

Usurped the royal ensign's grandeur,
shook 100

In the stern storm that swayed the
topmost tower

And whispered strange tales in the
Whirlwind's ear.

'Low through the lone cathedral's roof-
less aisles

The melancholy winds a death-dirge
sung:

It were a sight of awfulness to see 105

The works of faith and slavery, so vast,

So sumptuous, yet so perishing withal!

Even as the corpse that rests beneath
its wall.

A thousand mourners deck the pomp
of death

To-day, the breathing marble glows
above 110

To decorate its memory, and tongues

Are busy of its life: to-morrow, worms

In silence and in darkness seize their
prey.

'Within the massy prison's moulder-
ing courts,

Fearless and free the ruddy children
played, 115

Weaving gay chaplets for their inno-
cent brows

With the green ivy and the red wall-
flower,

That mock the dungeon's unavailing
gloom;

The ponderous chains, and gratings of
strong iron,

There rusted amid heaps of broken
stone 120

That mingled slowly with their native
earth:

There the broad beam of day, which
feebly once

Lighted the cheek of lean Captivity
With a pale and sickly glare, then

freely shone

On the pure smiles of infant playfulness:
125

No more the shuddering voice of hoarse
Despair

Pealed through the echoing vaults, but
soothing notes

Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome
birds

And merriment were resonant around.

'These ruins soon left not a wreck be-
hind: 130

Their elements, wide scattered o'er the
globe,

To happier shapes were moulded, and
became

Ministrant to all blissful impulses:
Thus human things were perfected,
and earth,

Even as a child beneath its mother's
love, 135

Was strengthened in all excellence,
and grew

Fairer and nobler with each passing
year.

'Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the
scene

Closes in steadfast darkness, and the
past

Fades from our charmed sight. My
task is done : 140

Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders
are thine own,

With all the fear and all the hope they
bring.

My spells are passed : the present now
recurs.

Ah me ! a pathless wilderness remains
Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming
hand. 145

'Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy
course,

Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring
change :

For birth and life and death, and that
strange state

Before the naked soul has found its
home, 150

All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
The restless wheels of being on their
way,

Whose flashing spokes, instinct with
infinite life,

Bicker and burn to gain their destined
goal :

For birth but wakes the spirit to the
sense 155

Of outward shows, whose unexperienced
shape

New modes of passion to its frame may
lend ;

Life is its state of action, and the store
Of all events is aggregated there 159

That variegate the eternal universe ;

Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,
That leads to azure isles and beaming
skies

And happy regions of eternal hope.

Therefore, O Spirit ! fearlessly bear on :
Though storms may break the primrose
on its stalk, 165

Though frosts may blight the freshness
of its bloom,

Yet Spring's awakening breath will
woo the earth,

To feed with kindest dews its favour-
ite flower,

That blooms in mossy banks and dark-
some glens,

Lighting the greenwood with its sunny
smile. 170

'Fear not then, Spirit, Death's dis-
robing hand,

So welcome when the tyrant is awake,
So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch
burns ;

'Tis but the voyage of a darksome
hour,

The transient gulf-dream of a start-
ling sleep. 175

Death is no foe to Virtue : earth has
seen

Love's brightest roses on the scaffold
bloom,

Mingling with Freedom's fadeless
laurels there,

And presaging the truth of visioned
bliss.

Are there not hopes within thee, which
this scene 180

Of linked and gradual being has con-
firmed ?

Whose stings bade thy heart look
further still,

When, to the moonlight walk by Henry
led,

Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk of
death ?

And wilt thou rudely tear them from
thy breast, 185

Listening supinely to a bigot's creed,

Or tamely crouching to the tyrant's
rod,
Whose iron thongs are red with human
gore?
Never: but bravely bearing on, thy
will
Is destined an eternal war to wage
With tyranny and falsehood, and up-
root 191
The germs of misery from the human
heart.
Thine is the hand whose piety would
soothe
The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,
Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,
Watching its wanderings as a friend's
disease: 196
Thine is the brow whose mildness
would defy
Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest
will,
When fenced by power and master of
the world.
Thou art sincere and good; of resolute
mind, 200
Free from heart-withering custom's
cold control,
Of passion lofty, pure and unsubdued.
Earth's pride and meanness could not
vanquish thee,
And therefore art thou worthy of the
boon
Which thou hast now received: Virtue
shall keep 205
Thy footsteps in the path that thou
hast trod,
And many days of beaming hope shall
bless
Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred
love.
Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life and rapture from thy
smile.' 211
The Fairy waves her wand of charm.

Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts
the car,
That rolled beside the battlement,
Bending her beamy eyes in thankful-
ness. 215
Again the enchanted steeds were
yoked,
Again the burning wheels inflame
The steep descent of Heaven's un-
trodden way.
Fast and far the chariot flew:
The vast and fiery globes that rolled
Around the Fairy's palace-gate 221
Lessened by slow degrees and soon
appeared
Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs
That there attendant on the solar
power
With borrowed light pursued their
narrower way. 225

Earth floated then below:
The chariot paused a moment there;
The Spirit then descended:
The restless coursers pawed the un-
genial soil,
Snuffed the gross air, and then, their
errand done, 230
Unfurled their pinions to the winds of
Heaven.

The Body and the Soul united
then,
A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's
frame:
Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;
Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs
remained: 235
She looked around in wonder and be-
held
Henry, who kneeled in silence by her
couch,
Watching her sleep with looks of
speechless love,
And the bright beaming stars 239
That through the casement shone.

SHELLEY'S NOTES

I. 242, 243 :—

*The sun's unclouded orb**Rolled through the black concave.*

BEYOND our atmosphere the sun would appear a rayless orb of fire in the midst of a black concave. The equal diffusion of its light on earth is owing to the refraction of the rays by the atmosphere, and their reflection from other bodies. Light consists either of vibrations propagated through a subtle medium, or of numerous minute particles repelled in all directions from the luminous body. Its velocity greatly exceeds that of any substance with which we are acquainted: observations on the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites have demonstrated that light takes up no more than 8' 7" in passing from the sun to the earth, a distance of 95,000,000 miles.—Some idea may be gained of the immense distance of the fixed stars when it is computed that many years would elapse before light could reach this earth from the nearest of them; yet in one year light travels 5,422,400,000,000 miles, which is a distance 5,707,600 times greater than that of the sun from the earth.

I. 252, 253 :—

*Whilst round the chariot's way**Innumerable systems rolled.*

The plurality of worlds,—the indefinite immensity of the universe, is a most awful subject of contemplation. He who rightly feels its mystery and grandeur is in no danger of seduction from the falsehoods of religious systems, or of deifying the principle of the universe. It is impossible to believe that the Spirit that pervades this infinite machine begat a son upon the body of a Jewish woman; or is angered at the consequences of that

necessity, which is a synonym of itself. All that miserable tale of the Devil, and Eve, and an Intercessor, with the childish mummeries of the God of the Jews, is irreconcilable with the knowledge of the stars. The works of His fingers have borne witness against Him.

The nearest of the fixed stars is inconceivably distant from the earth, and they are probably proportionably distant from each other. By a calculation of the velocity of light, Sirius is supposed to be at least 54,224,000,000,000 miles from the earth¹. That which appears only like a thin and silvery cloud streaking the heaven is in effect composed of innumerable clusters of suns, each shining with its own light, and illuminating numbers of planets that revolve around them. Millions and millions of suns are ranged around us, all attended by innumerable worlds, yet calm, regular, and harmonious, all keeping the paths of immutable necessity.

IV. 178, 179 :—

*These are the hired bravos who defend
The tyrant's throne.*

To employ murder as a means of justice is an idea which a man of an enlightened mind will not dwell upon with pleasure. To march forth in rank and file, and all the pomp of streamers and trumpets, for the purpose of shooting at our fellow-men as a mark; to inflict upon them all the variety of wound and anguish; to leave them weltering in their blood; to wander over the field of desolation, and count the number of the dying and the dead,—are employments which in thesis we may maintain to be necessary, but which no good man will contemplate

¹ See Nicholson's *Encyclopedia*, art. Light.

with gratulation and delight. A battle we suppose is won:—thus truth is established, thus the cause of justice is confirmed! It surely requires no common sagacity to discern the connexion between this immense heap of calamities and the assertion of truth or the maintenance of justice.

‘Kings, and ministers of state, the real authors of the calamity, sit unmolested in their cabinet, while those against whom the fury of the storm is directed are, for the most part, persons who have been trepanned into the service, or who are dragged unwillingly from their peaceful homes into the field of battle. A soldier is a man whose business it is to kill those who never offended him, and who are the innocent martyrs of other men’s iniquities. Whatever may become of the abstract question of the justifiableness of war, it seems impossible that the soldier should not be a depraved and unnatural being.

