The Months Illustrated

By

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MONTHS

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THE
MONTHS
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RICHARD
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THE MONTHS

ILLUSTRATED

BY PEN AND PENCIL.

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"It is truly a most Christian exercise to extract a sentiment of piety from the works and the appearances of Nature. It has the authority of the sacred writers upon its side, and even our Saviour Himself gives it the weight and the solemnity of His example. 'Behold the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet your Heavenly Father careth for them.' He expatiates on the beauty of a single flower, and draws from it the delightful argument of confidence in God. He gives us to see that taste may be combined with piety, and that the same heart may be occupied with all that is serious in the contemplations of Religion, and be at the same time alive to the charms and loveliness of Nature."—Dr. Chalmers.

CONTENTS.

		Page
List of Illustrations		ix
Hymn to the Seasons	*Thomson*	1

JANUARY.

A Winter Sabbath	*Grahame*	9
The New Year's Bells at Midnight	*Anon.*	10
Thoughts for New-Year's Day	*Bloomfield*	11
St. Agnes' Eve	*Tennyson*	12
A Winter Morning Walk	*Cowper*	13
The Woods in Winter	*Longfellow*	16
"Resurgam"	*Krummacher*	17
A Frost Scene	*Miss Mitford*	18
Times go by Turns	*Southwell*	22
The Snowdrop	*Keble*	23
Winter Walk at Noon	*Cowper*	24
Hymn for January	*Heber*	26

FEBRUARY.

Breaking up of Winter	*Clare*	29
February-fill-dike	*Miller*	31
To a Waterfowl	*Bryant*	32
The Beauties of Winter	*Bernard Barton*	33
Afternoon in February	*Longfellow*	34
The Ploughman	*Thomson*	35
The Winter Evening	*Cowper*	38
Hoar-Frost	*William Howitt*	39
Presages of Spring	*R. C. Trench*	40
To an Early Primrose	*Kirke White*	41
The Daisy	*Clare*	42
The Daisy	*Sutton*	42
The Daisy	*J. M. Good*	43
Hymn in Seed-time	*Heber*	44

MARCH.

The Gale	*Crabbe*	47
A Vernal Thought	*Hemans*	49
A Morning in March	*Wordsworth*	49
Felling Timber	*Miss Mitford*	50
Daffodils	*Robert Herrick*	52

		Page
The First Buds	*Longfellow*	53
The Storm	*Bishop Spencer*	54
Early Spring	*Clare*	56
Return of March	*Bryant*	56
Violets	*J. Moultrie*	58
The Sky-Lark	*Wordsworth*	59
The Sky-Lark	*Hogg*	59
On Gladness in Spring	*Addison*	60
The Reviving Influence of Spring	*Akenside*	61
Hymn for March	*Cowper*	62

APRIL.

Spring	*Chaucer, modernized by Warton*	65
Lessons of Returning Spring	*Keble*	66
Hedgerows in April	*N. P. Willis*	68
The Rainbow	*Keble*	69
Welcome to April	*Tennyson*	70
Young Lambs	*Dyer*	71
A Valley in Spring-time	*Coleridge*	73
Spring Flowers	*George Herbert*	74
The First Swallow	*C. Smith*	75
Early Piety	*Heber*	76
The Day of Flowers	*Hemans*	77
The Lily of the Valley	*M. A. Bacon*	79
Hymn for April	*"Lyra Germanica"*	80

MAY.

May Flowers	*W. Browne*	83
The Voice of Spring	*Hemans*	84
"The time of the singing of birds is come"	*Izaak Walton*	85
The Hawthorn	*W. Browne*	86
May Garlands	*"Lyra Innocentium"*	87
The Cuckoo	*Logan*	89
An Evening in May	*Izaak Walton*	90
Spring, and its Moral Analogies	*John Foster*	92
The Cowslip	*Clare*	94
The Cowslip	*James Montgomery*	95
Field Flowers	*Campbell*	96
Hymn for May	*"Lyra Germanica"*	97

JUNE.

The Advent of Summer	*Waller*	101
"Sweet Summer-time"	*William Motherwell*	102
The Beauty of Nature	*Keats*	103
The Cottager's Garden	*Crabbe*	104
Garden Thoughts	*Charlotte Elizabeth*	106

		Page
The Waterfall	*Wordsworth*	108
Wood Walk and Hymn	*Hemans*	110
A Day in June	*Longfellow*	112
Foliage	*Hemans*	113
"Sweet Rose"	*Hemans*	114
The Lily	*Mrs. Tighe*	115
The Butterfly	*Rogers*	116
Hymn for June	*Thomas Davis*	117

JULY.

Sultry Summer	*Clare*	121
Melodies of Morning	*Beattie*	122
Rain in Summer	*Longfellow*	122
Early Morning in Summer	*Bernard Barton*	125
A July Afternoon	*W. Allingham*	126
A July Evening	*Philip Bailey*	126
The River and the Rock	*Isaiah* xxxii. 2	128
Glow-worms	"*Summer-time in the Country*" *by Willmott*	129
The Jasmine	*Hemans*	131
The Jasmine	*Bernard Barton*	131
Summer Days	*A. K. H. B.*	132
The Evening Cloud	*Wilson*	133
Hymn for July	*James Ford*	133

AUGUST.

Goodness of God in Autumn	*Bishop Mant*	137
Autumn Thoughts	"*Summer-time in the Country*" *by Willmott*	138
Corn-fields	*Mary Howitt*	141
The Beauties of Nature Evanescent	*Heber*	143
The Reapers	*Thomson*	144
Rydal Water	*Wordsworth*	145
Rock-Pools	*Gosse's* "*Recreations of a Naturalist*"	146
Corn-flowers	*Various*	149
Forest Hymn	*Bryant*	150
The Rising Moon	*Peabody*	151
Hymn in Harvest	*Milman*	152

SEPTEMBER.

The Harvest-Moon	*Bishop Mant*	155
Lessons of Autumn	*Samuel Martin*	156
Reminiscences of Switzerland	*Rogers*	157
The Hour of Death	*Hemans*	160
George III. and the Dying Gipsy	*Crabbe*	161
The Gossamer	*L. Jermyn*	163
Lessons from the Gorse	*Mrs. Browning*	164
The Summer Shower	*T. B. Read*	165
Hymn for September	*George Herbert*	166

OCTOBER.

		Page
The Pleasures of Autumn	*Keats*	169
Forest Scenery in Autumn	*Thomson*	170
The Fields in October	*Mary Howitt*	171
Departure of the Swallows	*Hayley*	173
"We all do fade as a leaf"	*James Montgomery*	173
The Decay of Nature	*Miss Procter*	174
The Roman Campagna in Autumn	*Sydney Dobell*	175
"Earth's children cleave to earth"	*Bryant*	177
Autumn's Farewell	*Bryant*	178
Il Penseroso	*Milton*	178
The Autumn Crocus	*Anon.*	180
Autumnal Beauty	*Longfellow*	181
Hymn for October	*Anon.*	182

NOVEMBER.

Winter Sadness	*Kirke White*	185
The Death of the Flowers	*Bryant*	186
November Bonfires	*Pages from my Note-book*	187
Tweed-side in Winter	*Scott*	189
Calm Decay	*Keble*	190
Winter Tales	*Rogers*	191
Sonnet to Winter	*Hartley Coleridge*	193
A November Scene	*Cowper*	193
Winter Music	*Keats*	194
The Bramble	*Thomas Miller*	195
The Chrysanthemum	*"Literary Gazette"*	196
Hymn for November	*Keble*	196

DECEMBER.

Winter	*Cowper*	201
A Doubting Heart	*Miss Procter*	202
The First Snow	*Longfellow*	203
The Shepherds of Bethlehem	*St. Luke* ii. 8–14	204
The Holly-Tree	*Southey*	205
Christmas Bells	*Tennyson*	206
The Nativity	*Campbell*	207
Hymn for Christmas Morning	*Isaac Williams*	209
A Winter Evening at Home	*W. L. Bowles*	210
The Holly	*M. A. Bacon*	211
"Another Year"	*Robert Story*	212
Hymn for the Closing Year	*Horatius Bonar*	213
Conclusion	*Cowper*	215

INDEX OF FIRST LINES 221

ILLUSTRATIONS.

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JANUARY . . . . . *E. M. Wimperis* . 8

" He giveth snow like wool:
He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes."
Psalm cxlvii. 16.

A FARMYARD IN WINTER . . . . . *J. Gilbert* . . . 14

The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence
Screens them, and seem half-petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder.
Cowper.

THE SLIDE . . . . . *Robert Barnes* . . 19

There is a shouting from the deep, irregular pool, all glass now, where, on two long, smooth slides, half a dozen ragged urchins are slipping along in tottering triumph.
Miss Mitford.

THE SNOWDROP . . . . . *Noel Humphreys* . 23

Already now the snowdrop dares appear,
The first pale blossom of the unripened year.
Mrs. Barbauld.

OCTOBER.

		Page
The Pleasures of Autumn	*Keats*	169
Forest Scenery in Autumn	*Thomson*	170
The Fields in October	*Mary Howitt*	171
Departure of the Swallows	*Hayley*	173
"We all do fade as a leaf"	*James Montgomery*	173
The Decay of Nature	*Miss Procter*	174
The Roman Campagna in Autumn	*Sydney Dobell*	175
"Earth's children cleave to earth"	*Bryant*	177
Autumn's Farewell	*Bryant*	178
Il Penseroso	*Milton*	178
[illegible]	*Anon*	180

Hymn for November . . . . . .

DECEMBER.

Winter	*Cowper*	201
A Doubting Heart	*Miss Procter*	202
The First Snow	*Longfellow*	203
The Shepherds of Bethlehem	*St. Luke* ii. 8–14	204
The Holly-Tree	*Southey*	205
Christmas Bells	*Tennyson*	206
The Nativity	*Campbell*	207
Hymn for Christmas Morning	*Isaac Williams*	209
A Winter Evening at Home	*W. L. Bowles*	210
The Holly	*M. A. Bacon*	211
"Another Year"	*Robert Story*	212
Hymn for the Closing Year	*Horatius Bonar*	213
Conclusion	*Cowper*	215

INDEX OF FIRST LINES 221

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	Designed by	Page
Illustrative Title—THE MONTHS	*T. Sulman*	i
HYMN TO THE SEASONS	*Noel Humphreys*	1

These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of Thee.
Thomson.

JANUARY.

JANUARY	*E. M. Wimperis*	8

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He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes."
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FEBRUARY.

Designed by *Page*

FEBRUARY . . . . . *E. M. Wimperis* . 28

Muttering, the winds at eve, with blunted point
Blow hollow-blustering from the South. Subdued,
The frost resolves into a trickling thaw.
Thomson.

THE PLOUGHMAN . . . . . *J. N. Lee* . . . 35

"Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow?
Doth he open and break the clods of his ground?"
Isaiah xxviii. 24.

THE ROMAN PLOUGH . . . . . *Robert Pritchett* . 37

In ancient times, the sacred plough employed
The kings and awful fathers of mankind.
Thomson.

THE DAISY . . . . . *Noel Humphreys* . 42

Peeping through the long grass, smiling on the down,
Lighting up the dusky bank, just where the sun goes down.
Campbell.

MARCH.

MARCH . . . . . *J. W. North* . . 46

"He bringeth the wind out of His treasuries."
Psalm cxxxv. 7.

FELLING TIMBER . . . . . *Robert Barnes* . . 51

The woodman's heart is in his work,
His axe is sharp and good:
With sturdy arm and steady aim
He smites the gaping wood;
From distant rocks
His lusty knocks
Re-echoing many a rood.
Hood.

THE STORM . . . . . *T. Sargent* . . . 54

When masts are bowed, and sails are rent;
When skill and strength alike are spent;
When danger rears its giant form,—
Thy gracious eye controls the storm.
Bishop Spencer.

VIOLETS . . . . . *Noel Humphreys* . 58

The wayside violet,
That shines unseen, and were it not
For its sweet breath, would be forgot.
Moore.

APRIL.

	Designed by	Page
APRIL	*E. M. Wimperis*	64

O'er heaven's bright azure hence with joyful eyes
The farmer sees dark clouds assembling rise;
Borne o'er his fields a heavy torrent falls,
And strikes the earth in hasty, driving squalls.
Bloomfield.

THE YOUNG LAMB	*Robert Barnes*	72

The weakest, in thine arms,
Gently convey to the warm cote, and oft,
Between the lark's note and the nightingale's,
His hungry bleating still with tepid milk.
Dyer.

THE POOL OF SILOAM	*W. Nicholls*	76

By cool Siloam's shady rill
How sweet the lily grows!
How sweet the breath beneath the hill
Of Sharon's dewy rose!
Heber.

THE LILY OF THE VALLEY	*Noel Humphreys*	79

"He will beautify the meek with salvation."
Psalm cxlix. 4.

MAY.

MAY	*J. W. North*	82

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."
Cant. ii. 11, 12.

MAY GARLANDS	*Robert Barnes*	87

Come, ye little revellers gay,
Learners in the school of May,
Bring me here the richest crown,
Wreathed this morn on breezy down,
Or in nook of copse-wood green,
Or by river's rushy screen,
Or in sunny meadow wide.
"*Lyra Innocentium.*"

THE ANGLERS	*T. Sargent*	91

I thank you, good master! for your good direction for fly-fishing, and for the sweet enjoyment of the pleasant day.
Izaak Walton.

THE COWSLIP	*Noel Humphreys*	94

The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose.
Milton.

JUNE.

	Designed by	Page
JUNE	*E. M. Wimperis*	100

A hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.
Coleridge.

THE COTTAGER'S GARDEN	*E. M. Wimperis*	105

Near the cot,
The reed fence rises round some favourite spot;
Where rich carnations, pinks with purple eyes,
Proud hyacinths—the least some florist's prize,—
Tulips tall-stemmed, and pounced auriculas rise.
Crabbe.

THE WATERFALL	*J. Gilbert*	109

Smooth to the shelving brink, a copious flood
Rolls fair and placid, where collected all
In one impetuous torrent, down the steep
It thundering shoots, and shakes the country round.
Thomson.

"SWEET ROSE"	*Noel Humphreys*	114

Ope, folded rose;
Longs for thy beauty the expectant air:
Longs every silken breeze that round thee blows;
The watching Summer longs to vaunt thee fair.
W. C. Bennett.

Tail-piece—THE RAINBOW	*J. Gilbert*	118

JULY.

JULY	*E. M. Wimperis*	120

The landscape sleeps without a sound,
The breeze is stopped, the lazy bough
Hath not a leaf that danceth now.
Clare.

THE SUMMER SHOWER	*J. Gilbert*	124

"Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain,
Whereby Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance when it was weary."
Psalm lxviii. 9.

PETRA AND THE DESERT	*J. W. North*	128

"And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind,
And a covert from the tempest;
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."
Isaiah xxxii. 2.

THE JASMINE	*Noel Humphreys*	131

The jasmines their slender wreathings spread—
One with stars as ivory white,
The other with clusters of amber light.
L. E. L.

Tail-piece—SYCHAR	*J. Gilbert*	134

AUGUST.

	Designed by	Page
AUGUST	*J. W. North*	136

"They reap every one his corn in the field."
Job xxiv. 6.

THE SHUNAMITE'S SON	*J. N. Lee.*	142

Again, I see a little child,
His mother's sole delight,
God's living gift of love unto
The kind, good Shunamite;
To mortal pangs I see him yield,
And the lad bear him from the field.
Mary Howitt.

RYDAL WATER	*J. Gilbert*	145

Soft as a cloud is yon blue ridge—the mere
Seems firm as solid crystal, breathless, clear,
And motionless; and, to the gazer's eye,
Deeper than ocean, in the immensity
Of its vague mountains and unreal sky!
Wordsworth.

CORN-FLOWERS	*Noel Humphreys*	149

Standing, like Ruth, among the golden corn.
Longfellow.

SEPTEMBER.

SEPTEMBER	*E. M. Wimperis*	154

Moon of harvest! herald mild
Of plenty, rustic labour's child,
Hail! O hail! I greet thy beam
As soft it trembles o'er the stream,
And gilds the straw-thatched hamlet wide,
Where innocence and peace reside.
Kirke White.

THE LAKE OF LUCERNE	*J. W. North*	158

Who blesses not the light,
When through some loop-hole he surveys the lake,
Blue as a sapphire-stone, and richly set
With chateaux, villages, and village-spires,
Orchards and vineyards, Alps and alpine snows.
Rogers.

TELL'S CHAPEL	*Whymper*	159

That sacred lake withdrawn among the hills,
Its depth of waters flanked as with a wall
Built by the giant race before the flood;
Where not a cross or chapel but inspires
Holy delight; . . . . . .
Land where Tell leaped ashore; and climb to drink
Of the three hallowed fountains.
Rogers.

Designed by *Page*

GEORGE III. AND THE DYING GIPSY . . . . . *J. N. Lee* . . . 162

The King sat down by the side of the pallet, and taking the hand of the dying gipsy, discoursed on the demerit of sin, and the nature of redemption. He then pointed her to Christ, the all-sufficient Saviour.

Crabbe.

THE GORSE . . . . . *Noel Humphreys* . 164

See ! Nature, with Midas-like touch,
Here turns a whole common to gold.

Horace Smith.

OCTOBER.

OCTOBER . . . . . *J. W. North* . . 168

And now, with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Keats.

NUTTING . . . . . *J. N. Lee* . . . 172

And boys are busy in the woods,
Gathering the ripe nuts, bright and brown ;
In shady lanes the children stray,
Looking for blackberries through the day,—
Those berries of such old renown !

Mary Howitt.

ROME AND THE CAMPAGNA IN AUTUMN . . . . . *W. Nicholls* . . 175

Here and there
Rude heaps, that had been cities, clad the ground
With history.

Sydney Dobell.

ARCH OF TITUS . . . . . *P. W. Justyne* . . 176

Tombs, arches, monuments,
Vainly set up to save a name, as though
The eternal served the perishable.

Sydney Dobell.

HENRY VII.'S CHAPEL, WESTMINSTER ABBEY . . . *J. Gilbert* . . . 179

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim, religious light.

Milton.

THE AUTUMN CROCUS . . . . . *Noel Humphreys* . 180

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple drest,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.
Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Bryant.

NOVEMBER.

Designed by *Page*

NOVEMBER . . . . . *J. W. North* . . 184

Red o'er the forest peers the setting sun,
The line of yellow light dies fast away
That crowned the eastern copse : and chill and dun
Falls on the moor the brief November day.
Keble.

NOVEMBER BONFIRES . . . . . *Robert Barnes* . . 188

What grand masses of light and shade! How the tongues of flame shot high up into the air, and then fell back with magical variation. Ever and anon the blazing mass would suddenly sink down into some internal crater, and a shower of sparks would fly aloft, and seem to lose themselves amongst the stars.
Pages from my Note-book.

THE SIMOOM . . . . . *J. Gilbert* . . . 192

Some great caravan, from well to well
Winding as darkness on the desert fell,
In their long march, such as the Prophet bids,
To Mecca from the Land of Pyramids,
And in an instant lost—a hollow wave
Of burning sand their everlasting grave !
Rogers.

THE BRAMBLE . . . . . *Noel Humphreys* . 195

But thou, wild bramble ! back dost bring,
In all their beauteous power,
The fresh green days of life's fair spring,
And boyhood's blossomy hour.
Scorned bramble of the brake ! once more
Thou bidd'st me be a boy,
To gad with thee the woodlands o'er,
In freedom and in joy.
Ebenezer Elliott.

Tail-piece—THE LIGHTHOUSE . . . . . *J. Gilbert* . . . 198

DECEMBER.

DECEMBER . . . . . *E. M. Wimperis* . 200

How quiet shows the woodland scene !
Each flower and tree, its duty done,
Reposing in decay serene,
Like weary men when age is won.
Keble.

THE VISION OF THE SHEPHERDS . . . . . *Robert Barnes* . . 204

"And the glory of the Lord shone round about them ; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not ; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."
St. Luke ii. 9–11.

	Designed by	Page
THE NATIVITY	*J. Gilbert*	207

A star appeared, and peaceful threw
Around its holy ray;
It caught the faithful Magi's view,
It led the wondrous way
From far-famed Persia's smiling bowers,
Fair land of beauty, fruits and flowers.
Campbell.