To these more serious and momentous considerations it may be proper to add a recollection of the ridiculousness of the military character. Its first constituent is obedience: a soldier is, of all descriptions of men, the most completely a machine; yet his profession inevitably teaches him something of dogmatism, swaggering, and self-consequence: he is like the puppet of a showman, who, at the very time he is made to strut and swell and display the most farcical airs, we perfectly know cannot assume the most insignificant gesture, advance either to the right or the left, but as he is moved by his exhibitor.’—Godwin’s *Enquirer*, Essay v.

I will here subjoin a little poem, so strongly expressive of my abhorrence of despotism and falsehood, that I fear lest it never again may be depicted so vividly. This opportunity is perhaps

the only one that ever will occur of rescuing it from oblivion.

FALSEHOOD AND VICE

A DIALOGUE

WHILST monarchs laughed upon their thrones

To hear a famished nation’s groans,
And hugged the wealth wrung from the woe

That makes its eyes and veins o’erflow,—

Those thrones, high built upon the heaps

Of bones where frenzied Famine sleeps,
Where Slavery wields her scourge of iron,

Red with mankind’s unheeded gore,
And War’s mad fiends the scene environ,

Mingling with shrieks a drunken roar,
There Vice and Falsehood took their stand,

High raised above the unhappy land.

Falsehood.

Brother! arise from the dainty fare,
Which thousands have toiled and bled
to bestow;

A finer feast for thy hungry ear
Is the news that I bring of human
woe.

Vice.

And, secret one, what hast thou done,
To compare, in thy tumid pride, with
me?

I, whose career, through the blasted
year,

Has been tracked by despair and agony.

Falsehood.

What have I done!—I have torn the
robe

From baby Truth’s unsheltered form,
And round the desolated globe

Borne safely the bewildering charm:

My tyrant-slaves to a dungeon-floor
Have bound the fearless innocent,

And streams of fertilizing gore
Flow from her bosom's hideous rent,
Which this unfailing dagger gave. . . .
I dread that blood!—no more—this
day

Is ours, though her eternal ray
Must shine upon our grave.

Yet know, proud Vice, had I not given
To thee the robe I stole from Heaven,
Thy shape of ugliness and fear
Had never gained admission here.

Vice.

And know, that had I disdained to toil,
But sate in my loathsome cave the
while,

And ne'er to these hateful sons of
Heaven,

GOLD, MONARCHY, and MURDER,
given ;

Hadst thou with all thine art essayed
One of thy games then to have played,
With all thine overweening boast,
Falsehood ! I tell thee thou hadst
lost !—

Yet wherefore this dispute?—we tend,
Fraternal, to one common end ;

In this cold grave beneath my feet,
Will our hopes, our fears, and our
labours, meet.

Falsehood.

I brought my daughter, RELIGION,
on earth :

She smothered Reason's babes in their
birth ;

But dreaded their mother's eye
severe,—

So the crocodile slunk off sily in fear,
And loosed her bloodhounds from the
den. . . .

They started from dreams of slaughtered
men,

And, by the light of her poison eye,
Did her work o'er the wide earth
frightfully :

The dreadful stench of her torches'
flare,

Fed with human fat, polluted the air :

The curses, the shrieks, the ceaseless
cries

Of the many-mingling miseries,
As on she trod, ascended high

And trumpeted my victory !—

Brother, tell what thou hast done.

Vice.

I have extinguished the noonday sun,
In the carnage-smoke of battles won :

Famine, Murder, Hell and Power

Were glutted in that glorious hour

Which searchless fate had stamped for
me

With the seal of her security. . . .

For the bloated wretch on yonder
throne

Commanded the bloody fray to rise.

Like me he joyed at the stifled moan

Wrung from a nation's miseries ;

While the snakes, whose slime even
him *defiled*,

In ecstasies of malice smiled :

They thought 'twas theirs,—but mine
the deed !

Theirs is the toil, but mine the meed—
Ten thousand victims madly bleed.

They dream that tyrants goad them
there

With poisonous war to taint the air :

These tyrants, on their beds of thorn,
Swell with the thoughts of murderous

fame,

And with their gains to lift my name

Restless they plan from night to morn :

I—I do all ; without my aid

Thy daughter, that relentless maid,

Could never o'er a death-bed urge

The fury of her venom'd scourge.

Falsehood.

Brother, well :—the world is ours ;

And whether thou or I have won,

The pestilence expectant lowers

On all beneath yon blasted sun.

Our joys, our toils, our honours meet

In the milk-white and wormy winding-

sheet :

A short-lived hope, unceasing care,

Some heartless scraps of godly prayer,
A moody curse, and a frenzied sleep
Ere gapes the grave's unclosing deep,
A tyrant's dream, a coward's start,
The ice that clings to a priestly heart,
A judge's frown, a courtier's smile,
Make the great whole for which we toil;
And, brother, whether thou or I
Have done the work of misery,
It little boots: thy toil and pain,
Without my aid, were more than vain;
And but for thee I ne'er had sate
The guardian of Heaven's palace gate.

V. 1, 2:—

*Thus do the generations of the earth
Go to the grave, and issue from the womb.*

'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.'—*Ecclesiastes*, chap. i. vv. 4-7.

V. 4-6:—

*Even as the leaves
Which the keen frost-wind of the waning
year*

Has scattered on the forest soil.

Οἷη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
Φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἄνεμος χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα
δέ θ' ὕλη

Τηλεθόωσα φύει, ἔαρος δ' ἐπιγίγνεται ὄρη·
Ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενεή, ἣ μὲν φύει, ἣ δ' ἀπολήγει.

ΙΛΙΑΔ. Ζ, l. 146.

V. 58:—

*The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and
kings.*

Suave mari magno turbantibus aequora
ventis

E terra magnum alterius spectare labo-
rem;

Non quia vexari quemquam est iucunda
voluptas,

Sed quibus ipse malis careas quia
cernere suave est.

Suave etiam belli certamina magna
tueri

Per campos instructa, tua sine parte
pericli;

Sed nil dulcius est bene quam munita
tenere

Edita doctrina sapientum templa
serena,

Despicere unde queas alios, passimque
videre

Errare atque viam palantis quaerere
vitae;

Certare ingenio; contendere nobili-
tate;

Noctes atque dies niti praestante
labore

Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque
potiri.

O miseris hominum mentes! O pectora
caeca! *Lucret. lib. ii.*

V. 93, 94:—

*And statesmen boast
Of wealth!*

There is no real wealth but the labour of man. Were the mountains of gold and the valleys of silver, the world would not be one grain of corn the richer; no one comfort would be added to the human race. In consequence of our consideration for the precious metals, one man is enabled to heap to himself luxuries at the expense of the necessaries of his neighbour; a system admirably fitted to produce all the varieties of disease and crime, which never fail to characterize the two extremes of opulence and penury. A speculator takes pride to himself as the promoter of his country's prosperity, who employs a number of hands in the manufacture of articles

avowedly destitute of use, or subservient only to the unhallowed cravings of luxury and ostentation. The nobleman, who employs the peasants of his neighbourhood in building his palaces, until '*jam pauca aratro jugera regiae moles relinquunt*,' flatters himself that he has gained the title of a patriot by yielding to the impulses of vanity. The show and pomp of courts adduce the same apology for its continuance; and many a fête has been given, many a woman has eclipsed her beauty by her dress, to benefit the labouring poor and to encourage trade. Who does not see that this is a remedy which aggravates whilst it palliates the countless diseases of society? The poor are set to labour,—for what? Not the food for which they famish: not the blankets for want of which their babes are frozen by the cold of their miserable hovels: not those comforts of civilization without which civilized man is far more miserable than the meanest savage; oppressed as he is by all its insidious evils, within the daily and taunting prospect of its innumerable benefits assiduously exhibited before him:—no; for the pride of power, for the miserable isolation of pride, for the false pleasures of the hundredth part of society. No greater evidence is afforded of the wide extended and radical mistakes of civilized man than this fact: those arts which are essential to his very being are held in the greatest contempt; employments are lucrative in an inverse ratio to their usefulness¹: the jeweller, the toyman, the actor gains fame and wealth by the exercise of his useless and ridiculous art; whilst the cultivator of the earth, he without whom society must cease to subsist, struggles through contempt

and penury, and perishes by that famine which but for his unceasing exertions would annihilate the rest of mankind.

I will not insult common sense by insisting on the doctrine of the natural equality of man. The question is not concerning its desirableness, but its practicability: so far as it is practicable, it is desirable. That state of human society which approaches nearer to an equal partition of its benefits and evils should, *caeteris paribus*, be preferred: but so long as we conceive that a wanton expenditure of human labour, not for the necessities, not even for the luxuries of the mass of society, but for the egotism and ostentation of a few of its members, is defensible on the ground of public justice, so long we neglect to approximate to the redemption of the human race.

Labour is required for physical, and leisure for moral improvement: from the former of these advantages the rich, and from the latter the poor, by the inevitable conditions of their respective situations, are precluded. A state which should combine the advantages of both would be subjected to the evils of neither. He that is deficient in firm health, or vigorous intellect, is but half a man: hence it follows that to subject the labouring classes to unnecessary labour is wantonly depriving them of any opportunities of intellectual improvement; and that the rich are heaping up for their own mischief the disease, lassitude, and ennui by which their existence is rendered an intolerable burthen.

English reformers exclaim against sinecures,—but the true pension list is the rent-roll of the landed proprietors: wealth is a power usurped by the few, to compel the many to labour for their benefit. The laws

¹ See Rousseau, *De l'Inégalité parmi les Hommes*, note 7.

which support this system derive their force from the ignorance and credulity of its victims: they are the result of a conspiracy of the few against the many, who are themselves obliged to purchase this pre-eminence by the loss of all real comfort.

'The commodities that substantially contribute to the subsistence of the human species form a very short catalogue: they demand from us but a slender portion of industry. If these only were produced, and sufficiently produced, the species of man would be continued. If the labour necessarily required to produce them were equitably divided among the poor, and, still more, if it were equitably divided among all, each man's share of labour would be light, and his portion of leisure would be ample. There was a time when this leisure would have been of small comparative value: it is to be hoped that the time will come when it will be applied to the most important purposes. Those hours which are not required for the production of the necessaries of life may be devoted to the cultivation of the understanding, the enlarging our stock of knowledge, the refining our taste, and thus opening to us new and more exquisite sources of enjoyment.

'It was perhaps necessary that a period of monopoly and oppression should subsist, before a period of cultivated equality could subsist. Savages perhaps would never have been excited to the discovery of truth and the invention of art but by the narrow motives which such a period affords. But surely, after the savage state has ceased, and men have set out in the glorious career of discovery and invention, monopoly and oppression cannot be necessary to prevent them from returning to a state of barbarism.'

—Godwin's *Enquirer*, Essay ii. See also *Pol. Jus.*, book VIII, chap. ii.

It is a calculation of this admirable author, that all the conveniences of civilized life might be produced, if society would divide the labour equally among its members, by each individual being employed in labour two hours during the day.

V. 112, 113:—

or religion
Drives his wife raving mad.

I am acquainted with a lady of considerable accomplishments, and the mother of a numerous family, whom the Christian religion has goaded to incurable insanity. A parallel case is, I believe, within the experience of every physician.

Nam iam saepe homines patriam, caros-
que parentes
Prodiderunt, vitare Acherusia templa
petentes. *Lucretius.*

V. 189:—

Even love is sold.

Not even the intercourse of the sexes is exempt from the despotism of positive institution. Law pretends even to govern the indisciplinable wanderings of passion, to put fetters on the clearest deductions of reason, and, by appeals to the will, to subdue the involuntary affections of our nature. Love is inevitably consequent upon the perception of loveliness. Love withers under constraint: its very essence is liberty: it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy, nor fear: it is there most pure, perfect, and unlimited, where its votaries live in confidence, equality, and unreserve.

How long then ought the sexual connection to last? what law ought to specify the extent of the grievances which should limit its duration? A

husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other: any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration. How odious an usurpation of the right of private judgement should that law be considered which should make the ties of friendship indissoluble, in spite of the caprices, the inconstancy, the fallibility, and capacity for improvement of the human mind. And by so much would the fetters of love be heavier and more unendurable than those of friendship, as love is more vehement and capricious, more dependent on those delicate peculiarities of imagination, and less capable of reduction to the ostensible merits of the object.

The state of society in which we exist is a mixture of feudal savageness and imperfect civilization. The narrow and unenlightened morality of the Christian religion is an aggravation of these evils. It is not even until lately that mankind have admitted that happiness is the sole end of the science of ethics, as of all other sciences; and that the fanatical idea of mortifying the flesh for the love of God has been discarded. I have heard, indeed, an ignorant collegian adduce, in favour of Christianity, its hostility to every worldly feeling!¹

¹ The first Christian emperor made a law by which seduction was punished with death; if the female pleaded her own consent, she also was punished with death; if the parents endeavoured to screen the criminals, they were banished and their estates were confiscated; the slaves who might be accessory were burned alive, or forced to swallow melted lead. The very offspring of an illegal love were involved in the consequences of the sentence. — Gibbon's

But if happiness be the object of morality, of all human unions and disunions; if the worthiness of every action is to be estimated by the quantity of pleasurable sensation it is calculated to produce, then the connection of the sexes is so long sacred as it contributes to the comfort of the parties, and is naturally dissolved when its evils are greater than its benefits. There is nothing immoral in this separation. Constancy has nothing virtuous in itself, independently of the pleasure it confers, and partakes of the temporizing spirit of vice in proportion as it endures tamely moral defects of magnitude in the object of its indiscreet choice. Love is free: to promise for ever to love the same woman is not less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed: such a vow, in both cases, excludes us from all inquiry. The language of the votarist is this: The woman I now love may be infinitely inferior to many others; the creed I now profess may be a mass of errors and absurdities; but I exclude myself from all future information as to the amiability of the one and the truth of the other, resolving blindly, and in spite of conviction, to adhere to them. Is this the language of delicacy and reason? Is the love of such a frigid heart of more worth than its belief?

The present system of constraint does no more, in the majority of instances, than make hypocrites or open enemies. Persons of delicacy and virtue, unhappily united to one whom they find it impossible to love, spend the loveliest season of their life in unproductive efforts to appear

Decline and Fall, etc., vol. ii, p. 210. See also, for the hatred of the primitive Christians to love and even marriage, p. 269.

otherwise than they are, for the sake of the feelings of their partner or the welfare of their mutual offspring: those of less generosity and refinement openly avow their disappointment, and linger out the remnant of that union, which only death can dissolve, in a state of incurable bickering and hostility. The early education of their children takes its colour from the squabbles of the parents; they are nursed in a systematic school of ill-humour, violence, and falsehood. Had they been suffered to part at the moment when indifference rendered their union irksome, they would have been spared many years of misery: they would have connected themselves more suitably, and would have found that happiness in the society of more congenial partners which is for ever denied them by the despotism of marriage. They would have been separately useful and happy members of society, who, whilst united, were miserable and rendered misanthropical by misery. The conviction that wedlock is indissoluble holds out the strongest of all temptations to the perverse: they indulge without restraint in acrimony, and all the little tyrannies of domestic life, when they know that their victim is without appeal. If this connection were put on a rational basis, each would be assured that habitual ill-temper would terminate in separation, and would check this vicious and dangerous propensity.

Prostitution is the legitimate offspring of marriage and its accompanying errors. Women, for no other crime than having followed the dictates of a natural appetite, are driven with fury from the comforts and sympathies of society. It is less venial than murder; and the punishment which is inflicted on her who

destroys her child to escape reproach is lighter than the life of agony and disease to which the prostitute is irrecoverably doomed. Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature;—society declares war against her, pitiless and eternal war: she must be the tame slave, she must make no reprisals; theirs is the right of persecution, hers the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy: the loud and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She dies of long and lingering disease: yet *she* is in fault, *she* is the criminal, *she* the froward and untamable child,—and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous matron, who casts her as an abortion from her undefiled bosom! Society avenges herself on the criminals of her own creation; she is employed in anathematizing the vice to-day, which yesterday she was the most zealous to teach. Thus is formed one-tenth of the population of London: meanwhile the evil is twofold. Young men, excluded by the fanatical idea of chastity from the society of modest and accomplished women, associate with these vicious and miserable beings, destroying thereby all those exquisite and delicate sensibilities whose existence cold-hearted worldlings have denied; annihilating all genuine passion, and debasing that to a selfish feeling which is the excess of generosity and devotedness. Their body and mind alike crumble into a hideous wreck of humanity; idiocy and disease become perpetuated in their miserable offspring, and distant generations suffer for the bigoted morality of their forefathers. Chastity is a monkish and evangelical superstition, a greater foe to natural temperance even than unintellectual sensuality; it strikes at the root of all domestic happiness, and consigns more than half of the human

race to misery, that some few may monopolize according to law. A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage.

I conceive that from the abolition of marriage, the fit and natural arrangement of sexual connection would result. I by no means assert that the intercourse would be promiscuous: on the contrary, it appears, from the relation of parent to child, that this union is generally of long duration, and marked above all others with generosity and self-devotion. But this is a subject which it is perhaps premature to discuss. That which will result from the abolition of marriage will be natural and right; because choice and change will be exempted from restraint.

In fact, religion and morality, as they now stand, compose a practical code of misery and servitude: the genius of human happiness must tear every leaf from the accursed book of God ere man can read the inscription on his heart. How would morality, dressed up in stiff stays and finery, start from her own disgusting image should she look in the mirror of nature!