BETHLEHEM	*J. Gilbert*	208

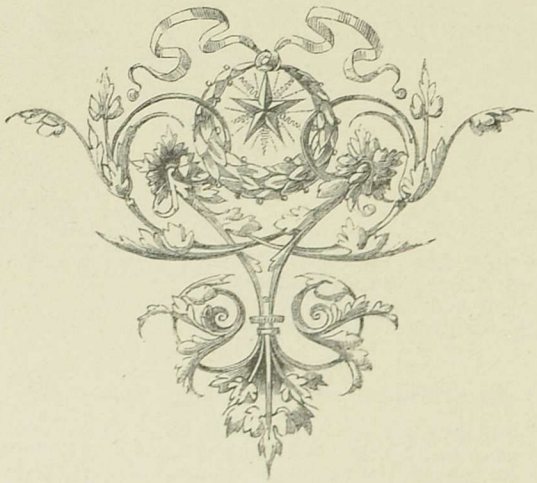
Each heart throughout the gazing throng
What anxious gladness fills,
While slowly moved that star along
O'er Judah's sacred hills,
And softly fixed its mellow light
On distant Bethlehem's joyful night.
Campbell.

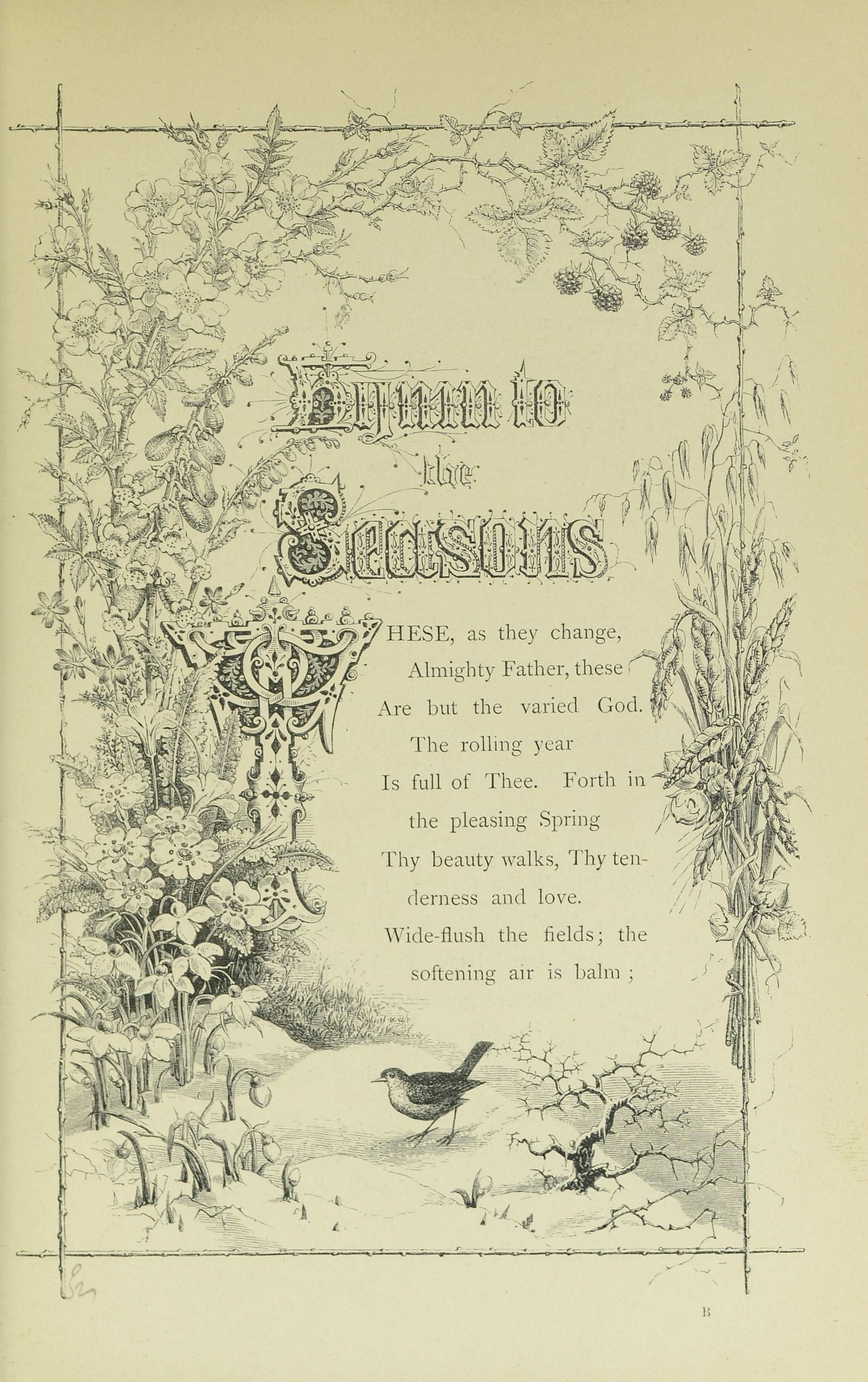
THE HOLLY	*Noel Humphreys*	211

I love this glad season, as yearly it comes,
With its cold to our meadows, and mirth to our homes;
I love in the landscape, when whitened with snow,
To mark the bright leaves of the green holly bough.
Anon.

Tail-piece—A CHURCHYARD IN WINTER	*J. Gilbert*	214

THE END	*Noel Humphreys*	220





Hymn to the Seasons

THESE, as they change,
Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God.
The rolling year
Is full of Thee. Forth in
the pleasing Spring
Thy beauty walks, Thy ten-
derness and love.
Wide-flush the fields; the
softening air is balm;

Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles;
And every sense, and every heart, is joy.
Then comes Thy glory in the Summer months
With light and heat refulgent. Then Thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year;
And oft Thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks;
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves, in hollow-whispering gales.
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfined,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.
In Winter, awful Thou! with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest rolled,
Majestic darkness! on the whirlwind's wing
Riding sublime, Thou bidd'st the world adore,
And humblest Nature with Thy northern blast.

Mysterious round! what skill, what force divine,
Deep felt, in these appear! a simple train,
Yet so delightful mixed with such kind art,
Such beauty and beneficence combined,
Shade, unperceived, so softening into shade,
And all so forming an harmonious whole,
That, as they still succeed, they ravish still.
But wandering oft, with brute, unconscious gaze,
Man marks not Thee, marks not the mighty hand,
That, ever busy, wheels the silent spheres;

Works in the secret deep; shoots, steaming, thence
The fair profusion that o'erspreads the Spring;
Flings from the sun direct the flaming day;
Feeds every creature; hurls the tempest forth;
And, as on earth this grateful change revolves,
With transport touches all the springs of life.

Nature, attend! join every living soul,
Beneath the spacious temple of the sky,
In adoration join; and, ardent, raise
One general song! To Him, ye vocal gales,
Breathe soft, whose Spirit in your freshness breathes:
Oh, talk of Him in solitary glooms!
Where, o'er the rock, the scarcely waving pine
Fills the brown shade with a religious awe.
And ye, whose bolder note is heard afar,
Who shake th' astonished world, lift high to heaven
Th' impetuous song, and say from whom you rage.
His praise, ye brooks, attune, ye trembling rills;
And let me catch it as I muse along.
Ye headlong torrents, rapid and profound;
Ye softer floods, that lead the humid maze
Along the vale; and thou, majestic main,
A secret world of wonders in thyself,
Sound His stupendous praise—whose greater voice
Or bids you roar, or bids your roarings fall.

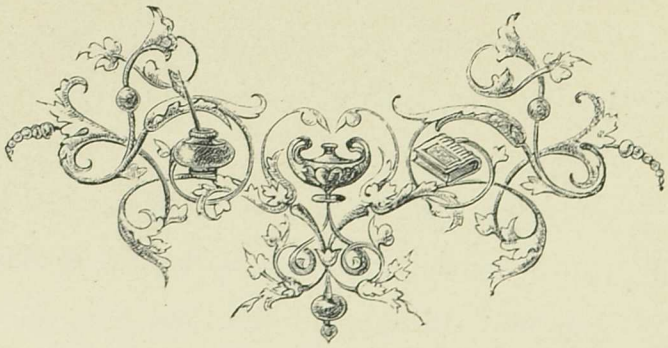
Soft roll your incense, herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
In mingled clouds, to Him whose sun exalts,
Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil paints.
Ye forests bend, ye harvests wave, to Him;
Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,
As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.
Ye that keep watch in heaven, as earth asleep
Unconscious lies, effuse your mildest beams,
Ye constellations, while your angels strike,
Amid the spangled sky, the silver lyre.
Great source of day! best image here below
Of thy Creator, ever pouring wide,
From world to world, the vital ocean round,
On Nature write with every beam His praise.
The thunder rolls: be hushed the prostrate world;
While cloud to cloud returns the solemn hymn.
Bleat out afresh, ye hills; ye mossy rocks,
Retain the sound; the broad responsive low,
Ye valleys, raise; for the Great Shepherd reigns;
And His unsuffering kingdom yet will come.
Ye woodlands all, awake; a boundless song
Burst from the groves; and when the restless day,
Expiring, lays the warbling world asleep,
Sweetest of birds! sweet Philomela, charm
The listening shades, and teach the night His praise.
Ye chief, for whom the whole creation smiles,

At once the head, the heart, and tongue of all,
Crown the great hymn! in swarming cities vast,
Assembled men, to the deep organ join
The long-resounding voice, oft breaking clear,
At solemn pauses, through the swelling bass;
And, as each mingling flame increases each,
In one united ardour rise to heaven.
Or if you rather choose the rural shade,
And find a fane in every sacred grove;
There let the shepherd's flute, the virgin's lay,
The prompting seraph, and the poet's lyre,
Still sing the God of Seasons as they roll.

For me, when I forget the darling theme,
Whether the blossom blows, the Summer ray
Russets the plain, inspiring Autumn gleams,
Or Winter rises in the blackening east,
Be my tongue mute, my fancy paint no more,
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat!

Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song—where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on th' Atlantic isles—'tis nought to me:
Since God is ever present, ever felt,

In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital breathes, there must be joy.
When e'en at last the solemn hour shall come,
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey; there, with new powers,
Will rising wonders sing: I cannot go
Where Universal Love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their sons;
From seeming evil still educing good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression. But I lose
Myself in Him, in Light ineffable!
Come then, expressive Silence, muse His praise.

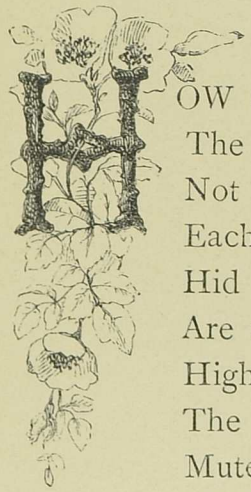


"He giveth snow like wool;
He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes."

Psalm cxlvii. 16.

JANUARY.

"All the earth sitteth still, and is at rest."—*Zechariah* i. 11.



HOW dazzling white the snowy scene! deep, deep,
The stillness of the winter Sabbath day,—
Not even a footfall heard. Smooth are the fields,
Each hollow pathway level with the plain:
Hid are the bushes, save that here and there
Are seen the topmost shoots of brier or broom.
High-ridged, the whirlèd drift has almost reached
The powdered key-stone of the church-yard porch;
Mute hangs the hooded bell; the tombs lie buried;
No step approaches to the house of prayer.
The flickering fall is o'er; the clouds disperse,
And show the sun, hung o'er the welkin's verge,
Shooting a bright but ineffectual beam
On all the sparkling waste. * *
But let me now explore the deep-sunk dell:
No footprint, save the covey's or the flock's,
Is seen along the rill, where marshy springs
Still rear the grassy blade of vivid green.
Beware, ye shepherds, of those treacherous haunts,
Nor longer linger there too long: the wintry day
Soon closes; and full oft a heavier fall,
Heaped by the blast, fills up the sheltered glen,
While gurgling deep below, the buried rill
Mines for itself a snow-coved way.

THE NEW YEAR'S BELLS AT MIDNIGHT.

KNELL of departed years!
Thy voice is sweet to me;
It wakes no sad foreboding fears,
Calls forth no sympathetic tears,
Time's restless course to see;
From hallowed ground
I hear a sound
Diffusing through the air a holy calm around.

Thou art the voice of love
To chide each doubt away;
And as thy murmur faintly dies
Visions of past enjoyment rise,
In long and bright array,
I hail the sign
That love divine
Will o'er my future path in cloudless mercy shine.

Thou art the voice of hope!
The music of the spheres!
A song of blessings yet to come,
A herald from my future home,
My soul delighted hears:
By sin deceived,
By nature grieved,
Still am I nearer rest than when I first believed.

Thou art the voice of life;
A sound which seems to say—
O prisoner in this gloomy vale,
Thy flesh shall faint, thy heart shall fail;
But fairer scenes thy spirit hail
That cannot pass away:
Here grief and pain
Thy steps detain;
There in the image of the Lord shalt thou with Jesus reign.

THOUGHTS FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY.

"A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."—*Deut.* xi. 12.

ANOTHER Year with promised blessings rise!
Eternal Power! from whom those blessings flow,
Teach me still more to wonder, more to know:
Seed-time and Harvest let me see again;
Wander the leaf-strewn wood, the frozen plain:
Let the first flower, corn-waving field, plain, tree,
Here round my home, still lift my soul to Thee.
And let me ever, 'midst Thy bounties, raise
An humble note of thankfulness and praise!

ST. AGNES' EVE.

Deep on the convent roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon :
My breath to heaven like vapour goes :
May my soul follow soon !
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord :
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,
To yonder shining ground ;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round ;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee ;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
Through all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, Thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.
He lifts me to the golden doors ;
The flashes come and go ;

All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strews her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with His bride!

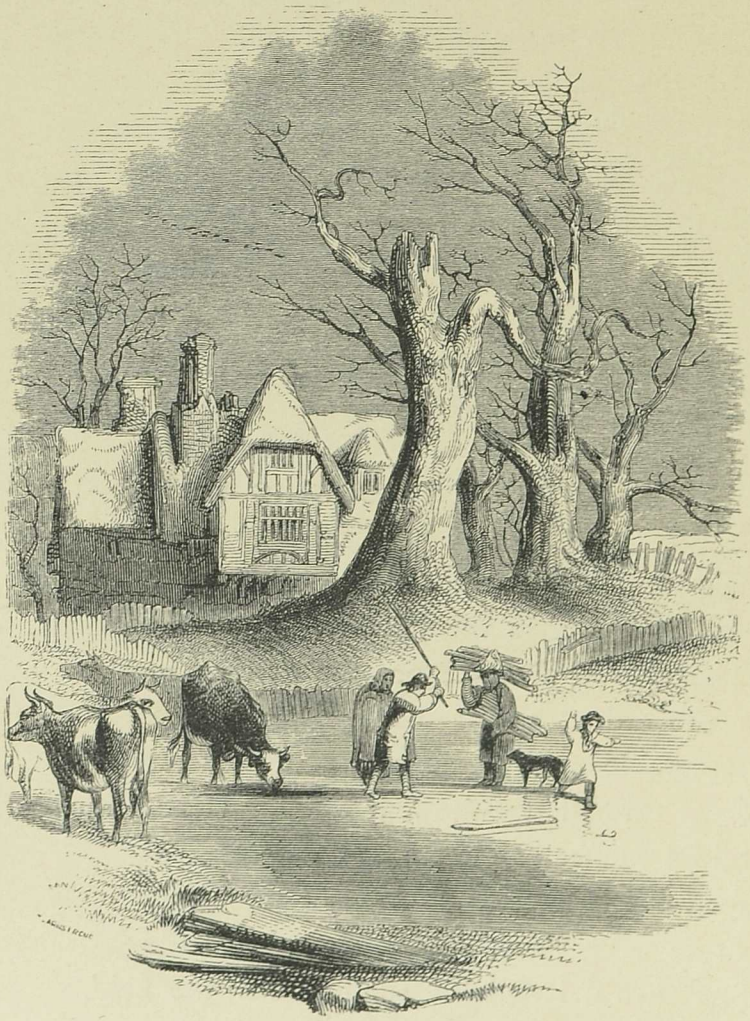
A WINTER MORNING WALK.

'Tis morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb
Ascending, fires the horizon; while the clouds,
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And tinging all with his own rosy hue,
From every herb and every spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.

* * * *

The verdure of the plain lies buried deep
Beneath the drizzling deluge; and the bents
And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine

Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence
Screens them, and seem half-petrified to sleep



In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder; not like hungering man,
Fretful if unsupplied; but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.

Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
The cheerful haunts of man; to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropped short, half lurcher and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow, and now with many a frisk
Wide scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.
Now from the roost, or from the neighbouring pale,
Where, diligent to catch the first fair gleam
Of smiling day, they gossipped side by side,
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call
The feathered tribes domestic. Half on wing,
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,
Conscious, and fearful of too deep a plunge.
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves,
To seize the fair occasion: well they eye
The scattered grain, and thievishly resolved
To escape the impending famine, often scared
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,
Or shed impervious to the blast.

THE WOODS IN WINTER.

When Winter winds are piercing chill,
And through the hawthorn blows the gale,
With solemn feet I tread the hill
That overbrows the lonely vale.

O'er the bare upland and away
Through the long reach of desert woods,
The embracing sunbeams chastely play
And gladden these deep solitudes.

Where, twisted round the barren oak,
The Summer vine in beauty clung,
And Summer winds the stillness broke—
The crystal icicle is hung.

Where, from their frozen urns, mute springs
Pour out the river's gradual tide,
Shrilly the skater's iron rings,
And voices fill the woodland side.

Alas! how changed from the fair scene
When birds sang out their mellow lay,
And winds were soft, and woods were green,
And the song ceased not with the day.

But still, wild music is abroad,
Pale, desert woods! within your crowd;
And gathering winds, in hoarse accord,
Amid the vocal reeds pipe loud.

Chill airs and wintry winds! my ear
Has grown familiar with your song;
I hear it in the opening year—
I listen, and it cheers me long.

"RESURGAM."

"For so He giveth His beloved sleep."—*Psalm* cxxvii. 2.

Ah! why reposest thou so pale,
So very still in thy white veil,
Thou cherished Fatherland?
Where are the joyous lays of Spring,
The varied hue of Summer's wing,
Thy glowing vestment bland?

But half-attired, thou slumberest now,
No flocks to seek thy pastures go,
O'er vales or mountains steep;
Silent is every warbler's lay,
No more the bee hums through the day,
Yet art thou fair in sleep.

On all thy trees, on every bough,
Thousands of crystals sparkle now,
Where'er our eyes alight;
Firm on the spotless robe we tread,
Which o'er thy beauteous form is spread,
With glittering hoar-frost bright.

Our Father kind, who dwells above,
For thee this garment pure hath wove,
He watches over thee;
Therefore in peace thy slumber take,
Our Father will the weary wake,
New strength, new light to see.

Soon to the breath of Spring's soft sighs
Delighted thou again wilt rise,
In wondrous life so fair;
I feel those sighs breathe o'er the plain,
Dear Nature, then rise up again
With flower-wreaths in thy hair.

A FROST SCENE.

At noon to-day, I and my white greyhound, Mayflower, set out for a walk into a very beautiful world—a sort of silent fairy-land—a creation of that matchless magician the hoar-frost. There had been just snow enough to cover the earth and all its colours with one sheet of pure and uniform white, and just time enough since the snow had fallen to allow the hedges to be freed of their fleecy load, and clothed with a delicate coating of rime. The atmosphere was deliciously calm, soft, even mild, in spite of the thermometer; no perceptible air, but a stillness that might almost be felt; the sky rather grey than blue, throwing out in bold relief the snow-covered roofs of our village, and the rimy trees that rise above them, and the sun shining dimly as through a veil, giving a pale, fair light—like the moon, only brighter. There was a silence, too, that might become the moon, as we stood at

our little gate, looking up the quiet street ; a Sabbath-like pause of work and play, rare on a work day ; nothing was audible but the pleasant hum of frost, that low, monotonous sound which is, perhaps, the nearest approach that life and nature can make to absolute silence. The very wagons, as they come down the hill along the beaten track of crisp, yellowish frost-dust, glide along like shadows ; even May's bounding footsteps, at her height of glee and of speed, fall like snow upon snow.