VI. 45, 46:—

*To the red and baleful sun
That faintly twinkles there.*

The north polar star, to which the axis of the earth, in its present state of obliquity, points. It is exceedingly probable, from many considerations, that this obliquity will gradually diminish, until the equator coincides with the ecliptic: the nights and days will then become equal on the earth throughout the year, and probably the seasons also. There is no great extravagance in presuming that the progress of the perpendicularity of the

poles may be as rapid as the progress of intellect; or that there should be a perfect identity between the moral and physical improvement of the human species. It is certain that wisdom is not compatible with disease, and that, in the present state of the climates of the earth, health, in the true and comprehensive sense of the word, is out of the reach of civilized man. Astronomy teaches us that the earth is now in its progress, and that the poles are every year becoming more and more perpendicular to the ecliptic. The strong evidence afforded by the history of mythology, and geological researches, that some event of this nature has taken place already, affords a strong presumption that this progress is not merely an oscillation, as has been surmised by some late astronomers¹. Bones of animals peculiar to the torrid zone have been found in the north of Siberia, and on the banks of the river Ohio. Plants have been found in the fossil state in the interior of Germany, which demand the present climate of Hindostan for their production². The researches of M. Bailly³ establish the existence of a people who inhabited a tract in Tartary 49° north latitude, of greater antiquity than either the Indians, the Chinese, or the Chaldeans, from whom these nations derived their sciences and theology. We find, from the testimony of ancient writers, that Britain, Germany, and France were much colder than at present, and that their great rivers were annually frozen over. Astronomy teaches us also that since this period the obliquity of the earth's position has been considerably diminished.

¹ Laplace, *Système du Monde*.

² Cabanis, *Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme*, vol. ii, p. 406.

³ Bailly, *Lettres sur les Sciences*, à Voltaire.

VI. 171-173 :—

*No atom of this turbulence fulfils
A vague and unnecessitated task,
Or acts but as it must and ought to act.*

‘Deux exemples serviront à nous rendre plus sensible le principe qui vient d’être posé ; nous emprunterons l’un du physique et l’autre du moral. Dans un tourbillon de poussière qu’élève un vent impétueux, quelque confus qu’il paraisse à nos yeux ; dans la plus affreuse tempête excitée par des vents opposés qui soulèvent les flots,—il n’y a pas une seule molécule de poussière ou d’eau qui soit placée au *hasard*, qui n’ait sa cause suffisante pour occuper le lieu où elle se trouve, et qui n’agisse rigoureusement de la manière dont elle doit agir. Un géomètre qui connaîtrait exactement les différentes forces qui agissent dans ces deux cas, et les propriétés des molécules qui sont mues, démontrerait que d’après des causes données, chaque molécule agit précisément comme elle doit agir, et ne peut agir autrement qu’elle ne fait.

‘Dans les convulsions terribles qui agitent quelquefois les sociétés politiques, et qui produisent souvent le renversement d’un empire, il n’y a pas une seule action, une seule parole, une seule pensée, une seule volonté, une seule passion dans les agens qui concourent à la révolution comme destructeurs ou comme victimes, qui ne soit nécessaire, qui n’agisse comme elle doit agir, qui n’opère infailliblement les effets qu’elle doit opérer, suivant la place qu’occupent ces agens dans ce tourbillon moral. Cela paraîtrait évident pour une intelligence qui sera en état de saisir et d’apprécier toutes les actions et réactions des esprits et des corps de ceux qui contribuent à cette révolution.’—*Système de la Nature*, vol. i, p. 44.

VI. 198 :—

Necessity! thou mother of the world!

He who asserts the doctrine of Necessity means that, contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or act in any other place than it does act. The idea of necessity is obtained by our experience of the connection between objects, the uniformity of the operations of nature, the constant conjunction of similar events, and the consequent inference of one from the other. Mankind are therefore agreed in the admission of necessity, if they admit that these two circumstances take place in voluntary action. Motive is to voluntary action in the human mind what cause is to effect in the material universe. The word liberty, as applied to mind, is analogous to the word chance as applied to matter: they spring from an ignorance of the certainty of the conjunction of antecedents and consequents.

Every human being is irresistibly impelled to act precisely as he does act: in the eternity which preceded his birth a chain of causes was generated, which, operating under the name of motives, make it impossible that any thought of his mind, or any action of his life, should be otherwise than it is. Were the doctrine of Necessity false, the human mind would no longer be a legitimate object of science; from like causes it would be in vain that we should expect like effects; the strongest motive would no longer be paramount over the conduct; all knowledge would be vague and undeterminate; we could not predict with any certainty that we might not meet as an

enemy to-morrow him with whom we have parted in friendship to-night; the most probable inducements and the clearest reasonings would lose the invariable influence they possess. The contrary of this is demonstrably the fact. Similar circumstances produce the same unvariable effects. The precise character and motives of any man on any occasion being given, the moral philosopher could predict his actions with as much certainty as the natural philosopher could predict the effects of the mixture of any particular chemical substances. Why is the aged husbandman more experienced than the young beginner? Because there is a uniform, undeniable necessity in the operations of the material universe. Why is the old statesman more skilful than the raw politician? Because, relying on the necessary conjunction of motive and action, he proceeds to produce moral effects, by the application of those moral causes which experience has shown to be effectual. Some actions may be found to which we can attach no motives, but these are the effects of causes with which we are unacquainted. Hence the relation which motive bears to voluntary action is that of cause to effect; nor, placed in this point of view, is it, or ever has it been, the subject of popular or philosophical dispute. None but the few fanatics who are engaged in the herculean task of reconciling the justice of their God with the misery of man, will longer outrage common sense by the supposition of an event without a cause, a voluntary action without a motive. History, politics, morals, criticism, all grounds of reasonings, all principles of science, alike assume the truth of the doctrine of Necessity. No farmer carrying his corn to market doubts the sale of it at the market price. The

master of a manufactory no more doubts that he can purchase the human labour necessary for his purposes than that his machinery will act as they have been accustomed to act.

But, whilst none have scrupled to admit necessity as influencing matter, many have disputed its dominion over mind. Independently of its militating with the received ideas of the justice of God, it is by no means obvious to a superficial inquiry. When the mind observes its own operations, it feels no connection of motive and action: but as we know 'nothing more of causation than the constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other, as we find that these two circumstances are universally allowed to have place in voluntary action, we may be easily led to own that they are subjected to the necessity common to all causes.' The actions of the will have a regular conjunction with circumstances and characters; motive is to voluntary action what cause is to effect. But the only idea we can form of causation is a constant conjunction of similar objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other: wherever this is the case necessity is clearly established.

The idea of liberty, applied metaphorically to the will, has sprung from a misconception of the meaning of the word power. What is power?—*id quod potest*, that which can produce any given effect. To deny power is to say that nothing can or has the power to be or act. In the only true sense of the word power, it applies with equal force to the lodestone as to the human will. Do you think these motives, which I shall present, are powerful enough to rouse him? is a question just as common as, Do you think this lever has the power of raising this weight? The

advocates of free-will assert that the will has the power of refusing to be determined by the strongest motive: but the strongest motive is that which, overcoming all others, ultimately prevails; this assertion therefore amounts to a denial of the will being ultimately determined by that motive which does determine it, which is absurd. But it is equally certain that a man cannot resist the strongest motive as that he cannot overcome a physical impossibility.

The doctrine of Necessity tends to introduce a great change into the established notions of morality, and utterly to destroy religion. Reward and punishment must be considered, by the Necessarian, merely as motives which he would employ in order to procure the adoption or abandonment of any given line of conduct. Desert, in the present sense of the word, would no longer have any meaning; and he who should inflict pain upon another for no better reason than that he deserved it, would only gratify his revenge under pretence of satisfying justice? It is not enough, says the advocate of free-will, that a criminal should be prevented from a repetition of his crime: he should feel pain, and his torments, when justly inflicted, ought precisely to be proportioned to his fault. But utility is morality; that which is incapable of producing happiness is useless; and though the crime of Damians must be condemned, yet the frightful torments which revenge, under the name of justice, inflicted on this unhappy man cannot be supposed to have augmented, even at the long run, the stock of pleasurable sensation in the world. At the same time, the doctrine of Necessity does not in the least diminish our disapprobation of vice. The conviction which all feel that a viper is a

poisonous animal, and that a tiger is constrained, by the inevitable condition of his existence, to devour men, does not induce us to avoid them less sedulously, or, even more, to hesitate in destroying them: but he would surely be of a hard heart who, meeting with a serpent on a desert island, or in a situation where it was incapable of injury, should wantonly deprive it of existence. A Necessarian is inconsequent to his own principles if he indulges in hatred or contempt; the compassion which he feels for the criminal is unmixed with a desire of injuring him: he looks with an elevated and dreadless composure upon the links of the universal chain as they pass before his eyes; whilst cowardice, curiosity, and inconsistency only assail him in proportion to the feebleness and indistinctness with which he has perceived and rejected the delusions of free-will.

Religion is the perception of the relation in which we stand to the principle of the universe. But if the principle of the universe be not an organic being, the model and prototype of man, the relation between it and human beings is absolutely none. Without some insight into its will respecting our actions religion is nugatory and vain. But will is only a mode of animal mind; moral qualities also are such as only a human being can possess; to attribute them to the principle of the universe is to annex to it properties incompatible with any possible definition of its nature. It is probable that the word God was originally only an expression denoting the unknown cause of the known events which men perceived in the universe. By the vulgar mistake of a metaphor for a real being, of a word for a thing, it became a man, endowed with human qualities and governing

the universe as an earthly monarch governs his kingdom. Their addresses to this imaginary being, indeed, are much in the same style as those of subjects to a king. They acknowledge his benevolence, deprecate his anger, and supplicate his favour.

But the doctrine of Necessity teaches us that in no case could any event have happened otherwise than it did happen, and that, if God is the author of good, He is also the author of evil; that, if He is entitled to our gratitude for the one, He is entitled to our hatred for the other; that, admitting the existence of this hypothetic being, He is also subjected to the dominion of an immutable necessity. It is plain that the same arguments which prove that God is the author of food, light, and life, prove Him also to be the author of poison, darkness, and death. The wide-wasting earthquake, the storm, the battle, and the tyranny, are attributable to this hypothetic being in the same degree as the fairest forms of nature, sunshine, liberty, and peace.

But we are taught, by the doctrine of Necessity, that there is neither good nor evil in the universe, otherwise than as the events to which we apply these epithets have relation to our own peculiar mode of being. Still less than with the hypothesis of a God will the doctrine of Necessity accord with the belief of a future state of punishment. God made man such as he is, and then damned him for being so: for to say that God was the author of all good, and man the author of all evil, is to say that one man made a straight line and a crooked one, and another man made the incongruity.

A Mahometan story, much to the present purpose, is recorded, wherein Adam and Moses are introduced disputing before God in the following

manner. Thou, says Moses, art Adam, whom God created, and animated with the breath of life, and caused to be worshipped by the angels, and placed in Paradise, from whence mankind have been expelled for thy fault. Whereto Adam answered, Thou art Moses, whom God chose for His apostle, and entrusted with His word, by giving thee the tables of the law, and whom He vouchsafed to admit to discourse with Himself. How many years dost thou find the law was written before I was created? Says Moses, Forty. And dost thou not find, replied Adam, these words therein, And Adam rebelled against his Lord and transgressed? Which Moses confessing, Dost thou therefore blame me, continued he, for doing that which God wrote of me that I should do, forty years before I was created, nay, for what was decreed concerning me fifty thousand years before the creation of heaven and earth?—Sale's *Prelim. Disc. to the Koran*, p. 164.

VII. 13:—

There is no God.

This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit co-eternal with the universe remains unshaken.

A close examination of the validity of the proofs adduced to support any proposition is the only secure way of attaining truth, on the advantages of which it is unnecessary to descant: our knowledge of the existence of a Deity is a subject of such importance that it cannot be too minutely investigated; in consequence of this conviction we proceed briefly and impartially to examine the proofs which have been adduced. It is necessary first to consider the nature of belief.

When a proposition is offered to the mind, it perceives the agreement or disagreement of the ideas of which it is composed. A perception of their agreement is termed *belief*. Many obstacles frequently prevent this perception from being immediate; these the mind attempts to remove in order that the perception may be distinct. The mind is active in the investigation in order to perfect the state of perception of the relation which the component ideas of the proposition bear to each, which is passive: the investigation being confused with the perception has induced many falsely to imagine that the mind is active in belief,—that belief is an act of volition,—in consequence of which it may be regulated by the mind. Pursuing, continuing this mistake, they have attached a degree of criminality to disbelief; of which, in its nature, it is incapable: it is equally incapable of merit.

Belief, then, is a passion, the strength of which, like every other passion, is in precise proportion to the degrees of excitement.

The degrees of excitement are three.

The senses are the sources of all knowledge to the mind; consequently their evidence claims the strongest assent.

The decision of the mind, founded upon our own experience, derived from these sources, claims the next degree.

The experience of others, which addresses itself to the former one, occupies the lowest degree.

(A graduated scale, on which should be marked the capabilities of propositions to approach to the test of the senses, would be a just barometer of the belief which ought to be attached to them.)

Consequently no testimony can be admitted which is contrary to reason;

reason is founded on the evidence of our senses.

Every proof may be referred to one of these three divisions: it is to be considered what arguments we receive from each of them, which should convince us of the existence of a Deity.

1st, The evidence of the senses. If the Deity should appear to us, if He should convince our senses of His existence, this revelation would necessarily command belief. Those to whom the Deity has thus appeared have the strongest possible conviction of His existence. But the God of Theologians is incapable of local visibility.

2d, Reason. It is urged that man knows that whatever is must either have had a beginning, or have existed from all eternity: he also knows that whatever is not eternal must have had a cause. When this reasoning is applied to the universe, it is necessary to prove that it was created: until that is clearly demonstrated we may reasonably suppose that it has endured from all eternity. We must prove design before we can infer a designer. The only idea which we can form of causation is derivable from the constant conjunction of objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other. In a case where two propositions are diametrically opposite, the mind believes that which is least incomprehensible;—it is easier to suppose that the universe has existed from all eternity than to conceive a being beyond its limits capable of creating it: if the mind sinks beneath the weight of one, is it an alleviation to increase the intolerability of the burthen?

The other argument, which is founded on a man's knowledge of his own existence, stands thus. A man knows not only that he now is, but that once he

was not; consequently there must have been a cause. But our idea of causation is alone derivable from the constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other; and, reasoning experimentally, we can only infer from effects causes exactly adequate to those effects. But there certainly is a generative power which is effected by certain instruments: we cannot prove that it is inherent in these instruments; nor is the contrary hypothesis capable of demonstration: we admit that the generative power is incomprehensible; but to suppose that the same effect is produced by an eternal, omniscient, omnipotent being leaves the cause in the same obscurity, but renders it more incomprehensible.

3d, Testimony. It is required that testimony should not be contrary to reason. The testimony that the Deity convinces the senses of men of His existence can only be admitted by us if our mind considers it less probable that these men should have been deceived than that the Deity should have appeared to them. Our reason can never admit the testimony of men, who not only declare that they were eye-witnesses of miracles, but that the Deity was irrational; for He commanded that He should be believed, He proposed the highest rewards for faith, eternal punishments for disbelief. We can only command voluntary actions; belief is not an act of volition; the mind is even passive, or involuntarily active; from this it is evident that we have no sufficient testimony, or rather that testimony is insufficient to prove the being of a God. It has been before shown that it cannot be deduced from reason. They alone, then, who have been convinced by the evidence of the senses can believe it.

Hence it is evident that, having no

proofs from either of the three sources of conviction, the mind *cannot* believe the existence of a creative God: it is also evident that, as belief is a passion of the mind, no degree of criminality is attachable to disbelief; and that they only are reprehensible who neglect to remove the false medium through which their mind views any subject of discussion. Every reflecting mind must acknowledge that there is no proof of the existence of a Deity.

God is an hypothesis, and, as such, stands in need of proof: the *onus probandi* rests on the theist. Sir Isaac Newton says: *Hypotheses non fingo, quicquid enim ex phaenomenis non deducitur hypothesis vocanda est, et hypothesis vel metaphysicae, vel physicae, vel qualitatum occultarum, seu mechanicae, in philosophia locum non habent.* To all proofs of the existence of a creative God apply this valuable rule. We see a variety of bodies possessing a variety of powers: we merely know their effects; we are in a state of ignorance with respect to their essences and causes. These Newton calls the phenomena of things; but the pride of philosophy is unwilling to admit its ignorance of their causes. From the phenomena, which are the objects of our senses, we attempt to infer a cause, which we call God, and gratuitously endow it with all negative and contradictory qualities. From this hypothesis we invent this general name, to conceal our ignorance of causes and essences. The being called God by no means answers with the conditions prescribed by Newton; it bears every mark of a veil woven by philosophical conceit, to hide the ignorance of philosophers even from themselves. They borrow the threads of its texture from the anthropomorphism of the vulgar. Words have been used by sophists for the same

purposes, from the occult qualities of the peripatetics to the *effluviu*m of Boyle and the *crinities* or *nebulæ* of Herschel. God is represented as infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; He is contained under every *predicate in non* that the logic of ignorance could fabricate. Even His worshippers allow that it is impossible to form any idea of Him: they exclaim with the French poet,

Pour dire ce qu'il est, il faut être lui-même.

Lord Bacon says that atheism leaves to man reason, philosophy, natural piety, laws, reputation, and everything that can serve to conduct him to virtue; but superstition destroys all these, and erects itself into a tyranny over the understandings of men: hence atheism never disturbs the government, but renders man more clear-sighted, since he sees nothing beyond the boundaries of the present life.—Bacon's *Moral Essays*.