* * * These cogitations have brought us up the hill, half-way across the light and airy common, with its bright expanse of snow and its clusters of cottages, whose turf-fires send such wreaths of smoke sailing up the air, and diffuse such aromatic fragrance around. And now comes the delightful sound of childish voices, ringing with glee and merriment almost from beneath our feet. There is a shouting from the deep, irregular pool, all glass now, where, on two long, smooth

slides, half a dozen ragged urchins are slipping along in tottering triumph. Half a dozen steps bring us to the bank just above them. May can hardly resist the temptation of joining her friends, for most of the varlets are of her acquaintance. "Come, May!" and up she springs, as light as a bird. The road is gay now; carts and post-chaises, and girls in red cloaks, and afar off, looking almost like a toy, the coach. It meets us fast and soon. How much happier the walkers look than the riders, especially the frost-bitten gentleman, and the shivering lady with the invisible face, sole passengers of that commodious machine! Hooded, veiled, and bonneted as she is, one sees from her attitude how miserable she would look uncovered.

Now we have reached the trees—the beautiful trees! never so beautiful as to-day. Imagine the effect of a straight and regular double avenue of oaks, nearly a mile long, arching overhead, and closing into perspective like the roofs and columns of a cathedral, every tree and branch encrusted with the bright and delicate congelation of hoar-frost, white and pure as snow, delicate and defined as carved ivory. How beautiful it is, how uniform, how various, how filling, how satiating to the mind, above-all—how melancholy! There is a thrilling awfulness, an intense feeling of simple power in that naked and colourless beauty, which falls on the earth like the thoughts of death—death, pure and glorious, and smiling—but still death. Sculpture has always the same effect on my imagination, and painting never. Colour is life.

We are now at the end of this magnificent avenue, and at the top of a steep eminence commanding a wide view over four counties—a landscape of snow. A deep lane leads abruptly down the hill: a mere narrow cart-track, sinking between high banks clothed with fern and furze and broom, crowned with luxuriant hedgerows, and famous for their summer smell of thyme. How lovely these banks are now; the tall weeds and the gorse fixed and stiffened in the hoar-frost, which fringes round the bright prickly holly, the pendent foliage of the bramble, and the deep orange leaves of the pollard oak. Oh, this is

rime in its loveliest form! And there is still a berry here and there on the holly, "blushing in its natural coral" through the delicate tracery; still a stray hip or haw for the birds, who abound here always. The poor birds, how tame they are, how sadly tame! There is the beautiful and rare crested wren, that "shadow of a bird," as White of Selborne calls it, perched in the middle of the hedge, nestling, as it were, amongst the cold, bare boughs, seeking, poor pretty thing, for the warmth it will not find. And there, farther on, just under the bank by the slender runlet, which still trickles between its transparent fantastic margin of thin ice, as if it were a thing of life—there, with a swift, scudding motion, flits, in short low flights, the gorgeous kingfisher, his magnificent plumage of scarlet and blue flashing in the sun like the glories of some tropical bird. He is come for water to this little spring by the hill side—water which even his long bill and slender head can hardly reach, so nearly do the fantastic forms of those garland-like icy margins meet over the tiny stream beneath. It is rarely that one sees the shy beauty so close or so long; and it is pleasant to see him in the grace and beauty of his natural liberty, the only way to look at a bird. We used, before we lived in a street, to fix a little board outside the parlour-window, and cover it with bread-crumbs in the hard weather. It was quite delightful to see the pretty things come and feed, to conquer their shyness, and do away their mistrust. First came the more social tribes, "the robin-redbreast and the wren," cautiously and suspiciously picking up a crumb on the wing, with the little keen bright eye fixed on the window; then they would stop for two pecks; then stay till they were satisfied. The shyer birds, tamed by their example, came next; and, at last, one saucy fellow of a blackbird—a sad glutton, he would clear the board in two minutes—used to tap his yellow bill against the window for more. How we loved the fearless confidence of that fine, frank-hearted creature! And surely he loved us. I wonder the practice is not more general.

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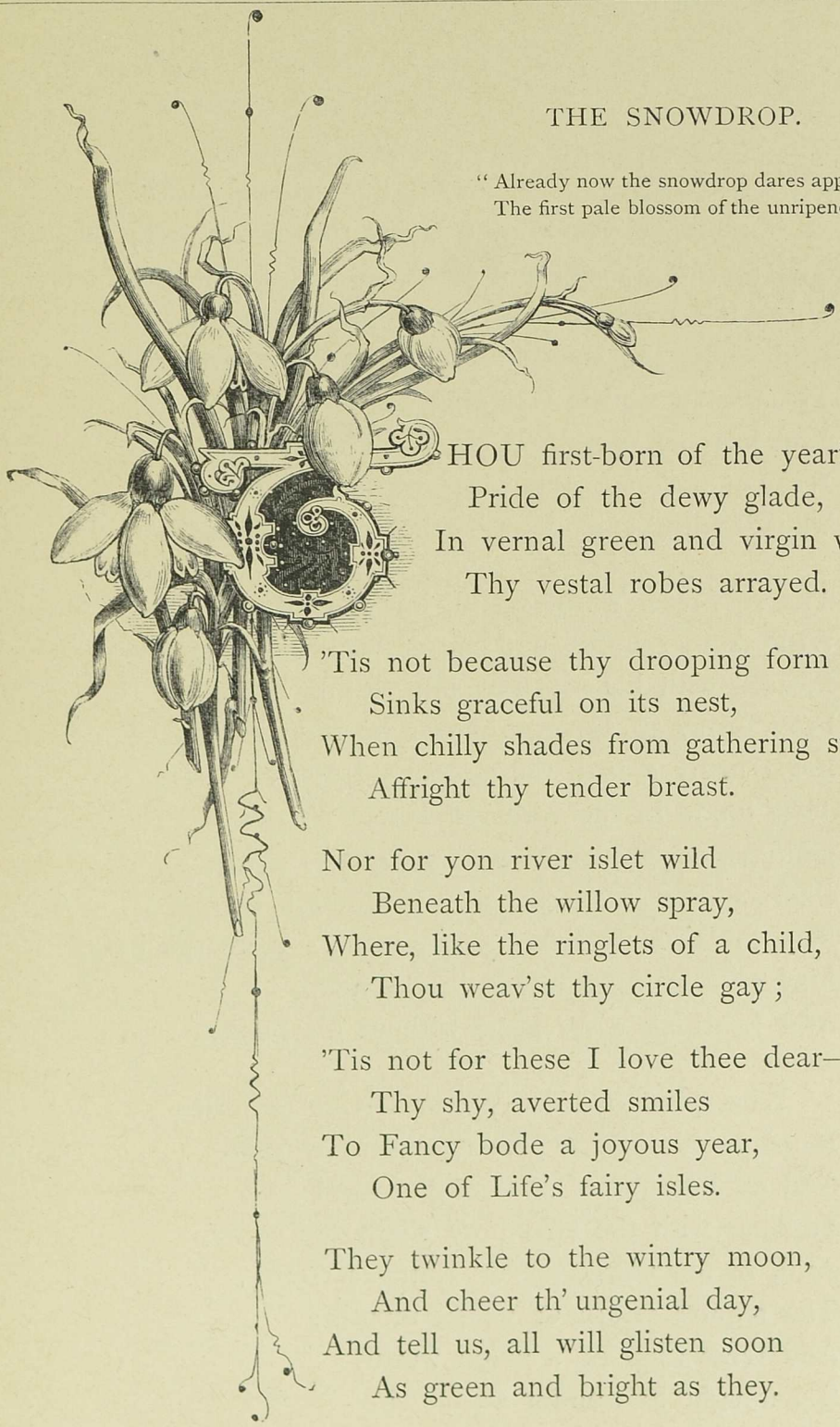
TIMES GO BY TURNS.

THE loppèd tree in time may grow again;
Most naked plants renew both leaf and flower;
The sorriest wight may find release of pain;
The driest soil suck in some moistening shower:
Times go by turns, and chances change by course
From foul to fair, from better hap to worse.

The sea of Fortune doth not ever flow,
She draws her favours to the lowest ebb,
Her tides have equal times to come and go;
Her loom doth weave the fine and coarsest web;
No joy so great but runneth to an end;
No hap so hard but may in fine amend.

Not always fall of leaf, nor ever Spring,
Not endless night, yet not eternal day:
The saddest birds a season find to sing,
The roughest storm a calm may soon allay.
Thus, with succeeding turns, God tempereth all,
That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall.

A chance may win that by mischance was lost;
That net that holds no great, takes little fish:
In some things all, in all things none are crossed;
Few, all they need—but none have all they wish;
Unmingled joys here to no man befall;
Who least, hath some; who most, hath never all.



THE SNOWDROP.

"Already now the snowdrop dares appear,
The first pale blossom of the unripened year."

THOU first-born of the year's delight,
Pride of the dewy glade,
In vernal green and virgin white
Thy vestal robes arrayed.

'Tis not because thy drooping form
Sinks graceful on its nest,
When chilly shades from gathering storm
Affright thy tender breast.

Nor for yon river islet wild
Beneath the willow spray,
Where, like the ringlets of a child,
Thou weav'st thy circle gay;

'Tis not for these I love thee dear—
Thy shy, averted smiles
To Fancy bode a joyous year,
One of Life's fairy isles.

They twinkle to the wintry moon,
And cheer th' ungenial day,
And tell us, all will glisten soon
As green and bright as they.

WINTER WALK AT NOON.

THE night was Winter in his roughest mood;
The morning sharp and clear. But now, at noon,
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.

* * * *

The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half suppressed:
Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
That tinkle in the withered leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And Learning wiser grow without his books.

* * * *

What prodigies can power Divine perform
More grand than it produces year by year,
And all in sight of inattentive man?
Familiar with the effect, we slight the cause,
And, in the constancy of Nature's course,
The regular return of genial months,
And renovation of a faded world,
See nought to wonder at. * *

All we behold is miracle; but, seen
So duly, all is miracle in vain.
Where now the vital energy that moved,
While Summer was, the pure and subtle lymph
Through the imperceptible meandering veins
Of leaf and flower? It sleeps; and the icy touch
Of unprolific winter has impressed
A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.
But let the months go round, a few short months,
And all shall be restored. These naked shoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.
Then each, in its peculiar honours clad,
Shall publish, even to the distant eye,
Its family and tribe.

* * * *

From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,
Is Nature's progress, when she lectures man
In heavenly truth; evincing, as she makes
The grand transition, that there lives and works
A soul in all things; and that soul is God.
The beauties of the wilderness are His,
That make so gay the solitary place,
Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms
That cultivation glories in are His.
He sets the bright procession on its way,
And marshals all the order of the year;
He marks the bounds which Winter may not pass,
And blunts his pointed fury; in its case,

Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ,
Uninjured, with inimitable art;
And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.

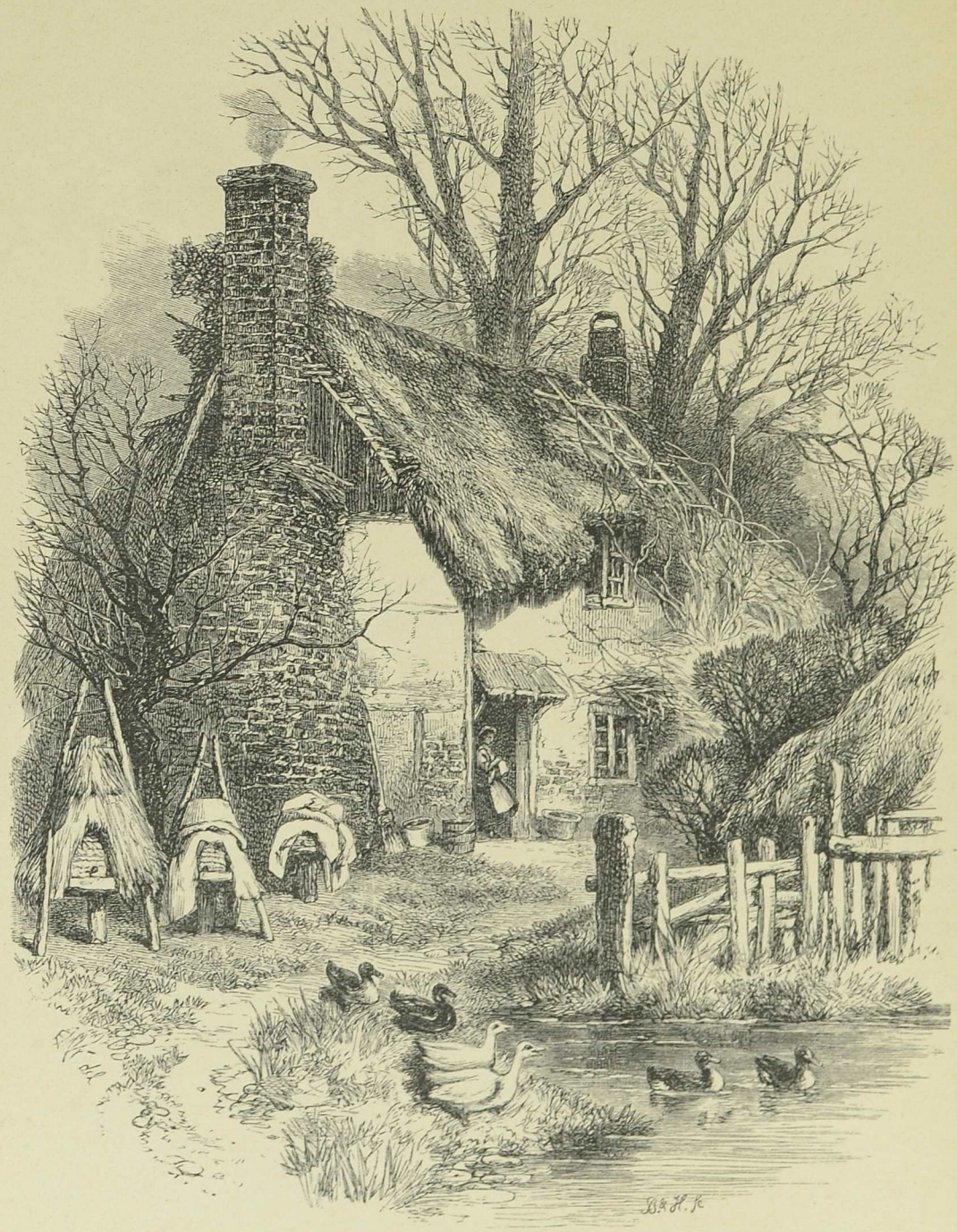
HYMN FOR JANUARY.

When Spring unlocks the flowers to paint the laughing soil;
When Summer's balmy showers refresh the mower's toil;
When Winter binds in frosty chains the fallow and the flood,
In God the Earth rejoiceth still, and owns her Maker good.

The birds that wake the morning, and those that love the shade;
The winds that sweep the mountain or lull the drowsy glade,
The Sun that from his amber bower rejoiceth on his way,
The Moon and Stars, their Master's name in silent pomp display.

Shall Man, the lord of Nature, expectant of the sky,
Shall Man, alone unthankful, his little praise deny?
No, let the year forsake his course, the seasons cease to be,
Thee, Master, must we always love, and Saviour, honour Thee.

The flowers of Spring may wither, the hope of Summer fade,
The Autumn droop in Winter, the birds forsake the shade;
The winds be lulled—the Sun and Moon forget their old decree,
But we in Nature's latest hour, O Lord! will cling to Thee.



Muttering, the winds at eve, with blunted point
Blow hollow-blustering from the South. Subdued,
The frost resolves into a trickling thaw.

THOMSON.

FEBRUARY.

"He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow."—*Psalm* cxlvii. 18.

THE snow has left the cottage roof;
The thatch-moss grows in brighter green;
And eaves in quick succession drop,
Where grinning icicles have been,
Pit-patting with a pleasant noise
In tubs set by the cottage-door;
While ducks and geese with happy joys,
Plunge in the yard-pond brimming o'er.

The milkmaid singing leaves her bed,
As glad as happy thoughts can be,
While magpies chatter o'er her head
As jocund in the change as she:
Her cows around the closes stray,
Nor lingering wait the foddering-boy;
Tossing the mole-hills in their play
And staring round with frolic joy.

The shepherd now is often seen
Near warm banks o'er his hook to bend;
Or o'er a gate or stile to lean,
Chattering to a passing friend:

Ploughmen go whistling to their toils,
And yoke again the rested plough;
And, mingling o'er the mellow soils,
Boys shout, and whips are noising now.

The barking dogs by lane and wood,
Drive sheep a-field from foddering ground,
And Echo in her Summer mood,
Briskly mocks the cheering sound.
The flocks, as from a prison broke,
Shake their wet fleeces in the sun,
While, following fast, a misty smoke
Reeks from the moist grass as they run.

The small birds think their wants are o'er,
To see the snow-hills fret again,
And from the barn's chaff-littered door,
Betake them to the greening plain.
The woodman's robin startles coy,
No longer to his elbow comes
To peck, with hunger's eager joy,
'Mong mossy stumps the littered crumbs.

'Neath hedge and walls that screen the wind
The gnats for play will flock together;
And e'en poor flies some hope will find
To venture in the mocking weather;
From out their hiding-holes again,
With feeble pace, they often creep
Along the sun-warmed window-pane,
Like dreaming things that walk in sleep.

FEBRUARY-FILL-DIKE.

"As yet the trembling year is unconfirmed
And Winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightless."

FEBRUARY-FILL-DIKE is an appropriate name for the damp month which comes in the end of Winter; but we know that "the time of the singing of birds" is at hand, and bear patiently the dearth and desolation which reigns around us, and look upon the lengthening of the days as sure heralds of coming sunshine and flowers. Hark! how the wind roars; and the leafless trees still sway their naked forms to and fro, and toss their skeleton arms in the air like maniacs; for there is a loud howling in the "savage woods," a roar of clashing branches and uprooted trees, as if Fingal led his warriors forth to battle, and commenced the "stormy strife," while Ossian twanged his wild harp to the gale. How wonderful are the winds! we feel their power, and shrink beneath it, yet see them not; the ocean is uplifted by their might, the angry waves lash the sky, navies are destroyed, and forests are blown down, yet we see not the arm that strikes.

"He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

And beautiful are some of those sublime passages in Holy Writ:—"He did fly upon the wings of the wind;" "the heaven was black with clouds and wind;" "there came a great wind from the wilderness;" "the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell;" "He gathereth the wind in His fists;" "and the wind was in their wings;" "like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." All these and numberless other passages show what an eye the holy writers had for the poetry of the elements.

TO A WATERFOWL.

WHITHER, 'midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,
The desert and illimitable air,
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold thin atmosphere;
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend
Soon o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou 'rt gone—th' abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form : yet, on my heart,
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He, who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

THE BEAUTIES OF WINTER.

THOU hast thy beauties : sterner ones I own,
Than those of thy precursors ; yet to thee
Belong the charms of solemn majesty
And naked grandeur. Awful is the tone
Of thy tempestuous nights, when clouds are blown
By hurrying winds across the troubled sky :
Pensive, when softer breezes faintly sigh
Through leafless boughs, with ivy overgrown.
Thou hast thy decorations too ; although
Thou art austere : thy studded mantle, gay
With icy brilliants, which as proudly glow
As erst Golconda's ; and thy pure array
Of regal ermine, when the drifted snow
Envelopes Nature ; till her features seem
Like pale, but lovely ones, seen when we dream.

AFTERNOON IN FEBRUARY.

The day is ending,
The night is descending;
The marsh is frozen,
The river dead.

Through clouds like ashes,
The red sun flashes,
On village windows,
That glimmer red.

The snow recommences;
The buried fences
Mark no longer
The road o'er the plain;

While through the meadows,
Like fearful shadows,
Slowly passes,
A funeral train.

The bell is pealing,
And every feeling
Within me responds
To the dismal knell.

Shadows are trailing,
My heart is bewailing,
And tolling within,
Like a funeral bell.

THE PLOUGHMAN.

"Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rye in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him."—*Isaiah* xxviii. 24—26.

And see where surly Winter passes off,
Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts:
His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill,
The shattered forest, and the ravaged vale;
While softer gales succeed, at whose kind touch,
Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost,
The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.

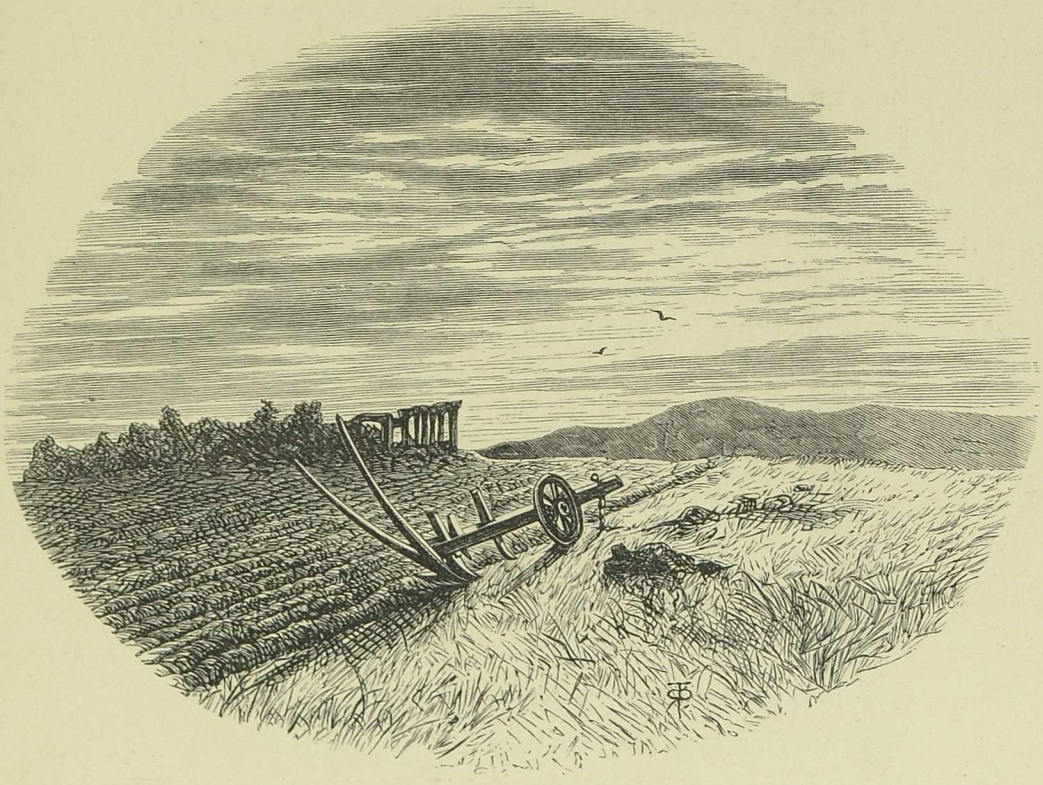
As yet the trembling year is unconfirmed,
And Winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightless: so that scarce
The bittern knows his time, with bill engulphed
To shake the sounding marsh; or from the shore
The plovers when to scatter o'er the heath,
And sing their wild notes to the listening waste.

* * * *

Forth fly the tepid airs; and unconfined,
Unbinding earth, the moving softness strays.
Joyous, th' impatient husbandman perceives
Relenting Nature, and his lusty steers
Drives from their stalls, to where the well-used plough
Lies in the furrow, loosened from the frost.
There, unrefusing, to the harnessed yoke
They lend their shoulder, and begin their toil,
Cheered by the simple song and soaring lark.
Meanwhile incumbent o'er the shining share
The master leans, removes th' obstructing clay,
Winds the whole work, and sidelong lays the glebe.
While through the neighbouring field the sower stalks,
With measured steps; and liberal throws the grain
Into the faithful bosom of the ground:
The harrow follows harsh, and shuts the scene.

Be gracious, Heaven! for now laborious man
Has done his part. Ye fostering breezes, blow!
Ye softening dews, ye tender showers, descend!
And temper all, thou world-reviving sun,
Into the perfect year! Nor ye who live
In luxury and ease, in pomp and pride,

Think these lost themes unworthy of your ear:
Such themes as these the rural Maro sung
To wide-imperial Rome, in the full height
Of elegance and taste, by Greece refined.
In ancient times, the sacred plough employed
The kings and awful fathers of mankind:



And some, with whom compared your insect tribes
Are but the beings of a summer's day,
Have held the scale of empire, ruled the storm
Of mighty war; then, with unwearied hand,
Disdaining little delicacies, seized
The plough, and greatly independent lived.

THE WINTER EVENING.

O WINTER, ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes filled,
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapped in clouds,
A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way,
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'st the Sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning east,
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still
Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gathering, at short notice, in one group
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee king of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, homeborn happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturbed Retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.

* * * *

Come, Evening, once again, season of peace;
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
With matron step slow moving, while the Night
Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employed

In letting fall the curtain of repose
On bird and beast, the other charged for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day :
Not sumptuously adorned, not needing aid,
Like homely-featured Night, of clustering gems ;
A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,
Suffices thee ; save that the Moon is thine
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high
With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,
Or make me so.

HOAR-FROST.

What dream of beauty ever equalled this !
What bands from fairyland have sallied forth,
With snowy foliage from the abundant North,
With imagery from the realms of bliss !
What visions of my boyhood do I miss
That here are not restored ! All splendours pure,
All loveliness, all graces that allure ;
Shapes that amaze ; a paradise that is—
Yet was not—will not in few moments be :
Glory from nakedness, that playfully
Mimics with passing life each summer boon ;
Clothing the ground—replenishing the tree ;
Weaving arch, bower, and delicate festoon ;
Still as a dream—and like a dream to flee !

PRESAGES OF SPRING.

"Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: Thou preparest them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: Thou settlest the furrows thereof: Thou makest it soft with showers: Thou blessest the springing thereof."—*Psalm* lxv. 9, 10.

FROM the sod no crocus peeps,
And the snowdrop scarce is seen,
And the daffodil yet sleeps
In its radiant sheath of green;
Yet the naked groves among
Is an homeless music heard,
And a welcoming is sung,
'Till the leafless boughs are stirred
With a spirit and a life
Which is floating all around;
And the covert glades are rife
With the new awakened sound
Of the birds, whose voices pour
To an interrupted strain,
As they scarcely were secure
That the Spring was come again.
Soon the seasonable flowers
Will a glad assurance bring,
To their fresh and leafy bowers,
Of the presence of the Spring:
And these snatches of delight
Are the prelude of a song,
That will daily gather might,
And endure the Summer long.

TO AN EARLY PRIMROSE.

"Lone tenant of the peaceful glade!
Emblem of Virtue in the shade!
Rearing thy head to brave the storm
That would thy innocence deform."

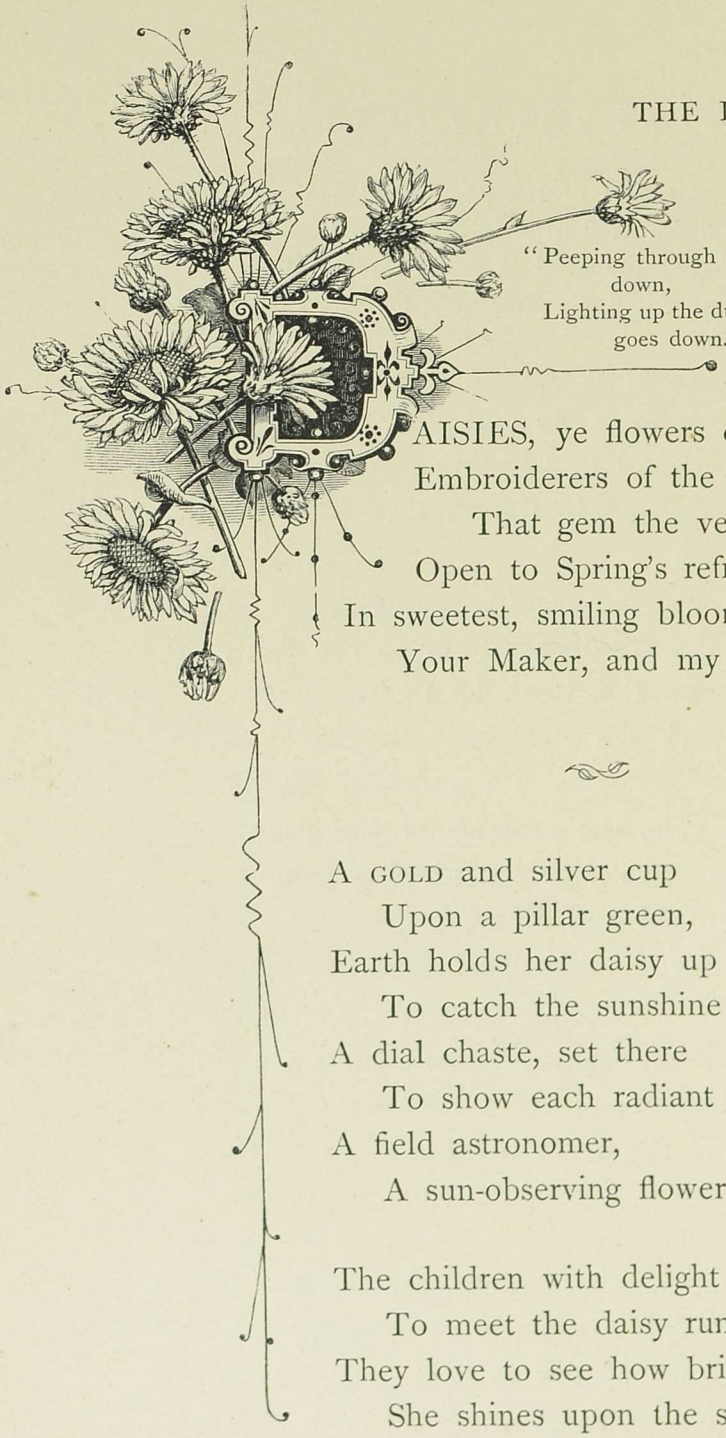
MILD offspring of a dark and sullen sire!
Whose modest form, so delicately fine,
Was nursed in whirling storms,
And cradled in the winds.

Thee, when young Spring first questioned Winter's sway,
And dared the sturdy blusterer to the fight,
Thee on this bank he threw
To mark the victory.

In this low vale, the promise of the year,
Serene, thou open'st to the nipping gale,
Unnoticed and alone,
Thy tender elegance.

So Virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms
Of chill adversity, in some lone walk
Of life she rears her head
Obscure and unobserved;

While every bleaching breeze, that on her blows,
Chastens her spotless purity of breast,
And hardens her to bear
Serene the ills of life.



THE DAISY.

"Peeping through the long grass, smiling on the down,
Lighting up the dusky bank, just where the sun goes down."

DAISIES, ye flowers of lowly birth,
Embroiderers of the carpet earth,
That gem the velvet sod;
Open to Spring's refreshing air;
In sweetest, smiling bloom declare
Your Maker, and my God.

A GOLD and silver cup
Upon a pillar green,
Earth holds her daisy up
To catch the sunshine in.
A dial chaste, set there
To show each radiant hour:
A field astronomer,
A sun-observing flower.

The children with delight
To meet the daisy run;
They love to see how bright
She shines upon the sun.

Like lowly white-crowned queen,
Demurely doth she bend,
And stands with quiet mien,
The little children's friend.

Not worlds on worlds in phalanx deep,
Need we to prove a God is here;
The daisy, fresh from Winter's sleep,
Tells of His hand in lines as clear.

For who but He that arched the skies,
And pours the day-spring's living flood,
Wondrous alike in all He tries,
Could rear the daisy's purple bud,

Mould its green cup, its wiry stem,
Its fringèd border nicely spin,
And cut the gold-embossèd gem,
That, set in silver, gleams within,

And fling it, unrestrained and free,
O'er hill, and dale, and desert sod,
That man, where'er he walks, may see,
In every step, the stamp of God?

HYMN IN SEED-TIME.

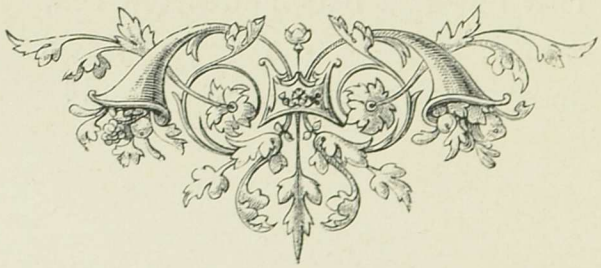
"And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased."—*St. Mark* iv. 8.

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."—*Romans* vi. 22.

O God! by whom the seed is given;
By whom the harvest blest;
Whose word, like manna showered from heaven,
Is planted in our breast;

Preserve it from the passing feet,
And plunderers of the air;
The sultry sun's intenser heat,
And weeds of worldly care!

Though buried deep or thinly strewn,
Do Thou thy grace supply;
The hope in earthly furrows sown
Shall ripen in the sky!



"He bringeth the wind out of His treasuries."

Psalm CXXXV. 7.

MARCH.

"Stormy wind fulfilling His word."—*Psalm* cxlviii. 8.

I LOVED to walk where none had walked before,
About the rocks that ran along the shore;
Or far beyond the sight of men to stray,
And take my pleasure when I lost my way.
For then 'twas mine to trace the hilly heath,
And all the mossy moor that lies beneath.
Here had I favourite stations where I stood,
And heard the murmurs of the ocean flood,
With not a sound beside, except when flew,
Aloft, the lapwing, or the grey curlew,
Who with wild notes my fancied power defied,
And mocked the dreams of solitary pride.
I loved to stop at every creek and bay
Made by the river in its winding way,
And call to memory—not by marks they bare,
But by the thoughts that were created there.
Pleasant it was to view the sea-gulls strive
Against the storm, or in the ocean dive,
With eager scream; or when they dropping gave
Their closing wings to sail upon the wave:
Then, as the winds and waters raged around,
And breaking billows mixed their deafening sound,
They on the rolling deep securely hung,
And calmly rode the restless waves among.

Nor pleased it less around me to behold
Far up the beach, the yeasty sea-foam rolled ;
Or, from the shore upborne, to see on high
Its frothy flakes in wild confusion fly.

* * * *

View now the Winter storm ! above, one cloud,
Black and unbroken, all the clouds o'ershroud.
All where the eye delights, yet dreads, to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam
Upon the billows rising, all the deep
Is restless change ; the waves so swelled and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swells,
Nor one, one moment in its station dwells :
But nearer land you may the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase ;
May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch ;
Curled as they come, they strike with furious force,
And then re-flowing, take their grating course,
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past
Rolled by their rage, and shall while ages last.

Far off the petrel, in the troubled way,
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray ;
She rises often, often drops again,
And sports at ease on the tempestuous main.
In-shore, their passage tribes of sea-gulls urge,
And drop for prey within the sweeping surge ;
Oft in the rough opposing blasts they fly
Far back, then turn, and all their force apply,
While to the storm they give their weak complaining cry :
Or clap the sleek white pinion to the breast,
And in the restless ocean dip for rest.

A VERNAL THOUGHT.

O FESTAL Spring! midst thy victorious glow,
Far-spreading o'er the kindled woods and plains,
And streams that bound to meet thee from their chains,
Well might there lurk the shadow of a woe
For human hearts, and in the exulting flow
Of thy rich songs a melancholy tone,
Were we of mould all earthly, we alone,
Severed from thy great spell, and doomed to go
Farther, still farther, from our sunny time,
Never to feel the breathings of our prime,
Never to flower again! But we, O Spring!
Cheered by deep spirit-whispers not of earth,
Press to the regions of thy heavenly birth,
As here thy flowers and birds press on to bloom and sing.

A MORNING IN MARCH.

THE cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green fields sleep in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated,
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
The ploughboy is whooping—anon—anon!
There's joy on the mountains;
There's life in the fountains,
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

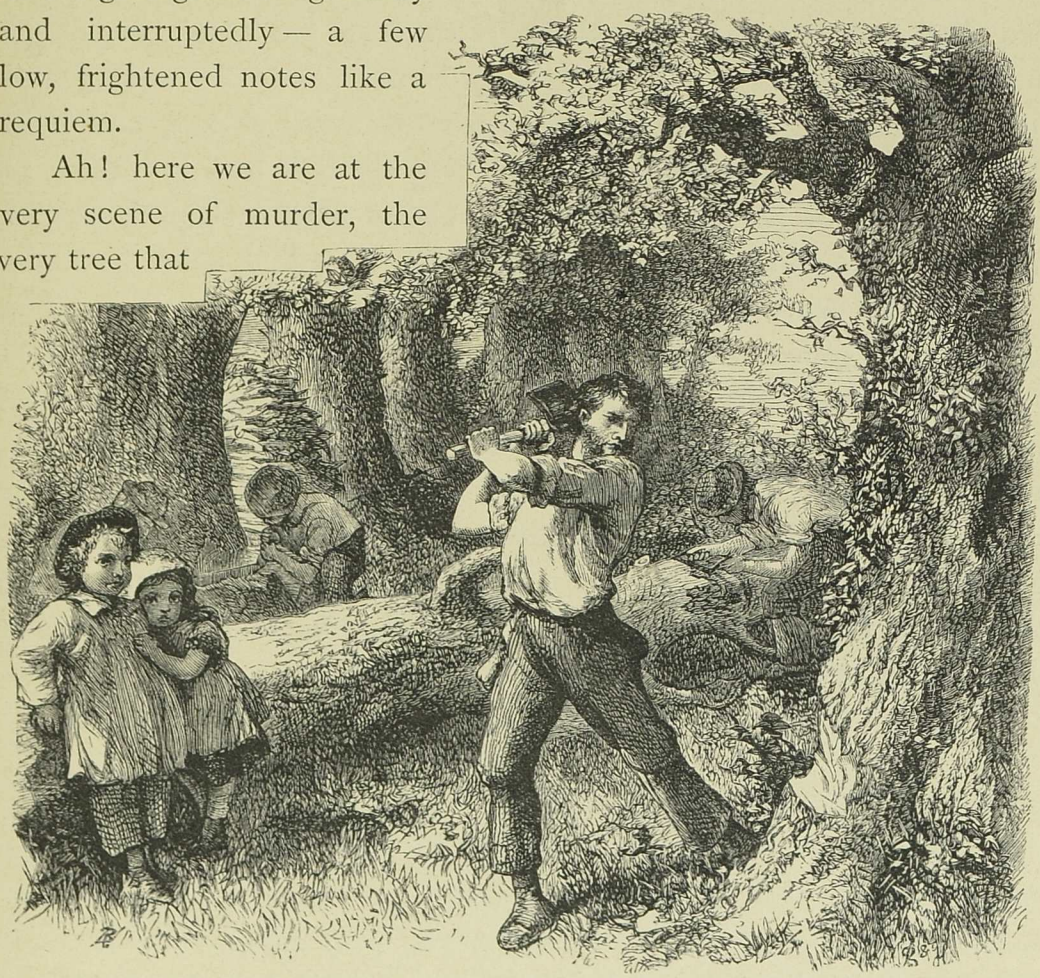
FELLING TIMBER.

"The woodman's heart is in his work,
His axe is sharp and good:
With sturdy arm and steady aim
He smites the gaping wood;
From distant rocks
His lusty knocks
Re-echoing many a rood."

We had nearly threaded the wood, and were approaching an open grove of magnificent oaks on the other side, when sounds other than of nightingales burst on our ear, the deep and frequent strokes of the woodman's axe, and emerging from the Penge, we discovered the havoc which that axe had committed. Above twenty of the finest trees lay stretched on the velvet turf. There they lay in every shape and form of devastation: some, bare trunks stripped ready for the timber-carriage, with the bark built up in long piles at the side; some with the spoilers busy about them, stripping, hacking, hewing; others with their noble branches, their brown and fragrant shoots all fresh as if

they were alive—majestic corpses, the slain of to-day! The grove was like a field of battle. The young lads who were stripping the bark, the very children who were picking up the chips, seemed awed and silent, as if conscious that death was around them. The nightingales sang faintly and interruptedly — a few low, frightened notes like a requiem.