La première théologie de l'homme lui fit d'abord craindre et adorer les éléments même, des objets matériels et grossiers; il rendit ensuite ses hommages à des agents présidant aux éléments, à des génies inférieurs, à des héros, ou à des hommes doués de grandes qualités. A force de réfléchir il crut simplifier les choses en soumettant la nature entière à un seul agent, à un esprit, à une âme universelle, qui mettait cette nature et ses parties en mouvement. En remontant de causes en causes, les mortels ont fini par ne rien voir; et c'est dans cette obscurité qu'ils ont placé leur Dieu; c'est dans cet abîme ténébreux que leur imagination inquiète travaille toujours à se fabriquer des chimères, qui les affligeront jusqu'à ce que la connaissance de la nature les détrompe

des fantômes qu'ils ont toujours si vainement adorés.

Si nous voulons nous rendre compte de nos idées sur la Divinité, nous serons obligés de convenir que, par le mot *Dieu*, les hommes n'ont jamais pu désigner que la cause la plus cachée, la plus éloignée, la plus inconnue des effets qu'ils voyaient: ils ne font usage de ce mot, que lorsque le jeu des causes naturelles et connues cesse d'être visible pour eux; dès qu'ils perdent le fil de ces causes, ou dès que leur esprit ne peut plus en suivre la chaîne, ils tranchent leur difficulté, et terminent leurs recherches en appelant Dieu la dernière des causes, c'est-à-dire celle qui est au-delà de toutes les causes qu'ils connaissent; ainsi ils ne font qu'assigner une dénomination vague à une cause ignorée, à laquelle leur paresse ou les bornes de leurs connaissances les forcent de s'arrêter. Toutes les fois qu'on nous dit que Dieu est l'auteur de quelque phénomène, cela signifie qu'on ignore comment un tel phénomène a pu s'opérer par le secours des forces ou des causes que nous connaissons dans la nature. C'est ainsi que le commun des hommes, dont l'ignorance est le partage, attribue à la Divinité non seulement les effets inusités qui les frappent, mais encore les évènements les plus simples, dont les causes sont les plus faciles à connaître pour quiconque a pu les méditer. En un mot, l'homme a toujours respecté les causes inconnues des effets surprenans, que son ignorance l'empêchait de démêler. Ce fut sur les débris de la nature que les hommes élevèrent le colosse imaginaire de la Divinité.

Si l'ignorance de la nature donna la naissance aux dieux, la connaissance de la nature est faite pour les détruire. A mesure que l'homme s'instruit, ses forces et ses ressources augmentent

avec ses lumières ; les sciences, les arts conservateurs, l'industrie, lui fournissent des secours ; l'expérience le rassure ou lui procure des moyens de résister aux efforts de bien des causes qui cessent de l'alarmer dès qu'il les a connues. En un mot, ses terreurs se dissipent dans la même proportion que son esprit s'éclaire. L'homme instruit cesse d'être superstitieux.

Ce n'est jamais que sur parole que des peuples entiers adorent le Dieu de leurs pères et de leurs prêtres : l'autorité, la confiance, la soumission, et l'habitude leur tiennent lieu de conviction et de preuves ; ils se prosternent et prient, parce que leurs pères leur ont appris à se prosterner et prier : mais pourquoi ceux-ci se sont-ils mis à genoux ? C'est que dans les temps éloignés leurs législateurs et leurs guides leur en ont fait un devoir. 'Adorez et croyez,' ont-ils dit, 'des dieux que vous ne pouvez comprendre ; rapportez-vous-en à notre sagesse profonde ; nous en savons plus que vous sur la divinité.' Mais pourquoi m'en rapporterais-je à vous ? C'est que Dieu le veut ainsi, c'est que Dieu vous punira si vous osez résister. Mais ce Dieu n'est-il donc pas la chose en question ? Cependant les hommes se sont toujours payés de ce cercle vicieux ; la paresse de leur esprit leur fit trouver plus court de s'en rapporter au jugement des autres. Toutes les notions religieuses sont fondées uniquement sur l'autorité ; toutes les religions du monde défendent l'examen et ne veulent pas que l'on raisonne ; c'est l'autorité qui veut qu'on croie en Dieu ; ce Dieu n'est lui-même fondé que sur l'autorité de quelques hommes qui prétendent le connaître, et venir de sa part pour l'annoncer à la terre. Un Dieu fait par les hommes a sans doute besoin des hommes pour se faire connaître aux hommes.

Ne serait-ce donc que pour des prêtres, des inspirés, des métaphysiciens que serait réservée la conviction de l'existence d'un Dieu, que l'on dit néanmoins si nécessaire à tout le genre humain ? Mais trouvons-nous de l'harmonie entre les opinions théologiques des différens inspirés, ou des penseurs répandus sur la terre ? Ceux même qui font profession d'adorer le même Dieu, sont-ils d'accord sur son compte ? Sont-ils contents des preuves que leurs collègues apportent de son existence ? Souscrivent-ils unanimement aux idées qu'ils présentent sur sa nature, sur sa conduite, sur la façon d'entendre ses prétendus oracles ? Est-il une contrée sur la terre où la science de Dieu se soit réellement perfectionnée ? A-t-elle pris quelque part la consistance et l'uniformité que nous voyons prendre aux connaissances humaines, aux arts les plus futiles, aux métiers les plus méprisés ? Ces mots d'*esprit*, d'*immaterialité*, de *création*, de *prédestination*, de *grâce* ; cette foule de distinctions subtiles dont la théologie s'est partout remplie dans quelques pays, ces inventions si ingénieuses, imaginées par des penseurs qui se sont succédés depuis tant de siècles, n'ont fait, hélas ! qu'embrouiller les choses, et jamais la science la plus nécessaire aux hommes n'a jusqu'ici pu acquérir la moindre fixité. Depuis des milliers d'années ces rêveurs oisifs se sont perpétuellement relayés pour méditer la Divinité, pour deviner ses voies cachées, pour inventer des hypothèses propres à développer cette énigme importante. Leur peu de succès n'a point découragé la vanité théologique ; toujours on a parlé de Dieu : on s'est égorgé pour lui, et cet être sublime demeure toujours le plus ignoré et le plus discuté.

Les hommes auraient été trop heureux, si, se bornant aux objets

visibles qui les intéressent, ils eussent employé à perfectionner leurs sciences réelles, leurs loix, leur morale, leur éducation, la moitié des efforts qu'ils ont mis dans leurs recherches sur la Divinité. Ils auraient été bien plus sages encore, et plus fortunés, s'ils eussent pu consentir à laisser leurs guides désœuvrés se quereller entre eux, et sonder des profondeurs capables de les étourdir, sans se mêler de leurs disputes insensées. Mais il est de l'essence de l'ignorance d'attacher de l'importance à ce qu'elle ne comprend pas. La vanité humaine fait que l'esprit se roidit contre des difficultés. Plus un objet se dérobe à nos yeux, plus nous faisons d'efforts pour le saisir, parce que dès-lors il aiguillonne notre orgueil, il excite notre curiosité, il nous paraît intéressant. En combattant pour son Dieu chacun ne combattit en effet que pour les intérêts de sa propre vanité, qui de toutes les passions produites par la mal-organisation de la société est la plus prompte à s'alarmer, et la plus propre à produire de très grandes folies.

Si écartant pour un moment les idées fâcheuses que la théologie nous donne d'un Dieu capricieux, dont les décrets partiels et despotiques décident du sort des humains, nous ne voulons fixer nos yeux que sur la bonté prétendue, que tous les hommes, même en tremblant devant ce Dieu, s'accordent à lui donner ; si nous lui supposons le projet qu'on lui prête de n'avoir travaillé que pour sa propre gloire, d'exiger les hommages des êtres intelligens ; de ne chercher dans ses œuvres que le bien-être du genre humain : comment concilier ces vues et ces dispositions avec l'ignorance vraiment invincible dans laquelle ce Dieu, si glorieux et si bon, laisse la plupart des hommes sur son compte ? Si Dieu veut être connu, chéri, remercié, que ne se montre-t-il

sous des traits favorables à tous ces êtres intelligens dont il veut être aimé et adoré ? Pourquoi ne point se manifester à toute la terre d'une façon non équivoque, bien plus capable de nous convaincre que ces révélations particulières qui semblent accuser la Divinité d'une partialité fâcheuse pour quelques-unes de ses créatures ? Le tout-puissant n'auroit-il donc pas des moyens plus convainquans de se montrer aux hommes que ces métamorphoses ridicules, ces incarnations prétendues, qui nous sont attestées par des écrivains si peu d'accord entre eux dans les récits qu'ils en font ? Au lieu de tant de miracles, inventés pour prouver la mission divine de tant de législateurs révéérés par les différens peuples du monde, le souverain des esprits ne pouvait-il pas convaincre tout d'un coup l'esprit humain des choses qu'il a voulu lui faire connaître ? Au lieu de suspendre un soleil dans la voûte du firmament ; au lieu de répandre sans ordre les étoiles et les constellations qui remplissent l'espace, n'eût-il pas été plus conforme aux vues d'un Dieu si jaloux de sa gloire et si bien-intentionné pour l'homme d'écrire, d'une façon non sujette à dispute, son nom, ses attributs, ses volontés permanentes en caractères ineffaçables, et lisibles également pour tous les habitans de la terre ? Personne alors n'aurait pu douter de l'existence d'un Dieu, de ses volontés claires, de ses intentions visibles. Sous les yeux de ce Dieu si terrible, personne n'aurait eu l'audace de violer ses ordonnances ; nul mortel n'eût osé se mettre dans le cas d'attirer sa colère : enfin nul homme n'eût eu le front d'en imposer en son nom, ou d'interpréter ses volontés suivant ses propres fantaisies.