Ah! here we are at the very scene of murder, the very tree that



they are felling; they have just hewn round the trunk with those slaughtering axes, and are about to saw it asunder. Into how grand an attitude was that young man thrown as he gave the final strokes round the root; and how wonderful is the effect of that supple and apparently powerless saw, bending like a ribbon, and

yet overmastering that giant of the woods, conquering and overthrowing that thing of life! Now it has passed half through the trunk, and the woodman has begun to calculate which way the tree will fall; he drives a wedge to direct its course; now a few more movements of the noiseless saw; and then a larger wedge. See how the branches tremble! Hark how the trunk begins to crack! Another stroke of the huge hammer on the wedge, and the tree quivers, as with a mortal agony, reels, shakes, and falls. How slow, and solemn, and awful it is! How like to death, to human death in its grandest forms! Cæsar in the Capitol, Seneca in the bath, could not fall more sublimely than that oak.

Even the heavens seem to sympathize with the devastation. The clouds have gathered into one thick low canopy, dark and vapoury as the smoke which overhangs London; the setting sun is just gleaming underneath with a dim and bloody glare, and the crimson rays spreading upward with a lurid and portentous grandeur, a subdued and dusky glow, like the light reflected on the sky from some vast conflagration. The deep flush fades away, and the rain begins to descend, and we hurry homeward rapidly, yet sadly, forgetful alike of the flowers and the wetting—thinking and talking only of the fallen tree.

DAFFODILS.

"Daffodils that come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty."

FAIR Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attained his noon.

Stay, stay
Until the hastening day
Has run
But to the evensong;
And having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you;
We have as short a Spring,
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain,
Or as the pearls of morning dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

THE FIRST BUDS.

Ah, how wonderful is the advent of Spring!—the great annual miracle of the blossoming of Aaron's rod, repeated on myriads and myriads of branches!—the gentle progression and growth of herbs, flowers, trees—gentle, and yet irrepressible—which no force can stay, no violence restrain, like love, that wins its way and cannot be withstood by any human power, because itself is divine power. If Spring came but once in a century, instead of once a year, or burst forth with the sound of an earthquake, and not in silence, what wonder and expectation would there be in all hearts to behold the miraculous change!

THE STORM.

When from its high and sullen cloud
The ruthless thunder roars aloud,
And from its murky canopy
Flashes the lightning's vengeful eye,—

That bolt, that voice, from heaven to heaven,
Their course, their charge by Thee are given ;
And Thou, as merciful as dread,
Wilt keep them from Thy suppliant's head.

To sun and shade, to calm and shower,
Thou, only Thou, assign'st the hour—
Serene upon the tempest's wing,
As in the softest gale of Spring.

When ocean wears its halcyon hue,
Its matchless depth of native blue ;
When wave on wave subsides to rest,
Thy Spirit broods upon its breast.

Or when those waves, convulsed and high,
Urge stern revolt against the sky ;
When winds and rain, in mingled might,
More deeply cloud the powers of night ;—

When masts are bowed, and sails are rent ;
When skill and strength alike are spent ;
When danger rears its giant form,—
Thy gracious eye controls the storm.

Our hope, our comfort, staff and rod,
Are but Thy presence, glorious God !
In that confiding, safe we go,
Nor dread the storm, nor fear the foe.

EARLY SPRING.

WINTER is past—the little bee resumes
Her share of sun and shâde, and o'er the lea
Hums her first hymnings to the flowers' perfumes,
And wakes a sense of gratefulness in me :
The little daisy keeps its wonted place,
Ere March by April gets disarmed of snow ;
A look of joy opes on its smiling face,
Turned to that Power that suffers it to blow.

Ah, pleasant time ! yet, pleasing as you be,
One still more pleasing Hope reserves for me,
Where suns, unsetting, one long Summer shine,
Flowers endless bloom, where Winter ne'er destroys :
O may the good man's righteous end be mine,
That I may witness these unfading joys !

RETURN OF MARCH.

THE stormy March is come at last,
With wind and cloud and changing skies :
I hear the rushing of the blast,
That through the snowy valley flies.

Ah! passing few are those who speak,
Wild, stormy month, in praise of thee!
Yet, though thy winds are loud and bleak,
Thou art a welcome month to me.

For thou to northern lands again
The glad and glorious sun dost bring;
And thou hast joined the gentle train,
And wear'st the gentle name of Spring.

And in thy reign of blast and storm
Smiles many a long bright sunny day;
When the changed winds are soft and warm,
And heaven puts on the blue of May.

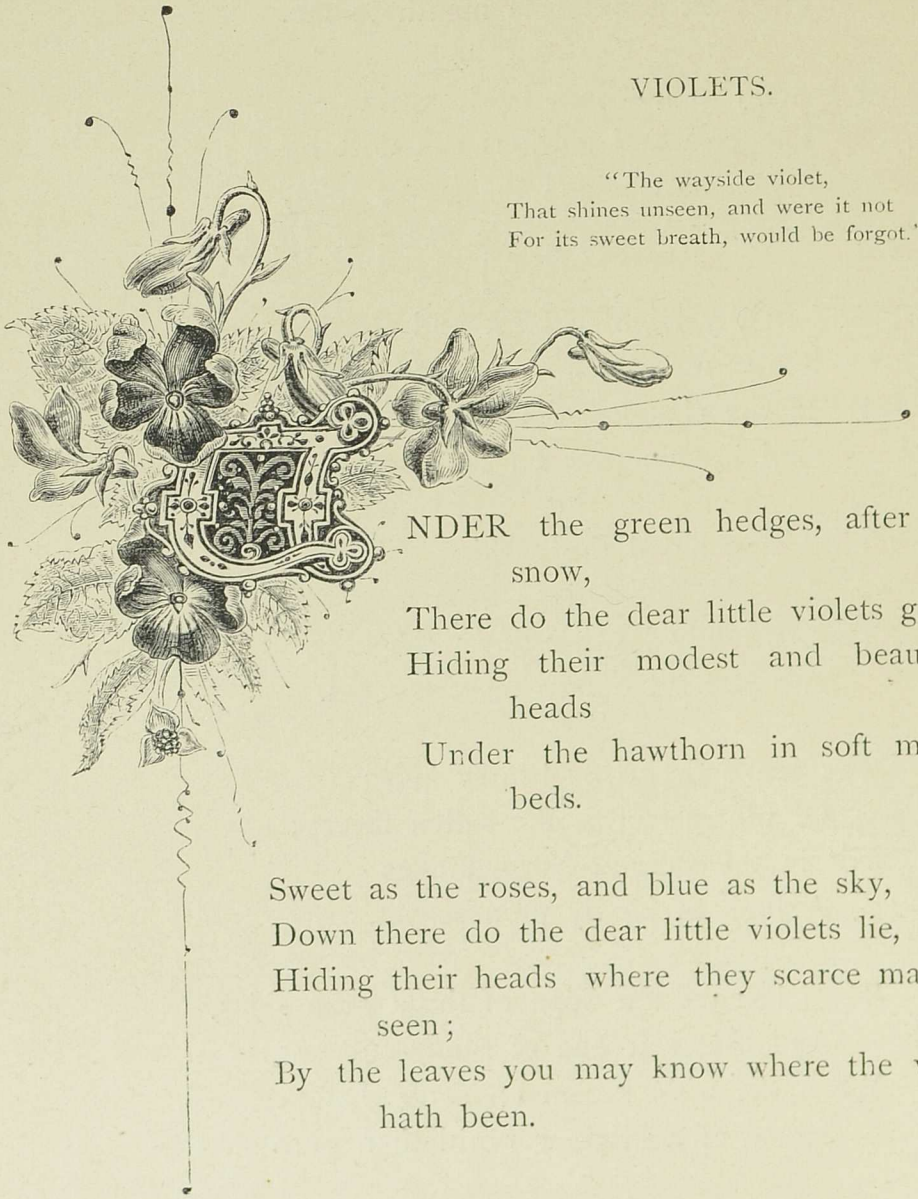
Then sing aloud the gushing rills,
And the full springs from frost set free,
That, brightly leaping down the hills,
Are just set out to meet the sea.

The year's departing beauty hides
Of wintry storms the sullen threat;
But in thy sternest frown abides
A look of kindly promise yet.

Thou bring'st the hope of those calm skies,
And that soft hue of sunny showers,
When the wide bloom on earth that lies,
Seems of a brighter world than ours.

VIOLETS.

"The wayside violet,
That shines unseen, and were it not
For its sweet breath, would be forgot."



UNDER the green hedges, after the snow,
There do the dear little violets grow,
Hiding their modest and beautiful heads
Under the hawthorn in soft mossy beds.

Sweet as the roses, and blue as the sky,
Down there do the dear little violets lie,
Hiding their heads where they scarce may be seen;
By the leaves you may know where the violet hath been.

THE SKY-LARK.

ETHEREAL minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth, where cares abound;
Or, while thy wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest, upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, and music still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring warbler! that love-prompted strain,
('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond,)
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain;
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing,
All independent of the leafy Spring.

Leave to the nightingale the shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine,
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with rapture more divine:
Type of the wise, who soar—but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home.

BIRD of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Light be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness!
Bless'd is thy dwelling-place!
O, to abide in the desert with thee!

Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud ;
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamer that heralds the day ;
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, hie, hie thee away!

Then when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather-blooms,
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness!
Bless'd is thy dwelling-place!
O, to abide in the desert with thee!

ON GLADNESS IN SPRING.

In the opening of the Spring, when all Nature begins to recover herself, the same animal pleasure which makes the birds sing, and the whole brute creation rejoice, rises very sensibly in the heart of man. I would have my readers endeavour to moralize this natural pleasure of the soul, and to improve this vernal delight, as Milton calls it, into a Christian virtue. When we find ourselves inspired with this pleasing

instinct, this secret satisfaction and complacency, arising from the beauties of the creation, let us consider to whom we stand indebted for all these entertainments of sense, and who it is that thus opens His hand and fills the world with good. The apostle instructs us to take advantage of our present temper of mind, to graft upon it such a religious exercise as is particularly conformable to it, by that precept which advises those who are sad to pray, and those who are merry to sing psalms. The cheerfulness of heart which springs up in us from the survey of Nature's works, is an admirable preparation for gratitude. The mind has gone a great way towards praise and thanksgiving that is filled with such a secret gladness. A grateful reflection on the Supreme Cause who produces it, sanctifies it in the soul, and gives it its proper value. Such a habitual disposition of mind consecrates every field and wood, turns an ordinary walk into a morning or evening sacrifice, and will improve those transient gleams of joy, which naturally brighten up and refresh the soul on such occasions, into an inviolable and perpetual state of bliss and happiness.

THE REVIVING INFLUENCE OF SPRING.

FAIR is the face of Spring,
When rural songs and odours wake the morn,
To every eye; but how much more to his,
Round whom the bed of sickness long diffused
Its melancholy gloom! how doubly fair,
When first with fresh-born vigour he inhales
The balmy breeze, and feels the blessèd sun,
Warm at his bosom, from the springs of life
Chasing oppressive damps and languid pain.

HYMN FOR MARCH.

"He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm."
St. Matthew viii. 26.

THE billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds overcast my wintry sky;
Out of the depths to Thee I call,
My fears are great, my strength is small.

O Lord, the pilot's part perform,
And guide and guard me through the storm;
Defend me from each threatening ill,
Control the waves, say, "Peace, be still!"

Amidst the roaring of the sea
My soul still hangs her hopes on Thee;
Thy constant love, Thy faithful care
Is all that saves me from despair.

Dangers of every shape and name
Attend the followers of the Lamb,
Who leave the world's deceitful shore,
And leave it to return no more.

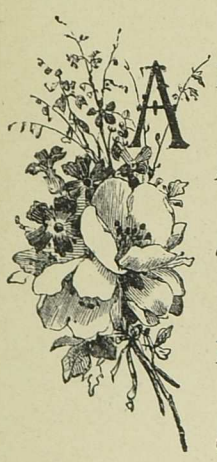
Though tempest-tossed, and half a wreck;
My Saviour through the floods I seek:
Let neither winds nor stormy main
Force back my shattered bark again!

O'er heaven's bright azure hence with joyful eyes
The farmer sees dark clouds assembling rise;
Borne o'er his fields a heavy torrent falls,
And strikes the earth in hasty, driving squalls.

BLOOMFIELD.

APRIL.

"I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing."—*Ezekiel* xxxiv. 26.



ALL day the low-hung clouds have dropped
Their garnered fulness down;
All day that soft grey mist hath wrapped
Hill, valley, grove, and town.
There has not been a sound to-day
To break the calm of Nature:
Nor motion, I might almost say,
Of life or living creature;
Of waving bough, or warbling bird,
Or cattle faintly lowing;
I could have half believed I heard
The leaves and blossoms growing.
I stood to hear—I love it well,
The rain's continuous sound;
Small drops, but thick and fast they fell,
Down straight into the ground.
For leafy thickness is not yet
Earth's naked breast to screen,
Though every dripping branch is set
With shoots of tender green.
Sure since I looked at early morn,
Those honeysuckle buds
Have swelled to double growth; that thorn
Hath put forth larger studs;

That lilac's cleaving cones have burst,
The milk-white flowers revealing;
E'en now, upon my senses first
Methinks their sweets are stealing.
The very earth, the steamy air
Is all with fragrance rife;
And grace and beauty everywhere
Are flushing into life.
Down, down they come—those fruitful stores!
Those earth-rejoicing drops!
A momentary deluge pours,
Then thins, decreases, stops;
And ere the dimples on the stream
Have circled out of sight,
Lo! from the west, a parting gleam
Breaks forth of amber light.

LESSONS OF RETURNING SPRING.

Lessons sweet of Spring returning,
Welcome to the thoughtful heart!
May I call ye sense or learning,
Instinct pure, or Heaven-taught art?
Be your title what it may,
Sweet the lengthening April day,
While with you the soul is free,
Ranging wild o'er hill and lea.

Soft as Memnon's harp at morning,
To the inward ear devout,

Touched by light, with heavenly warning
Your transporting chords ring out.
Every leaf in every nook,
Every wave in every brook,
Chanting with a solemn voice,
Minds us of our better choice.

Needs no show of mountain hoary,
Winding shore or deepening glen,
Where the landscape in its glory
Teaches truth to wandering men:
Give true hearts but earth and sky,
And some flowers to bloom and die—
Homely scenes and simple views
Lowly thoughts may best infuse.

See the soft green willow springing
Where the waters gently pass,
Every way her free arms flinging
O'er the moist and reedy grass.
Long ere Winter blasts are fled,
See her tipped with vernal red,
And her kindly flower displayed
Ere her leaf can cast a shade.

Though the rudest hand assail her,
Patiently she droops awhile,
But when showers and breezes hail her,
Wears again her willing smile.
Thus I learn Contentment's power
From the slighted willow bower,
Ready to give thanks and live
On the least that Heaven may give.

If, the quiet brooklet leaving,
Up the stony vale I wind,
Haply half in fancy grieving
For the shades I leave behind,
By the dusty wayside drear,
Nightingales with joyous cheer
Sing, my sadness to reprove,
Gladlier than in cultured grove.

Where the thickest boughs are twining
Of the greenest, darkest tree,
There they plunge, the light declining—
All may hear, but none may see.
Fearless of the passing hoof,
Hardly will they fleet aloof;
So they live in modest ways,
Trust entire, and ceaseless praise.

HEDGEROWS IN APRIL.

I HAVE found violets. April hath come on,
And the cool winds feel softer, and the rain
Falls in the beaded drops of Summer time.
You may hear birds at morning, and at eve
The tame dove lingers till the twilight falls,
Cooing upon the eaves, and drawing in
His beautiful bright neck, and from the hills
A murmur, like the hoarseness of the sea,
Tells the release of waters, and the earth
Sends up a pleasant smell, and the dry leaves
Are lifted by the grass—and so I know

That Nature, from her delicate ear, hath heard
The dropping of the velvet foot of Spring.

I love to go in the capricious days
Of April and hunt violets—when the rain
Is in the blue cups trembling, and they nod
So gracefully to the kisses of the wind.
It may be deemed unmanly, but the wise
Read Nature like the manuscript of Heaven,
And call the flowers its poetry. Go out!
Ye spirits of habitual unrest,
And read it when the fever of the world
Hath made your hearts impatient, and, if life
Hath yet one spring unpoisoned, it will be
Like a beguiling music to its flow,
And you will no more wonder that I love
To hunt for violets in the April time.

THE RAINBOW.

A FRAGMENT of a rainbow bright
Through the moist air I see,
All dark and damp on yonder height,
All bright and clear to me.
An hour ago the storm was here,
The gleam was far behind:
So will our joys and griefs appear
When earth has ceased to blind.
Grief will be joy if on its edge
Fall soft that holiest ray,
Joy will be grief if no faint pledge
Be there of heavenly day.

WELCOME TO APRIL.

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new year, delaying long;
Thou doest expectant Nature wrong
Delaying long; delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the Summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new year, delaying long,
Delay'st the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And, drowned in yonder living blue,
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

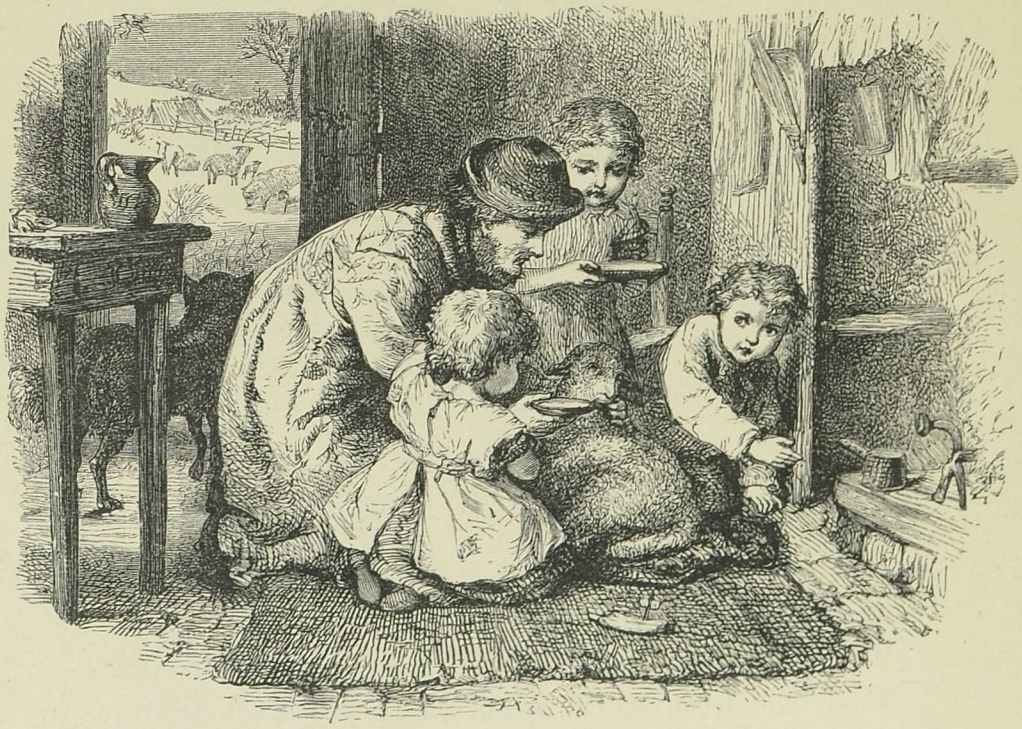
Where now the sea-mew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

YOUNG LAMBS.

SPREAD around thy tenderest diligence
In flowery Spring-time, when the new-dropt lamb,
Tottering with weakness by his mother's side,
Feels the fresh world about him; and each thorn,
Hillock, or furrow, trips his feeble feet:
Oh, guard his meek, sweet innocence from all
Th' innumerous ills that rush around his life;
Mark the quick kite, with beak and talons prone,
Circling the skies to snatch him from the plain;
Observe the lurking crows; beware the brake,
There the sly fox the careless minute waits;
Nor trust thy neighbour's dog, nor earth, nor sky:
Thy bosom to a thousand cares divide.

Eurus oft slings his hail; the tardy fields
Pay not their promised food; and oft the dam
O'er her weak twins with empty udder mourns,
Or fails to guard, when the bold bird of prey
Alights, and hops in many turns around,
And tires her, also turning: to her aid



Be nimble, and the weakest, in thine arms,
Gently convey to the warm cote, and oft,
Between the lark's note and the nightingale's,
His hungry bleating still with tepid milk;
In this soft office may thy children join,
And charitable habits learn in sport;
Nor yield him to himself, ere vernal airs
Sprinkle thy little croft with daisy flowers.

A VALLEY IN SPRING-TIME.

A GREEN and silent spot, amid the hills;
A small and silent dell. O'er stiller place
No singing sky-lark ever poised himself.
The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,
Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,
All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
Which now blooms most profusely: but the dell,
Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate
As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,
When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve,
The level sunshine glimmers with green light.
Oh! 'tis a quiet, spirit-healing nook!
Which all, methinks, would love; but chiefly he,
The humble man, who, in his youthful years,
Knew just so much of folly as had made
His early manhood more securely wise.
Here he might lie on fern or withered heath,
While from the singing-lark (that sings unseen
The minstrelsy that solitude loves best),
And from the sun, and from the breezy air,
Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame;
And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,
Made up a meditative joy, and found
Religious meanings in the forms of Nature.
And so, his senses gradually wrapped
In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,
And dreaming, hears thee still, O singing-lark,
That singest like an angel in the clouds!

SPRING FLOWERS.

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
Are Thy returns! e'en as the flowers in Spring;
To which, besides their own demean,
The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring.
Grief melts away
Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing.

Who would have thought my shrivelled heart
Could have recovered greenness? It was gone
Quite under ground; as flowers depart
To see their mother-root, when they have blown:
Where they, together,
All the hard weather,
Dead to the world, keep house unknown.

O that I once past changing were,
Fast in thy Paradise, where no flower can wither!
Many a Spring I shoot up fair
Offering at heaven, growing and groaning thither.
Nor doth my flower
Want a Spring shower;
My sins and I joining together.

And now in age I bud again,
After so many deaths I live and write:
I once more smell the dew and rain,
And relish versing. Oh! my only Light,

It cannot be
That I am he
On whom Thy tempests fell at night!

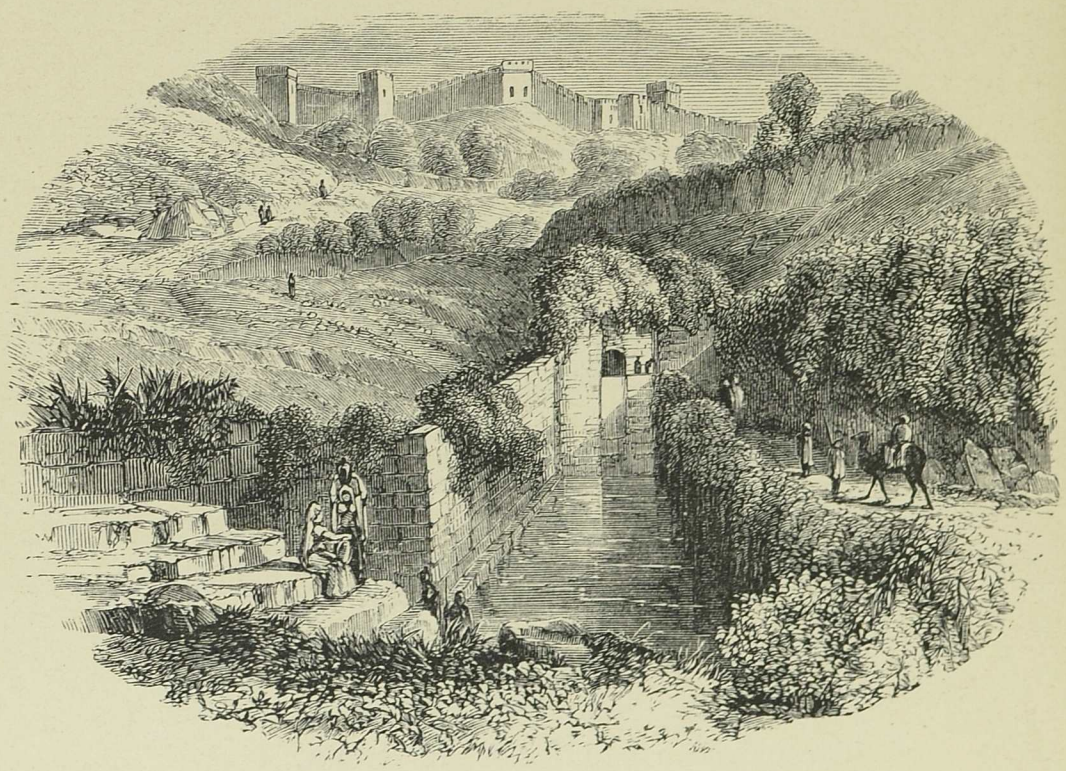
These are Thy wonders, Lord of love!
To make us see we are but flowers that glide:
Which when we once can find and prove,
Thou hast a garden for us where, to bide.
Who would be more,
Swelling through store,
Forfeit their Paradise by their pride.

THE FIRST SWALLOW.

The gorse is yellow on the heath,
The banks with speedwell flowers are gay,
The oaks are budding, and beneath,
The hawthorn soon will bear the wreath,
The silver wreath of May.

The welcome guest of settled Spring,
The swallow, too, is come at last;
Just at sunset, when thrushes sing,
I saw her dash with rapid wing,
And hailed her as she passed.

Come, Summer visitant, attach
To my reed roof your nest of clay,
And let my ear your music catch,
Low twittering underneath the thatch,
At the grey dawn of day.



EARLY PIETY.

By cool Siloam's shady rill
How sweet the lily grows!
How sweet the breath beneath the hill
Of Sharon's dewy rose!

Lo! such the child whose early feet
The paths of peace have trod;
Whose secret heart, with influence sweet,
Is upward drawn to God!

By cool Siloam's shady rill
The lily must decay,
The rose that blooms beneath the hill
Must shortly fade away.

And soon, too soon, the wintry hour
Of man's maturer age,
Will shake the soul with sorrow's power,
And stormy passions rage!

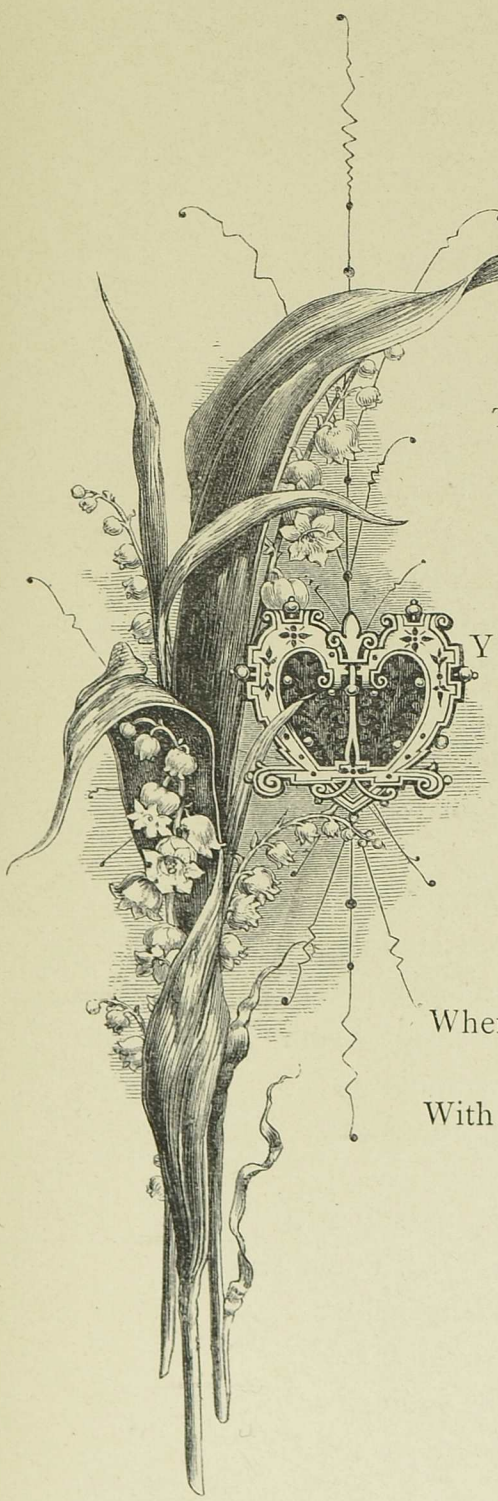
O Thou, whose infant feet were found
Within Thy Father's shrine!
Whose years, with changeless virtue crowned,
Were all alike Divine:

Dependent on Thy bounteous breath,
We seek Thy grace alone,
In childhood, manhood, age, and death,
To keep us still Thine own.

THE DAY OF FLOWERS.

O Father! Lord!
The All-beneficent! I bless Thy name
That Thou hast mantled the green earth with flowers,
Linking our hearts to Nature. By the love
Of their wild blossoms, our young footsteps first
Into her deep recesses are beguiled—

Her minster-cells, dark glen and forest bower,
Where, thrilling with its earliest sense of Thee,
Amidst the low religious whisperings,
And shivery leaf-sounds of the solitude,
The spirit wakes to worship, and is made
Thy living temple. By the breath of flowers
Thou callest us, from city throngs and cares,
Back to the woods, the birds, the mountain streams,
That sing of Thee;—back to free childhood's heart,
Fresh with the dews of tenderness. Thou bidd'st
The lilies of the field with placid smile
Reprove man's feverish strivings, and infuse
Through his worn soul a more unworldly life,
With their soft holy breath. Thou hast not left
His purer nature, with its fine desires,
Uncared for in this universe of Thine!
The glowing rose attests it, the beloved
Of poet-hearts, touch'd by their fervent dreams
With spiritual light, and made a source
Of heaven-ascending thoughts. Even to faint age
Thou lend'st the vernal bliss: the old man's eye
Falls on the kindling blossoms, and his soul
Remembers youth and love, and hopefully
Turns unto Thee, who call'st earth's buried germs
From dust to splendour; as the mortal seed
Shall, at thy summons, from the grave spring up
To put on glory, to be girt with power,
And filled with immortality. Receive
Thanks, blessings, love, for these Thy lavish boons,
And, most of all, their heavenward influences,
O Thou that gav'st us flowers!



THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

"He will beautify the meek with salvation."
Psalm cxlix. 4.

MY heart is full of prayer!
When I behold the "Lilies of the field,"
Shading their heads like drops of dew congealed,
So humble, yet so fair!

Thus do the tears that rise
When the rough paths of life are meekly trod,
With veilèd lids, with soul upraised to God,—
Look precious in His eyes!

HYMN FOR APRIL.

Thy mighty working, mighty God!
Wakes all my powers; I look abroad,
And can no longer rest;
I, too, must sing when all things sing,
And from my heart the praises ring
The Highest loveth best.

If Thou, in Thy great love to us,
Wilt scatter joy and beauty thus,
O'er this poor world of ours,
What noble glories shall be given
Hereafter in Thy shining heaven
Set round with golden towers!

What thrilling joy, when on our sight
Christ's garden beams in cloudless light,
Where all the air is sweet;
Still laden with the unwearied hymn
From Cherubim and Seraphim
Who God's high praise repeat.

Oh, were I there! Oh, that I now
Before Thy throne, my God, could bow,
And wave my heavenly palm!
Then like the angels would I raise
My voice, and sing Thy endless praise
In many a sweet-toned psalm.

M

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

Canticles ii. 11, 12.

MAY.

"Lo! where the rosy-bosomed Hours,
Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers;
And wake the purple year."

EE the Spring
Is the earth enamelling,
And the birds on every tree
Greet this morn with melody.
Hark! how yonder throstle chaunts it,
And her mate as proudly vaunts it.
See how every stream is drest,
By her margin, with the best
Of Flora's gifts; she seems glad,
For such brooks, such flowers she had;
All the trees are quaintly tired
With green buds, of all desired;
And the hawthorn, every day,
Spreads some little show of May.
See the primrose sweetly set
By the much-loved violet,
Which the banks do sweetly cover,
As they would invite a lover,
With his lass, to see their dressing,
And to grace them by their pressing.

THE VOICE OF SPRING.

I COME, I come! ye have called me long,
I come o'er the mountains with light and song,
Ye may trace my step o'er the wakening earth,
By the winds which tell of the violet's birth,
By the primrose stars in the shadowy grass,
By the green leaves opening as I pass.

I have breathed on the South; and the chestnut-flowers,
By thousands, have burst from the forest-bowers,
And the ancient graves, and the fallen fanes,
Are veiled with wreaths on Italian plains.
—But it is not for me, in my hour of bloom,
To speak of the ruin or the tomb!

I have passed o'er the hills of the stormy North,
And the larch has hung all his tassels forth,
The fisher is out on the sunny sea,
And the reindeer bounds through the pasture free,
And the pine has a fringe of softer green,
And the moss looks bright where my step has been.

I have sent through the wood-paths a gentle sigh,
And called out each voice of the deep blue sky,
From the night-bird's lay through the starry time,
In the groves of the soft Hesperian clime,
To the swan's wild note by the Iceland lakes,
When the dark fir bough into verdure breaks.

From the streams and founts I have loosed the chain:
They are sweeping on to the silvery main,
They are flashing down from the mountain-brows,
They are flinging spray on the forest boughs,
They are bursting fresh from their sparry caves,
And the earth resounds with the joy of waves.

Come forth, O ye children of gladness, come!
Where the violets lie may now be your home.
Ye of the rose-cheek and dew-bright eye,
And the bounding footstep, to meet me fly,
With the lyre, and the wreath, and the joyous lay:
Come forth to the sunshine, I may not stay!

Away from the dwellings of care-worn men,
The waters are sparkling in wood and glen;
Away from the chamber and dusky hearth,
The young leaves are dancing in breezy mirth,
Their light stems thrill to the wild wood strains,
And Youth is abroad in my green domains.

"THE TIME OF THE SINGING OF BIRDS IS COME."

THE lark, when she means to rejoice, and cheer herself and those that hear her, quits the earth, and sings as she ascends higher into the air; and, having ended her heavenly employment, grows then mute and sad to think she must descend to the dull earth, which she would not touch but for necessity. How do the blackbird and throstle with their melodious voices bid welcome to the cheerful Spring, and

in their fixed months warble forth such ditties as no art or instrument can reach to! Nay, the smaller birds also do the like in their particular seasons, as namely, the laverock, the titlark, the little linnet, and the honest robin, that loves mankind both alive and dead. But the nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes such sweet loud music out of her little instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have very often, the clear airs, the sweet discants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, "Lord, what music hast Thou provided for the saints in heaven, when Thou affordest sinful man such music on earth!"

THE HAWTHORN.

Amongst the many buds proclaiming May,
Decking the fields in holiday array,
Striving who shall surpass in bravery,
Mark the fair blooming of the hawthorn tree,
Who, finely clothèd in a robe of white,
Feeds full the wanton eye with May's delight;
Yet for the bravery that she is in,
Doth neither handle card nor wheel to spin,
Nor changeth robes but twice, is never seen
In other colours than in white or green.
Learn then content, young shepherd, from this tree,
Whose greatest wealth is Nature's livery,
And richest ingots never toil to find,
Nor care for poverty, but of the mind.

MAY GARLANDS.

Come, ye little revellers gay,
Learners in the school of May,
Bring me here the richest crown,
Wreathed this morn on breezy down,
Or in nook of copse-wood green,
Or by river's rushy screen,
Or in sunny meadow wide,
Gemmed with cowslips in their pride;
Or perchance, high prized o'er all,
From beneath the southern wall,
From the choicest garden bed,

'Mid bright smiles of infants bred.
Each a lily of his own
Offering, or a rose half-blown.

Bring me now a crown as gay,
Wreathed and woven yesterday.
Where are now those forms so fair?
Withered, drooping, wan, and bare,
Feeling nought of earth or sky,
Shower or dew, behold they lie,
Vernal airs no more to know:
They are gone—and ye must go,
Go where all that ever bloomed,
In its hour must lie entombed.
They are gone; their light is o'er:
Ye must go; but ye once more
Hope, in joy, to be new-born,
Lovelier than May's gleaming morn.

Hearken, children of the May,
Now in your glad hour and gay.
Ye whom all good angels greet
With their treasures blithe and sweet:
None of all the wreaths ye prize
But was nursed by weeping skies.
Keen March winds, soft April showers,
Braced the roots, embalmed the flowers.
So, if e'er that second Spring
Her green robe o'er you shall fling,
Stern self-mastery, tearful prayer,
Must the way of bliss prepare,
How should else earth's flowerets prove
Meet for those pure crowns above?

THE CUCKOO.

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the grove!
Thou messenger of Spring!
Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome sing.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear:
Hast thou a star to guide thy path
Or mark the rolling year?

The schoolboy, wandering through the wood
To pull the primrose gay,
Starts, the new voice of Spring to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou fliest thy vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another Spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year!

O could I fly, I'd fly with thee!
We'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the Spring.

AN EVENING IN MAY.

PISCATOR. And now, scholar, my direction for fly-fishing is ended with this shower, for it has done raining. And now look about you, and see how pleasantly that meadow looks; nay, and the earth smells as sweetly too. Come, let me tell you what holy Mr. Herbert says of such days and flowers as these; and then we will thank God that we enjoy them, and walk to the river and sit down quietly, and try to catch the other brace of trouts.

"Sweet day! so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose! whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet Spring! full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But when the whole world turns to coal,
Then chiefly lives."

VENATOR. I thank you, good master, for your good direction for fly-fishing, and for the sweet enjoyment of the pleasant day, which is so far spent without offence to God or man.

* * * * *

So when I would beget content, and increase confidence in the power and wisdom and providence of Almighty God, I will walk the

meadows by some gliding stream, and there contemplate the lilies that take no care, and those very many other various little living, creatures that are not only created, but fed, man knows not how, by the goodness of the God of Nature, and therefore trust in Him. This is my purpose; and so, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord:" and let the blessing of St. Peter's Master be with mine.

PISCATOR. And upon all that are lovers of virtue, and dare trust in His providence, and be quiet, and go a angling.

"STUDY TO BE QUIET."

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SPRING, AND ITS MORAL ANALOGIES.

How welcome are the early signs, and precursory appearances of the Spring! the earlier dawn of day; a certain cheerful cast in the light, even though still shining over an expanse of desolation,—it has the appearance of a smile; a softer breathing of the air, at intervals; the bursting of the buds; the vivacity of the animal tribes; the first flowers of the season; and by degrees a delicate, dubious tint of green. It needs not that a man should be a poet, or a sentimental worshipper of Nature, to be delighted with all this.

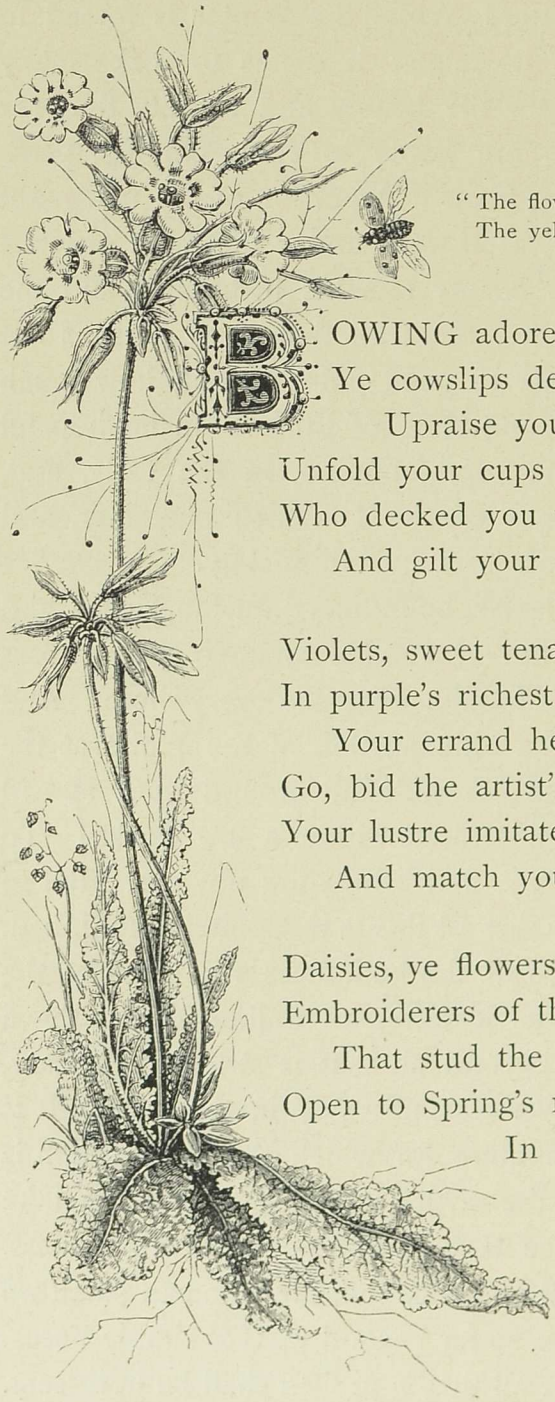
May we suggest one analogy to this? The operation of the Divine Spirit in renovating the human soul, effecting its conversion from the natural state, is sometimes displayed in this gentle and gradual manner, especially in youth. In many cases, certainly, it seems violent and sudden (resembling the transition from Winter to Spring in the northern climates); but, in the more gradual instances, whether in youth or further on in life, it is most gratifying to perceive the first indications—serious thoughts and emotions, growing sensibility of conscience, distaste for vanity and folly, deep solicitude for the welfare of the soul, a disposition to exercises of piety, a progressively clearer, more grateful, and more believing apprehension of the necessity and sufficiency of the work and sacrifice of Christ for human redemption. To a pious friend, or parent, this is more delightful than if he could have a vision of Eden, as it bloomed on the first day that Adam beheld it.