En effet, quand même on admettrait l'existence du Dieu théologique et la réalité des attributs si discordans qu'on

lui donne, l'on n'en peut rien conclure, pour autoriser la conduite ou les cultes qu'on prescrit de lui rendre. La théologie est vraiment *le tonneau des Danaïdes*. A force de qualités contradictoires et d'assertions hasardées, elle a, pour ainsi dire, tellement garrotté son Dieu qu'elle l'a mis dans l'impossibilité d'agir. S'il est infiniment bon, quelle raison aurions-nous de le craindre? S'il est infiniment sage, de quoi nous inquiéter sur notre sort? S'il sait tout, pourquoi l'avertir de nos besoins, et le fatiguer de nos prières? S'il est partout, pourquoi lui élever des temples? S'il est maître de tout, pourquoi lui faire des sacrifices et des offrandes? S'il est juste, comment croire qu'il punisse des créatures qu'il a rempli de faiblesses? Si la grâce fait tout en elles, quelle raison aurait-il de les récompenser? S'il est tout-puissant, comment l'offenser, comment lui résister? S'il est raisonnable, comment se mettrait-il en colère contre des aveugles, à qui il a laissé la liberté de déraisonner? S'il est immuable, de quel droit prétendrions-nous faire changer ses décrets? S'il est inconcevable, pourquoi nous en occuper?

S'IL A PARLÉ, POURQUOI L'UNIVERS N'EST-IL PAS CONVAINCU?

Si la connaissance d'un Dieu est la plus nécessaire, pourquoi n'est-elle pas la plus évidente et la plus claire?

—*Système de la Nature*. London, 1781.

The enlightened and benevolent Pliny thus publicly professes himself an atheist:—Quapropter effigiem Dei formamque quaerere imbecillitatis humanae reor. Quisquis est Deus (si modo est alius) et quacunque in parte, totus est sensus, totus est visus, totus auditus, totus animae, totus animi, totus sui. . . . Imperfectae vero in homine naturae praecipua solatia ne

deum quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, si velit, quod homini dedit optimum in tantis vitae poenis: nec mortales aeternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos; nec facere ut qui vixit non vixerit, qui honores gessit non gesserit, nullumque habere in praeteritum ius, praeterquam oblivionis, atque (ut facetis quoque argumentis societas haec cum deo copuletur) ut bis dena viginti non sint, et multa similiter efficere non posse.—Per quae declaratur haud dubie naturae potentiam id quoque esse quod Deum vocamus.—Plin. *Nat. Hist.* cap. de Deo.

The consistent Newtonian is necessarily an atheist. See Sir W. Drummond's *Academical Questions*, chap. iii. —Sir W. seems to consider the atheism to which it leads as a sufficient presumption of the falsehood of the system of gravitation; but surely it is more consistent with the good faith of philosophy to admit a deduction from facts than an hypothesis incapable of proof, although it might militate with the obstinate preconceptions of the mob. Had this author, instead of inveighing against the guilt and absurdity of atheism, demonstrated its falsehood, his conduct would have been more suited to the modesty of the sceptic and the toleration of the philosopher.

Omnia enim per Dei potentiam facta sunt: imo quia naturae potentia nulla est nisi ipsa Dei potentia. Certum est nos eatenus Dei potentiam non intelligere, quatenus causas naturales ignoramus; adeoque stulte ad eandem Dei potentiam recurritur, quando rei alicuius causam naturalem, sive est, ipsam Dei potentiam ignoramus.—Spinoza, *Tract. Theologico-Pol.* chap. i, p. 14.

VII. 67 :—

Ahasuerus, rise!

‘Ahasuerus the Jew crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel. Near two thousand years have elapsed since he was first goaded by never-ending restlessness to rove the globe from pole to pole. When our Lord was wearied with the burthen of His ponderous cross, and wanted to rest before the door of Ahasuerus, the unfeeling wretch drove Him away with brutality. The Saviour of mankind staggered, sinking under the heavy load, but uttered no complaint. An angel of death appeared before Ahasuerus, and exclaimed indignantly, “Barbarian! thou hast denied rest to the Son of man: be it denied thee also, until He comes to judge the world.”

‘A black demon, let loose from hell upon Ahasuerus, goads him now from country to country; he is denied the consolation which death affords, and precluded from the rest of the peaceful grave.

‘Ahasuerus crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel—he shook the dust from his beard—and taking up one of the skulls heaped there, hurled it down the eminence: it rebounded from the earth in shivered atoms. “This was my father!” roared Ahasuerus. Seven more skulls rolled down from rock to rock; while the infuriate Jew, following them with ghastly looks, exclaimed—“And these were my wives!” He still continued to hurl down skull after skull, roaring in dreadful accents—“And these, and these, and these were my children! They *could die*; but I! reprobate wretch! alas! I cannot die! Dreadful beyond conception is the judgement that hangs over me. Jerusalem fell—I crushed the sucking babe, and pre-

cipitated myself into the destructive flames. I cursed the Romans—but, alas! alas! the restless curse held me by the hair,—and I could not die!

“Rome the giantess fell—I placed myself before the falling statue—she fell and did not crush me. Nations sprang up and disappeared before me;—but I remained and did not die. From cloud-encircled cliffs did I precipitate myself into the ocean; but the foaming billows cast me upon the shore, and the burning arrow of existence pierced my cold heart again. I leaped into Etna’s flaming abyss, and roared with the giants for ten long months, polluting with my groans the Mount’s sulphureous mouth—ah! ten long months. The volcano fermented, and in a fiery stream of lava cast me up. I lay torn by the torture-snakes of hell amid the glowing cinders, and yet continued to exist.—A forest was on fire: I darted on wings of fury and despair into the crackling wood. Fire dropped upon me from the trees, but the flames only singed my limbs; alas! it could not consume them.—I now mixed with the butchers of mankind, and plunged in the tempest of the raging battle. I roared defiance to the infuriate Gaul, defiance to the victorious German; but arrows and spears rebounded in shivers from my body. The Saracen’s flaming sword broke upon my skull: balls in vain hissed upon me: the lightnings of battle glared harmless around my loins: in vain did the elephant trample on me, in vain the iron hoof of the wrathful steed! The mine, big with destructive power, burst upon me, and hurled me high in the air—I fell on heaps of smoking limbs, but was only singed. The giant’s steel club rebounded from my body; the executioner’s hand could not strangle me, the tiger’s tooth could not pierce me,

nor would the hungry lion in the circus devour me. I cohabited with poisonous snakes, and pinched the red crest of the dragon.—The serpent stung, but could not destroy me. The dragon tormented, but dared not to devour me.—I now provoked the fury of tyrants: I said to Nero, 'Thou art a bloodhound!' I said to Christiern, 'Thou art a bloodhound!' I said to Muley Ismail, 'Thou art a bloodhound!'—The tyrants invented cruel torments, but did not kill me.—Ha! not to be able to die—not to be able to die—not to be permitted to rest after the toils of life—to be doomed to be imprisoned for ever in the clay-formed dungeon—to be for ever clogged with this worthless body, its load of diseases and infirmities—to be condemned to [be]hold for millenniums that yawning monster Sameness, and Time, that hungry hyaena, ever bearing children, and ever devouring again her offspring!—Ha! not to be permitted to die! Awful Avenger in Heaven, hast Thou in Thine armoury of wrath a punishment more dreadful? then let it thunder upon me, command a hurricane to sweep me down to the foot of Carmel, that I there may lie extended; may pant, and writhe, and die!"

This fragment is the translation of part of some German work, whose title I have vainly endeavoured to discover. I picked it up, dirty and torn, some years ago, in Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

VII. 135, 136:—

*I will beget a Son, and He shall bear
The sins of all the world.*

A book is put into our hands when children, called the Bible, the purport of whose history is briefly this: That God made the earth in six days, and there planted a delightful garden, in which He placed the first pair of human

beings. In the midst of the garden He planted a tree, whose fruit, although within their reach, they were forbidden to touch. That the Devil, in the shape of a snake, persuaded them to eat of this fruit; in consequence of which God condemned both them and their posterity yet unborn to satisfy His justice by their eternal misery. That, four thousand years after these events (the human race in the meanwhile having gone unredeemed to perdition), God engendered with the betrothed wife of a carpenter in Judea (whose virginity was nevertheless uninjured), and begat a son, whose name was Jesus Christ; and who was crucified and died, in order that no more men might be devoted to hell-fire, He bearing the burthen of His Father's displeasure by proxy. The book states, in addition, that the soul of whoever disbelieves this sacrifice will be burned with everlasting fire.