But we may carry the analogy into a wider application. It is most gratifying to perceive the signs of change on the great field of society. How like the early flowers, the more benignant light, the incipient verdure, are the new desire of knowledge, and the schemes and efforts to impart it; the rising, zealous, and rapidly enlarging activity to promote true religion. In this moral Spring we hope we are advanced a little way beyond the season of the earliest flowers.

The next observation on the Spring season is, how reluctantly the worse gives place to the better! While the Winter is forced to retire, it is yet very tenacious of its reign; it seems to make many efforts to return; it seems to hate the beauty and fertility that are supplanting it. For months we are liable to cold, chilling, pestilential blasts, and sometimes biting frosts. A portion of the malignant power lingers, or returns to lurk, as it were, under the most cheerful sunshine; so that the vegetable beauty remains in hazard, and the luxury of enjoying the Spring is attended with danger to persons not in firm health. It is too obvious to need pointing out, how much resembling this there is in the moral state of things—in the hopeful advance and improvement of the youthful mind, in the early, and, indeed, the more advanced, stages of the Christian character, and in all the commencing improvements of human society.

We may contemplate next the lavish, boundless diffusion, riches, and variety of beauty in the Spring. Survey a single confined spot, or pass over leagues, or look from a hill. Infinite affluence everywhere. And so you know, too, that it is over a wide portion of the globe at the same time. It is under your feet, extends all around you, spread out to the horizon. And all this created within a few weeks! To every observer the immensity, variety, and beauty are obvious. But to the perceptions of the skilful naturalist all this is indefinitely multiplied.

Reflect, what a display is here of the boundless resources of the Great Author. He flings forth, as it were, an unlimited wealth—a deluge of beauty, immeasurably beyond all that is strictly necessary, an immense quantity that man never sees, not even in the mass. It is true that man is not the only creature for which the gratification is designed; but it is man alone, of the earth's inhabitants, that can take any account of it as beauty, or as wisdom, and power, and goodness. Such unlimited profusion may well assure us that He who can (shall we say) afford thus to lavish treasures so far beyond what is simply necessary, can never fail of resources for all that is or ever shall be necessary.



THE COWSLIP.

"The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose."

BOWING adorers of the gale,
Ye cowslips delicately pale,
Upraise your loaded stems;
Unfold your cups in splendour: speak!
Who decked you with that ruddy streak,
And gilt your golden gems?

Violets, sweet tenants of the shade,
In purple's richest pride arrayed,
Your errand here fulfil;
Go, bid the artist's simple stain
Your lustre imitate, in vain,
And match your Maker's skill.

Daisies, ye flowers of lowly birth,
Embroiderers of the carpet earth,
That stud the velvet sod;
Open to Spring's refreshing air,
In sweetest smiling bloom declare
Your Maker, and my God.

Now in my walk with sweet surprise
I see the first Spring cowslip rise,
The plant whose pensile flowers
Bend to the earth their beauteous eyes
In sunshine, as in showers.

Low on a mossy bank it grew,
Where lichens, purple, red, and blue,
Among the verdure crept;
Its yellow ringlets, dropping dew,
The breezes lightly swept.

O welcome, as a friend! I cried,
A friend through many a season tried,
And never sought in vain,
When May, with Flora at her side,
Is dancing on the plain.

Where thick thy primrose blossoms play,
Lovely and innocent as they,
O'er coppice, lawns, and dells,
In bands the village children stray
To pluck thy nectared bells.

Unchanging still from year to year,
Like stars returning in their sphere
With undiminished rays,
Thy vernal constellations cheer
The dawn of lengthening days.

And O, till Nature's final doom,
Here unmolested may they bloom
From scythe and plough secure;
This bank their cradle and their tomb,
While earth and skies endure.

FIELD FLOWERS.

Ye field flowers! the gardens eclipse you, 'tis true,
Yet, wildings of Nature, I doat upon you,
For ye waft me to summers of old,
When the earth teemed around me with fairy delight,
And when daisies and buttercups gladdened my sight,
Like treasures of silver and gold.

I love you for lulling me back into dreams
Of the blue Highland mountains, and echoing streams,
And of broken glades breathing their balm;
While the deer was seen glancing in sunshine remote,
And the deep mellow cush of the wood-pigeon's note
Made music that sweetened the calm.

Even now what affections the violet awakes,
What loved little islands, twice seen in their lakes,
Can the wild water-lily restore;
What landscapes I read in the primrose's looks,
And what pictures of pebbled and minnowy brooks
In the vetches that tangled their shore!

Earth's cultureless buds, to my heart ye were dear,
Ere the fever of passion, or ague of fear,
Hath scathed my existence's bloom;
Once I welcome you more, in life's passionless stage,
With the visions of youth to revisit my age,
And I wish you to grow on my tomb.

HYMN FOR MAY.

"He hath made everything beautiful in his time."—*Ecclesiastes* iii. 11.

NOTHING fair on earth I see
But I straightway think on Thee;
Thou art fairest in mine eyes,
Source in whom all beauty lies!

When the golden sun forth goes,
And the east before him glows,
Quickly turns this heart of mine
To Thy heavenly form divine.

On Thy light I think at morn,
With the earliest break of dawn;
Ah, what glories lie in Thee,
Light of all Eternity!

When I watch the moon arise
'Mid Heaven's thousand golden eyes,
Then I think, more glorious far
Is the Maker of yon star.

Or I cry in Spring's sweet hours,
When the fields are gay with flowers,
As their varied hues I see,
What must their Creator be!

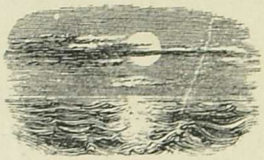
When along the brook I wander,
Or beside the fountain ponder,
Straight my thoughts take wing and mount
Up to Thee, the purest Fount.

Sweetly sings the nightingale,
Sweet the flute's soft plaintive tale,
Sweeter than their richest tone,
Is the name of Mary's Son.

Sweetly all the air is stirred
When the Echo's call is heard;
But no sounds my heart rejoice
Like to my Beloved's voice.

Come then, fairest Lord, appear,
Come, let me behold Thee here,
I would see Thee face to face,
On Thy proper light would gaze.

Take away these veils that blind,
Jesus, all my soul and mind;
Henceforth ever let my heart
See Thee truly as Thou art!



A hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

COLERIDGE.

JUNE.

"Go forth, my heart, and seek delight
In all the gifts of God's great might,
These pleasant Summer hours."

AND now comes rosy June; the blue-eyed hours,
With song of birds, and stir of leaves and wings,
And run of rills, and bubble of bright springs,
And hourly burst of pretty buds to flowers;
With buzz of happy bees in violet bowers;
And gushing lay of the loud lark, who sings
High in the silent air, and sleeks his wings
In frequent sheddings of the flying showers;
With plunge of struggling sheep in plashy floods,
And timid bleat of shorn and shivering lamb,
Answered in far-off faintness by its dam;
With cuckoo's call, from green depths of old woods;
And hum of many sounds, making one voice,
That sweetens the smooth air with a melodious noise.

"SWEET SUMMER-TIME."

THEY come! the merry Summer months of beauty, song, and flowers;
They come! the gladsome months that bring thick leafiness to bowers.
Up, up, my heart! and walk abroad, fling cark and care aside;
Seek silent hills or rest thyself where peaceful waters glide,
Or underneath the shadow vast of patriarchal tree,
Scan through its leaves the cloudless sky in rapt tranquillity.

The grass is soft as velvet touch is grateful to the hand,
And, like the kiss of maiden-love, the breeze is sweet and bland;
The daisy and the buttercup are nodding courteously;
It stirs their blood with kindest love to bless and welcome thee;
And mark how, with thine own thin locks—they now are silvery grey—
That blissful breeze is wantoning, and whispering—"Be gay!"

But soft! mine ear upcaught a sound—from yonder wood it came!
The spirit of the dim green glade did breathe his own glad name;
Yes, it is he! the hermit bird, that, apart from all his kind,
Slow spells his beads monotonous to the soft western wind;
"Cuckoo! cuckoo!" he sings again—his notes are void of art;
But simplest strains do soonest sound the deep founts of the heart.

Good Lord! it is a gracious boon for thought-crazed wight like me,
To smell again these Summer flowers beneath this Summer tree!
To suck once more in every breath their little souls away,
And feed my fancy with fond dreams of youth's bright Summer day,
When, rushing forth like untamed colt, the reckless truant-boy
Wandered through greenwoods all day long, a mighty heart of joy.

I'm sadder now—I have had cause; but O! I'm proud to think
That each pure joy-fount, loved of yore, I yet delight to drink;
Leaf, blossom, blade, hill, valley, stream, the calm, unclouded sky,
Still mingle music with my dreams, as in the days gone by.
When Summer's loveliness and light fall round me dark and cold,
I'll bear, indeed, life's heaviest curse—a heart that hath waxed old!

THE BEAUTY OF NATURE.

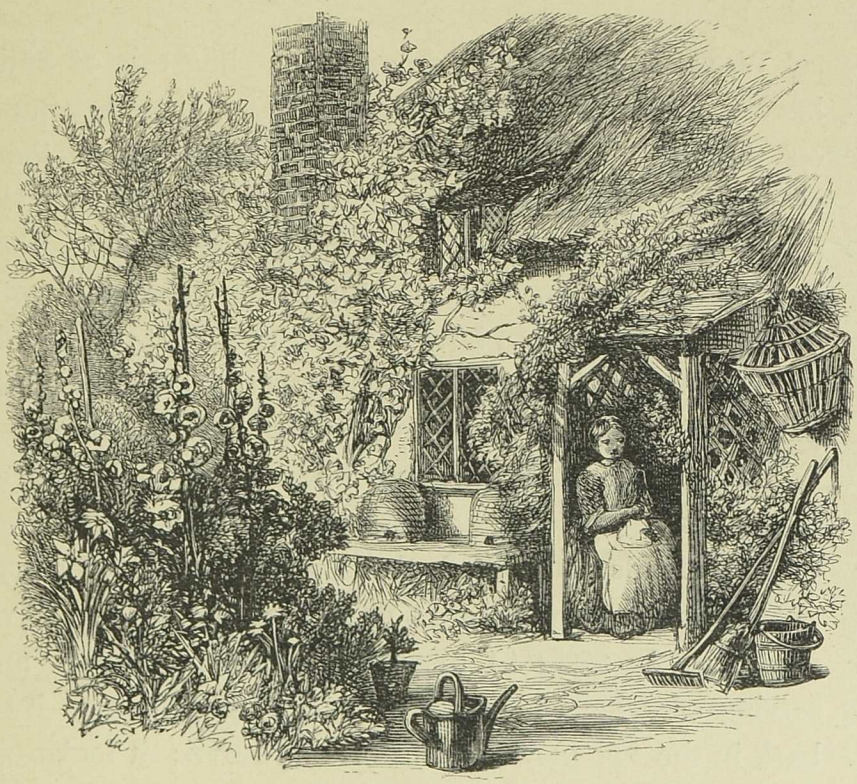
A THING of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore on every morrow are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of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

We have imagined for the mighty dead:
All lovely tales that we have heard or read
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.
Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
They always must be with us, or we die.

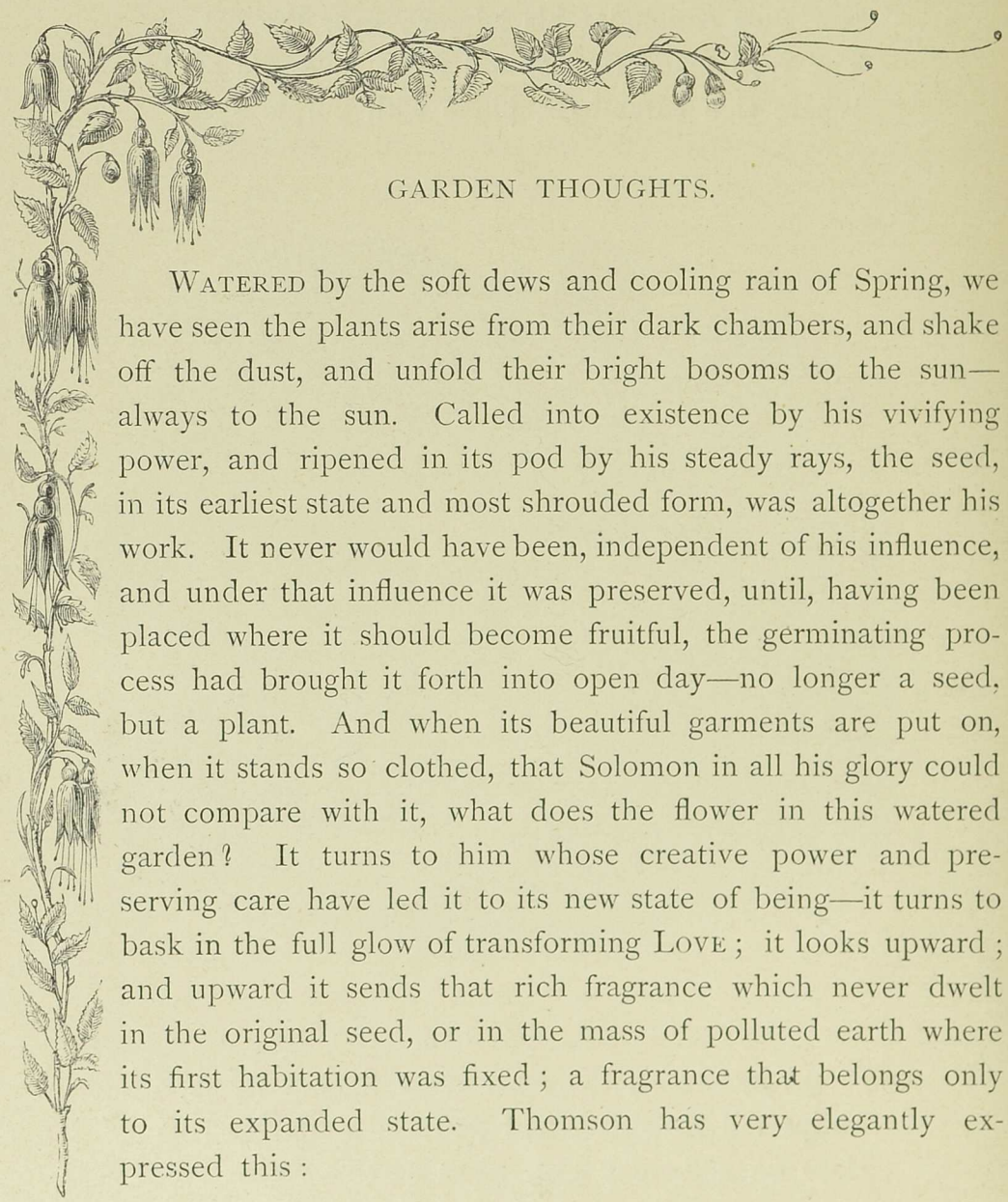
THE COTTAGER'S GARDEN.

Here—till return of morn dismissed the farm—
The careful peasant plies the sinewy arm,
Warmed as he works, and casts his look around
On every foot of that improving ground:
It is his own he sees; his master's eye
Peers not about, some secret fault to spy;
Nor voice severe is there, nor censure known;
Hope, profit, pleasure—they are all his own.
Here grow the humble cives, and hard by them
The leek with crown globose, and reedy stem,
High climb his pulse in many an even row,
Deep strike the ponderous roots in soil below,
And herbs of potent smell and pungent taste
Give a warm relish to the night's repast.

Apples and cherries grafted by his hand,
And clustered nuts for neighbouring market-stand:
Nor thus concludes his labour; near the cot,
The reed fence rises round some favourite spot;
Where rich carnations, pinks with purple eyes,



Proud hyacinths, the least some florist's prize,
Tulips tall stemmed, and pounced auriculas rise.
Here on a Sunday eve, when service ends,
Meet and rejoice a family of friends;
All speak aloud, are happy and are free,
And glad they seem, and gaily they agree.



GARDEN THOUGHTS.

WATERED by the soft dews and cooling rain of Spring, we have seen the plants arise from their dark chambers, and shake off the dust, and unfold their bright bosoms to the sun—always to the sun. Called into existence by his vivifying power, and ripened in its pod by his steady rays, the seed, in its earliest state and most shrouded form, was altogether his work. It never would have been, independent of his influence, and under that influence it was preserved, until, having been placed where it should become fruitful, the germinating process had brought it forth into open day—no longer a seed, but a plant. And when its beautiful garments are put on, when it stands so clothed, that Solomon in all his glory could not compare with it, what does the flower in this watered garden? It turns to him whose creative power and preserving care have led it to its new state of being—it turns to bask in the full glow of transforming LOVE; it looks upward; and upward it sends that rich fragrance which never dwelt in the original seed, or in the mass of polluted earth where its first habitation was fixed; a fragrance that belongs only to its expanded state. Thomson has very elegantly expressed this:

> "Soft roll your incense, herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
> In mingled clouds to Him whose sun exalts,
> Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil paints."

I am shamed by every weed that grows, when I bring myself to this test—when I compare the diligence with which each tiny blossom seeks the beams of the Summer sun, with my sad unheedfulness in striving to catch the far brighter beams of that Eternal Sun, without whose life-giving light my soul cannot be sustained. The favourite edging of my flower-beds is singularly eloquent upon this point. Heartsease composes it; and while the border that faces the south exhibits its beautiful little flowers on short stems, basking tranquilly in the ray, displaying a broad, uniform sheet of gold and silver and purple—the strips that run from south to north appear as with their heads turned, by an effort, out of the natural posture, that they too may gaze and shine. To complete the picture, where a little hedge throws its shadow over another bank of my heartsease, I see them rising on stems thrice the length of their opposite neighbours', perfectly erect, and stretching upwards as if to overtop the barrier, that they too may rejoice in the sunshine which gladdens the earth.

* * * * *

"Thou shalt be like a watered garden," says the Lord to the believing soul, whose graces shall spring up and flourish, and be fruitful, to the praise of the glory of His grace, who visits it with the small, quiet rain of his life-giving Spirit. "Thou shalt be like a watered garden," He says to His church, as one sleeper after another awakes, and arises from spiritual death, and receives light from Christ, growing up among the trees of His planting, that He may be glorified in the abundant accession to His vineyard on its very fruitful hill. "Thou shalt be like a watered garden," the Lord says to this wide earth, destined in the appointed day to see her dead men live—they that dwell in the dust of many ages, awake and sing—a dew as the dew of herbs falling upon her graves, and the bodies of the saints that slept issuing forth in the brilliancy of celestial beauty.