During many ages of misery and darkness this story gained implicit belief; but at length men arose who suspected that it was a fable and imposture, and that Jesus Christ, so far from being a God, was only a man like themselves. But a numerous set of men, who derived and still derive immense emoluments from this opinion, in the shape of a popular belief, told the vulgar that if they did not believe in the Bible they would be damned to all eternity; and burned, imprisoned, and poisoned all the unbiassed and unconnected inquirers who occasionally arose. They still oppress them, so far as the people, now become more enlightened, will allow.

The belief in all that the Bible contains is called Christianity. A Roman governor of Judea, at the instance of a priest-led mob, crucified a man called Jesus eighteen centuries ago. He was a man of pure life, who desired to

rescue his countrymen from the tyranny of their barbarous and degrading superstitions. The common fate of all who desire to benefit mankind awaited him. The rabble, at the instigation of the priests, demanded his death, although his very judge made public acknowledgement of his innocence. Jesus was sacrificed to the honour of that God with whom he was afterwards confounded. It is of importance, therefore, to distinguish between the pretended character of this being as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and his real character as a man, who, for a vain attempt to reform the world, paid the forfeit of his life to that overbearing tyranny which has since so long desolated the universe in his name. Whilst the one is a hypocritical Daemon, who announces Himself as the God of compassion and peace, even whilst He stretches forth His blood-red hand with the sword of discord to waste the earth, having confessedly devised this scheme of desolation from eternity; the other stands in the foremost list of those true heroes who have died in the glorious martyrdom of liberty, and have braved torture, contempt, and poverty in the cause of suffering humanity¹.

The vulgar, ever in extremes, became persuaded that the crucifixion of Jesus was a supernatural event. Testimonies of miracles, so frequent in unenlightened ages, were not wanting to prove that he was something divine. This belief, rolling through the lapse of ages, met with the reveries of Plato and the reasonings of Aristotle, and acquired force and extent, until

¹ Since writing this note I have some reason to suspect that Jesus was an ambitious man, who aspired to the throne of Judea.

the divinity of Jesus became a dogma, which to dispute was death, which to doubt was infamy.

Christianity is now the established religion: he who attempts to impugn it must be contented to behold murderers and traitors take precedence of him in public opinion; though, if his genius be equal to his courage, and assisted by a peculiar coalition of circumstances, future ages may exalt him to a divinity, and persecute others in his name, as he was persecuted in the name of his predecessor in the homage of the world.

The same means that have supported every other popular belief have supported Christianity. War, imprisonment, assassination, and falsehood; deeds of unexampled and incomparable atrocity have made it what it is. The blood shed by the votaries of the God of mercy and peace, since the establishment of His religion, would probably suffice to drown all other sectaries now on the habitable globe. We derive from our ancestors a faith thus fostered and supported: we quarrel, persecute, and hate for its maintenance. Even under a government which, whilst it infringes the very right of thought and speech, boasts of permitting the liberty of the press, a man is pilloried and imprisoned because he is a deist, and no one raises his voice in the indignation of outraged humanity. But it is ever a proof that the falsehood of a proposition is felt by those who use coercion, not reasoning, to procure its admission; and a dispassionate observer would feel himself more powerfully interested in favour of a man who, depending on the truth of his opinions, simply stated his reasons for entertaining them, than in that of his aggressor who, daringly avowing his unwillingness or incapacity to answer them by argument, proceeded to repress

the energies and break the spirit of their promulgator by that torture and imprisonment whose infliction he could command.

Analogy seems to favour the opinion that as, like other systems, Christianity has arisen and augmented, so like them it will decay and perish; that as violence, darkness, and deceit, not reasoning and persuasion, have procured its admission among mankind, so, when enthusiasm has subsided, and time, that infallible controverter of false opinions, has involved its pretended evidences in the darkness of antiquity, it will become obsolete; that Milton's poem alone will give permanency to the remembrance of its absurdities; and that men will laugh as heartily at grace, faith, redemption, and original sin, as they now do at the metamorphoses of Jupiter, the miracles of Romish saints, the efficacy of witchcraft, and the appearance of departed spirits.

Had the Christian religion commenced and continued by the mere force of reasoning and persuasion, the preceding analogy would be inadmissible. We should never speculate on the future obsolescence of a system perfectly conformable to nature and reason: it would endure so long as they endured; it would be a truth as indisputable as the light of the sun, the criminality of murder, and other facts, whose evidence, depending on our organization and relative situations, must remain acknowledged as satisfactory so long as man is man. It is an incontrovertible fact, the consideration of which ought to repress the hasty conclusions of credulity, or moderate its obstinacy in maintaining them, that, had the Jews not been a fanatical race of men, had even the resolution of Pontius Pilate been equal to his candour, the Christian religion

never could have prevailed, it could not even have existed: on so feeble a thread hangs the most cherished opinion of a sixth of the human race! When will the vulgar learn humility? When will the pride of ignorance blush at having believed before it could comprehend?

Either the Christian religion is true, or it is false: if true, it comes from God, and its authenticity can admit of doubt and dispute no further than its omnipotent author is willing to allow. Either the power or the goodness of God is called in question, if He leaves those doctrines most essential to the well-being of man in doubt and dispute; the only ones which, since their promulgation, have been the subject of unceasing cavil, the cause of irreconcilable hatred. *If God has spoken, why is the universe not convinced?*

There is this passage in the Christian Scriptures: 'Those who obey not God, and believe not the Gospel of his Son, shall be punished with everlasting destruction.' This is the pivot upon which all religions turn: they all assume that it is in our power to believe or not to believe; whereas the mind can only believe that which it thinks true. A human being can only be supposed accountable for those actions which are influenced by his will. But belief is utterly distinct from and unconnected with volition: it is the apprehension of the agreement or disagreement of the ideas that compose any proposition. Belief is a passion, or involuntary operation of the mind, and, like other passions, its intensity is precisely proportionate to the degrees of excitement. Volition is essential to merit or demerit. But the Christian religion attaches the highest possible degrees of merit and demerit to that which is worthy of neither, and which is totally uncon-

nected with the peculiar faculty of the mind, whose presence is essential to their being.

Christianity was intended to reform the world: had an all-wise Being planned it, nothing is more improbable than that it should have failed: omniscience would infallibly have foreseen the inutility of a scheme which experience demonstrates, to this age, to have been utterly unsuccessful.

Christianity inculcates the necessity of supplicating the Deity. Prayer may be considered under two points of view;—as an endeavour to change the intentions of God, or as a formal testimony of our obedience. But the former case supposes that the caprices of a limited intelligence can occasionally instruct the Creator of the world how to regulate the universe; and the latter, a certain degree of servility analogous to the loyalty demanded by earthly tyrants. Obedience indeed is only the pitiful and cowardly egotism of him who thinks that he can do something better than reason.

Christianity, like all other religions, rests upon miracles, prophecies, and martyrdoms. No religion ever existed which had not its prophets, its attested miracles, and, above all, crowds of devotees who would bear patiently the most horrible tortures to prove its authenticity. It should appear that in no case can a discriminating mind subscribe to the genuineness of a miracle. A miracle is an infraction of nature's law, by a supernatural cause; by a cause acting beyond that eternal circle within which all things are included. God breaks through the law of nature, that He may convince mankind of the truth of that revelation which, in spite of His precautions, has been, since its introduction, the subject of unceasing schism and cavil.

Miracles resolve themselves into the

following question¹:—Whether it is more probable the laws of nature, hitherto so immutably harmonious, should have undergone violation, or that a man should have told a lie? Whether it is more probable that we are ignorant of the natural cause of an event, or that we know the supernatural one? That, in old times, when the powers of nature were less known than at present, a certain set of men were themselves deceived, or had some hidden motive for deceiving others; or that God begat a Son, who, in His legislation, measuring merit by belief, evidenced Himself to be totally ignorant of the powers of the human mind—of what is voluntary, and what is the contrary?

We have many instances of men telling lies;—none of an infraction of nature's laws, those laws of whose government alone we have any knowledge or experience. The records of all nations afford innumerable instances of men deceiving others either from vanity or interest, or themselves being deceived by the limitedness of their views and their ignorance of natural causes: but where is the accredited case of God having come upon earth, to give the lie to His own creations? There would be something truly wonderful in the appearance of a ghost; but the assertion of a child that he saw one as he passed through the churchyard is universally admitted to be less miraculous.

But even supposing that a man should raise a dead body to life before our eyes, and on this fact rest his claim to being considered the son of God;—the Humane Society restores drowned persons, and because it makes no mystery of the method it employs, its members are not mistaken for the

¹ See Hume's *Essay*, vol. ii. p. 121.