Then that which was sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption: that which was sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory: that

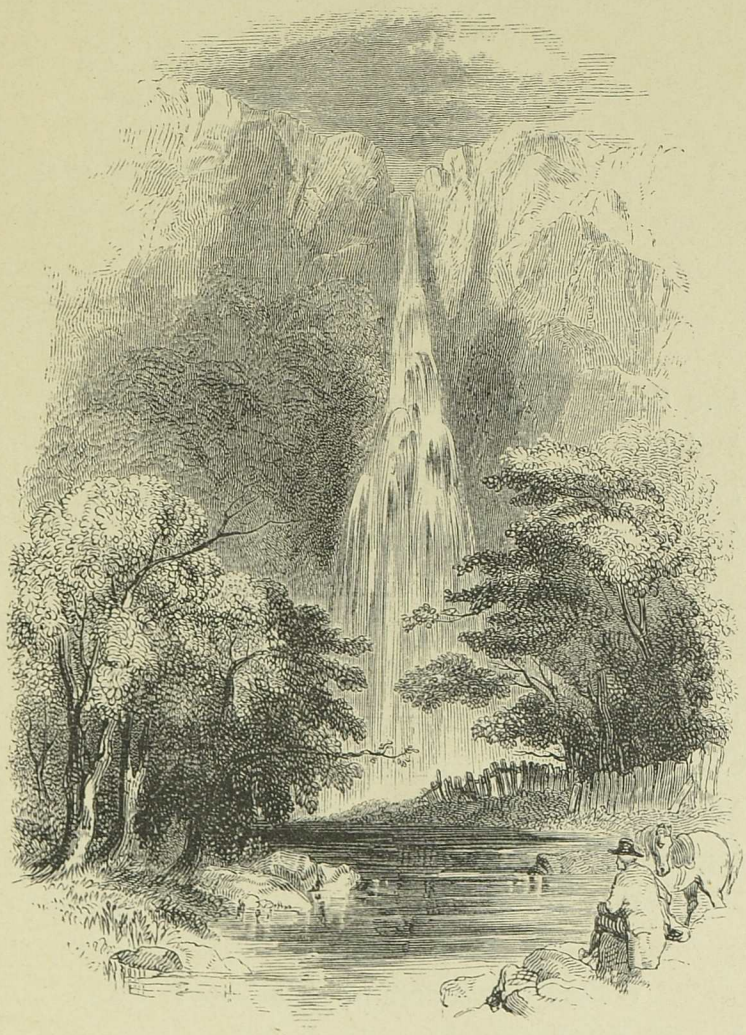
which was sown in weakness shall be raised in power: that which was sown a poor, vile, natural body, shall be raised a spiritual body, like to the glorious body of Christ, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things—yea, even death, and the grave, and destruction unto Himself. Has He not given us an earnest of this in the vivid forms that spring on every hand, as we tread the garden and the grove? Shall we look upon this annual resurrection, and not give thanks unto Him for His great power? Shall we disdain to acknowledge the benevolence of that Divine skill which has taken of the common elements and spread them out into such lovely forms, and tinted them with such resplendent hues, and finished the delicate penciling with such exquisite art, and planted them in our daily, hourly path, breathing delicious fragrance; and, to crown all, bade us consider them how they grow, as an earnest of that tender care that He is pledged to take of us, His obdurate, unthankful children!

Lord of all power and might! all Thy other works do naturally praise Thee; but such is the darkness of man's heart, that it is only by the application of that spiritual gift purchased by the blood of Christ, that even Thy saints can be impelled to give due thanks unto Thee for Thy great love, while Thou clothest the grass that makes pleasant their footpath over this magnificent wreck of a glorious world!

THE WATERFALL.

From the fierce aspect of this river, throwing
His giant body o'er the steep rock's brink,
Back in astonishment and fear we shrink:
But, gradually a calmer look bestowing,
Flowers we espy beside the torrent growing;
Flowers that peep forth from many a cleft and chink,

And, from the whirlwind of his anger, drink
Hues ever fresh, in rocky fortress blowing:
They suck—from breath that, threatening to destroy,
Is more benignant than the dewy eve—



Beauty and life, and motions as of joy:
Nor doubt but He to whom yon pine-trees nod
Their heads in sign of worship, Nature's God,
These humbler adorations will receive.

WOOD WALK AND HYMN.

"How the green shadows close
Into a rich clear summer darkness round
A luxury of gloom! Scarce doth one ray,
Even when a soft wind parts the foliage, steal
O'er the bronzed pillars of these deep arcades;
Or if it doth, 'tis with a mellowed hue
Of glow-worm coloured light."

BROODS there some spirit here?
The Summer leaves hang silent as a cloud;
And o'er the pools, all still and darkly clear,
The wild wood-hyacinth with awe seems bowed;
And something of a tender cloistral gloom
Deepens the violet's bloom.

The very light that streams
Through the dim dewy veil of foliage round,
Comes tremulous with emerald-tinted gleams,
As if it knew the place were holy ground,
And would not startle, with too bright a burst,
Flowers, all divinely nursed.

Wakes there some spirit here?
A swift wind, fraught with change, comes rushing by;
And leaves and waters, in its wild career,
Shed forth sweet voices—each a mystery!
Surely some awful influence must pervade
These depths of trembling shade!

Yes! lightly, softly move!
There is a Power, a Presence in the woods;
A viewless Being, that, with life and love,
Informs the reverential solitudes:
The rich air knows it, and the mossy sod—
Thou—Thou art here, my God!

And if with awe we tread
The minster-floor, beneath the storied pane,
And midst the mouldering banners of the dead,
Shall the green voiceful wild seem less Thy fane,
Where Thou alone hast built? where arch and roof
Are of Thy living woof?

The silence and the sound,
In the lone places, breathe alike of Thee;
The temple twilight of the gloom profound,
The dew-cup of the frail anemone,
The reed by every wandering whisper thrilled—
All, all with Thee are filled!

Oh! purify mine eyes,
More and yet more, by love and lowly thought;
Thy presence, holiest One! to recognise
In these majestic aisles which Thou hast wrought,
And midst their sea-like murmurs teach mine ear
Ever Thy voice to hear!

And sanctify my heart
To meet the awful sweetness of that tone
With no faint thrill or self-accusing start,
But a deep joy the heavenly guest to own—

Joy, such as dwelt in Eden's glorious bowers,
Ere sin had dimmed the flowers.

Let me not know the change
O'er nature thrown by guilt!—the boding sky,
The hollow leaf-sounds ominous and strange,
The weight wherewith the dark tree-shadows lie!
Father! oh, keep my footsteps pure and free,
To walk the woods with Thee!

A DAY IN JUNE.

O GIFT of God! O perfect day,
Whereon shall no man work, but play;
Whereon it is enough for me,
Not to be doing, but to be!

Through every fibre of my brain,
Through every nerve, through every vein,
I feel the electric thrill, the touch
Of life, that almost seems too much.

I hear the wind among the trees
Playing celestial symphonies;
I see the branches downward bent,
Like keys of some great instrument.

And over me unrolls on high
The splendid scenery of the sky,
Where, through a sapphire sea, the sun
Sails like a golden galleon,

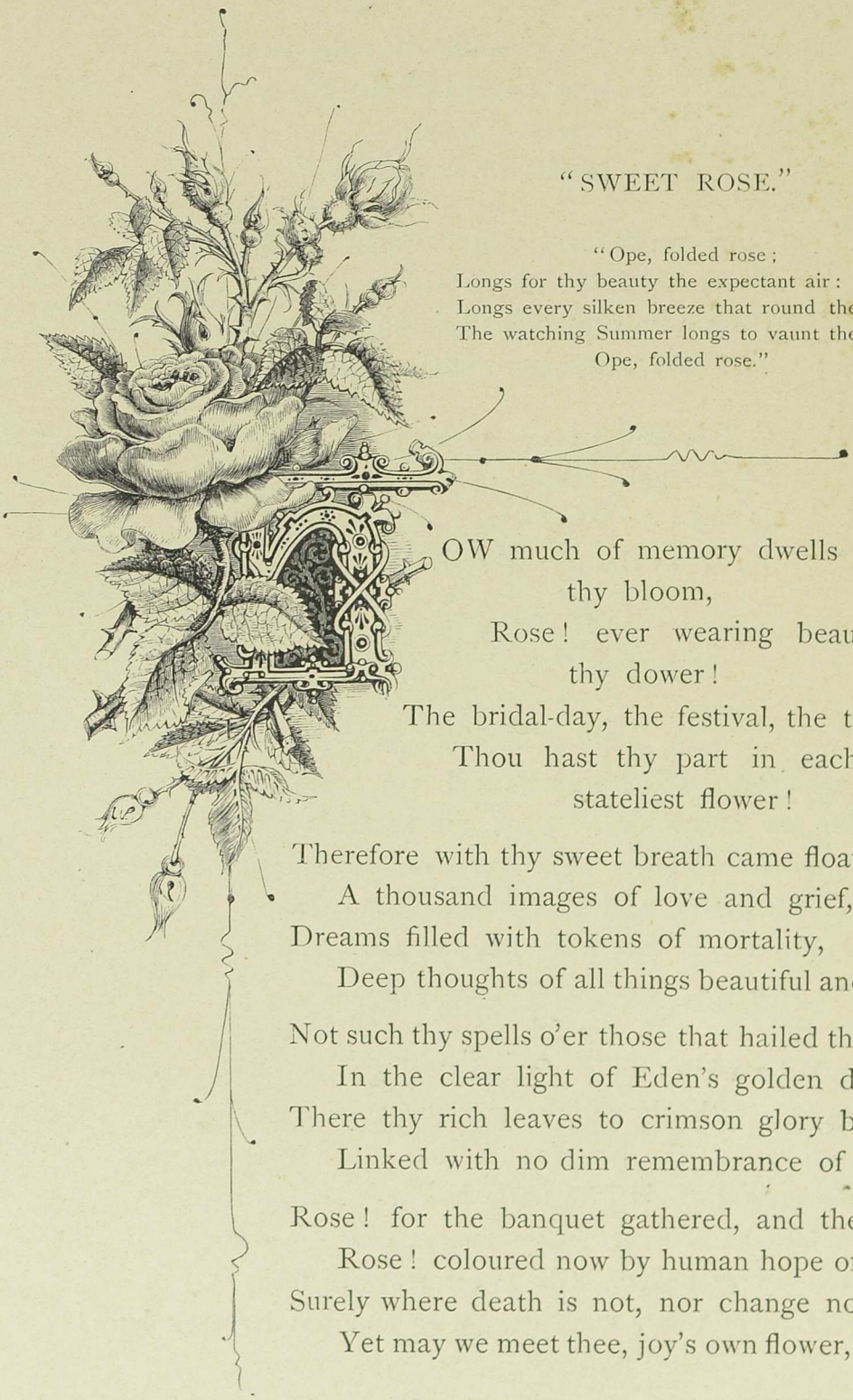
Towards yonder cloud-land in the west,
Towards yonder Islands of the Blest,
Whose steep sierra far uplifts
Its craggy summits white with drifts.

Blow, winds, and waft through all the rooms
The snow-flakes of the cherry blooms!
Blow, winds, and bend within my reach
The fiery blossoms of the peach!

O Life and Love! O happy throng
Of thoughts, whose only speech is song!
O heart of man! canst thou not be
Blithe as the air is, and as free?

FOLIAGE.

Come forth, and let us through our hearts receive
The joy of verdure! See! the honeyed lime
Showers cool green light o'er banks where wild flowers weave
Thick tapestry, and woodbine tendrils climb
Up the brown oak from beds of moss and thyme.
The rich deep masses of the sycamore
Hang heavy with the fulness of their prime;
And the white poplar from its foliage hoar
Scatters forth gleams like moonlight, with each gale
That sweeps the boughs: the chesnut flowers are past,
The crowning glories of the hawthorn fail,
But arches of sweet eglantine are cast
From every hedge. Oh, never may we lose,
Dear friend! our fresh delight in simplest Nature's hues!



"SWEET ROSE."

"Ope, folded rose;
Longs for thy beauty the expectant air:
Longs every silken breeze that round thee blows;
The watching Summer longs to vaunt thee fair;
Ope, folded rose."

HOW much of memory dwells amidst thy bloom,
Rose! ever wearing beauty for thy dower!
The bridal-day, the festival, the tomb—
Thou hast thy part in each, thou stateliest flower!

Therefore with thy sweet breath came floating by
A thousand images of love and grief,
Dreams filled with tokens of mortality,
Deep thoughts of all things beautiful and brief.

Not such thy spells o'er those that hailed thee first
In the clear light of Eden's golden day!
There thy rich leaves to crimson glory burst,
Linked with no dim remembrance of decay.

Rose! for the banquet gathered, and the bier;
Rose! coloured now by human hope or pain:
Surely where death is not, nor change nor fear,
Yet may we meet thee, joy's own flower, again!

THE LILY.

"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."—1 *Cor.* xv. 49.

How withered, perished seems the form
Of yon obscure, unsightly root!
Yet from the blight of wintry storm
It hides secure the precious fruit.

The careless eye can find no grace,
No beauty in its scaly folds,
Nor see within the dark embrace
What latent loveliness it holds.

Yet in that bulb, those sapless scales,
The lily wraps her silver vest,
Till vernal suns and vernal gales
Shall kiss once more her fragrant breast.

Oh! many a stormy night shall close
In gloom upon the barren earth,
While still, in undisturbed repose,
Uninjured lies the future birth;

And Ignorance with sceptic eye,
Hope's patient smile shall wondering view;
Or mock her fond credulity,
As her soft tears the spot bedew.

Sweet smile of hope, delicious tear!
The sun, the shower indeed shall come,
The promised verdant shoot appear,
And Nature bid her blossoms bloom.

And thou, O Virgin Queen of Spring!
Shalt, from thy dark and lowly bed,
Bursting thy green sheath's silken string,
Unveil thy charms, and perfume shed;

Unfold thy robes of purest white
Unsullied from their darksome grave,
And thy soft petals' silvery light
In the mild breeze unfettered wave.

THE BUTTERFLY.

CHILD of the Sun! pursue thy rapturous flight,
Mingling with her thou lov'st in fields of light;
And where the flowers of Paradise unfold,
Quaff fragrant nectar from their cups of gold.
There shall thy wings, rich as an evening sky,
Expand and shut with silent ecstasy!—
Yet wert thou once a worm, a thing that crept
On the bare earth, then wrought a tomb and slept!
And such is Man: soon from his cell of clay
To burst a Seraph in the blaze of day!

HYMN FOR JUNE.

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."—1 *John* iv. 8.

WHY comes this fragrance on the Summer breeze,
The blended tribute of ten thousand flowers,
To me, a frequent wanderer 'mid the trees
That form these gay, though solitary bowers!
One answer is around, beneath, above;
The echo of the voice, that God is Love!

Why bursts such melody from tree and bush,
The overflowing of each songster's heart,
So filling mine, that it can scarcely hush
Awhile to listen, but would take its part?
'Tis but one song I hear where'er I rove,
Though countless be the notes, that God is Love!

Why leaps the streamlet down the mountain's side,
Hastening so swiftly to the vale beneath,
To cheer the shepherd's thirsty flock, or glide
Where the hot sun has left a faded wreath;
Or, rippling, aid the music of the grove?
Its own glad voice replies, that God is Love!

In starry heavens, at the midnight hour,
In ever-varying hues at morning's dawn,
In the fair bow athwart the falling shower,
In forest, river, lake, rock, hill, and lawn,
One truth is written: all conspire to prove,
What grace of old revealed, that God is Love!

Is it a fallen world on which I gaze?
Am I as deeply fallen as the rest?
Yet joys partaking, past my utmost praise,
Instead of wandering forlorn, unblest!
It is as if an unseen spirit strove
To grave upon my heart, that God is Love!

Yet wouldst thou see, my soul, this truth displayed
In characters which wondering angels read,
And read, adoring; go, imploring aid
To gaze with faith, behold the Saviour bleed!
Thy God in human form! oh, what can prove,
If this suffice thee not, that God is Love?

Cling to His cross, and let thy ceaseless prayer
Be, that thy grasp may fail not! and, ere long,
Thou shalt ascend to that fair temple, where
In strains ecstatic an innumerous throng
Of saints and seraphs, round the throne above,
Proclaim for evermore that God is Love!

"The landscape sleeps without a sound.
The breeze is stopped, the lazy bough
Hath not a leaf that danceth now."

CLARE.

JULY.

"'Tis Summer, joyous Summer-time!
In noisy towns no more abide;
The earth is full of radiant things,
Of gleaming flowers and glancing wings,
Beauty and joy on every side."

LOUD is the Summer's busy song,
The smallest breeze can find a tongue,
While insects of each tiny size
Grow teasing with their melodies,
Till noon burns with its blistering breath
Around, and day lies still as death.

The busy noise of man and brute
Is, on a sudden, lost and mute;
Even the brook, that leaps along,
Seems weary of its bubbling song,
And, so soft its waters creep,
Tired Silence sinks in sounder sleep;

The cricket on its bank is dumb,
The very flies forget to hum;
And, save the wagon rocking round,
The landscape sleeps without a sound.
The breeze is stopped, the lazy bough
Hath not a leaf that danceth now.

MELODIES OF MORNING.

But who the melodies of morn can tell?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side;
The lowing herd; the sheepfold's simple bell;
The pipe of early shepherd, dim descried
In the lone valley; echoing far and wide
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above;
The hollow murmur of the ocean tide;
The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

The cottage-curs at early pilgrim bark;
Crowned with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings;
The whistling ploughman stalks afield; and, hark!
Down the rough slope the ponderous wagon rings;
Through rustling corn the hare astonished springs;
Slow tolls the village-clock the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequestered bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aërial tour.

RAIN IN SUMMER.

"Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance when it was weary."—*Psalm* lxviii. 9.

How beautiful is the rain!
After the dust and heat,
In the broad and fiery street,

In the narrow lane,
How beautiful is the rain!

How it clatters along the roofs,
Like the tramp of hoofs!
How it gushes and struggles out
From the throat of the overflowing spout!
Across the window pane
It pours and pours;
And swift and wide,
With a muddy tide,
Like a river down the gutter roars
The rain, the welcome rain!

The sick man from his chamber looks
At the twisted brooks;
He can feel the cool
Breath of each little pool;
His fevered brain
Grows calm again,
And he breathes a blessing on the rain.

From the neighbouring school
Come the boys,
With more than their wonted noise
And commotion;
And down the wet streets
Sail their mimic fleets,
Till the treacherous pool
Engulfs them in its whirling
And turbulent ocean.

In the furrowed land
The toilsome and patient oxen stand;

Lifting the yoke-encumbered head,
With their dilated nostrils spread,
They silently inhale
The clover-scented gale,
And the vapours that arise
From the well-watered and smoking soil.
For this rest in the furrow after toil
Their large and lustrous eyes
Seem to thank the Lord,
More than man's spoken word.

EARLY MORNING IN SUMMER.

It was a lovely morning;—all was calm,
As if Creation, thankful for repose,
In renovated beauty, breathing balm
And blessedness around, from slumber rose;
Joyful once more to see the East unclose
Its gates of glory:—yet subdued and mild,
Like the soft smile of Patience, amid woes
By Hope and Resignation reconciled,
That morning's beauty shone, that landscape's charm beguiled.

The heavens were marked by many a filmy streak,
Even in the orient; and the sun shone through
Those lines, as Hope upon a mourner's cheek
Sheds, meekly chastened, her delightful hue.
From groves and meadows, all empearled with dew,
Rose silvery mists,—no eddying wind swept by,—
The cottage chimneys, half concealed from view
By their embowering foliage, sent on high
Their pallid wreaths of smoke, unruffled to the sky.

And every gentle sound which broke the hush
Of morning's still serenity, was sweet;
The skylark overhead; the speckled thrush,
Who now had taken with delight his seat
Upon the slender larch, the day to greet;
The starling, chattering to her callow young;
And that monotonous lay, which seems to fleet
Like echo through the air, the cuckoo's song,
Was heard at times the leafy woods among.

A JULY AFTERNOON.

SEE once again our village; with its street
Lazied in dusty sunshine. All around
Is silence, save a tone for slumber meet,
The spinning-wheel's unbroken whirring sound
From cottage door, where, basking on his side,
The dog lolls motionless and drowsy-eyed.

Each hollyhock within its little wall
Sleeps in the richness of its clustered blooms;
Up the hot glass the sluggish blue flies crawl;
The heavy bee is humming into rooms
Through open window, like a sturdy rover,
Bringing with him warm scents of thyme and clover.

From little cottage gardens you almost
Smell the fruit ripening on the sultry air;
Oppressed to silence every bird is lost
In cave and hedgerow; save that here and there
With twitter soft, the sole unquiet thing,
Shoots the dark lightning of a swallow's wing.

A JULY EVENING.

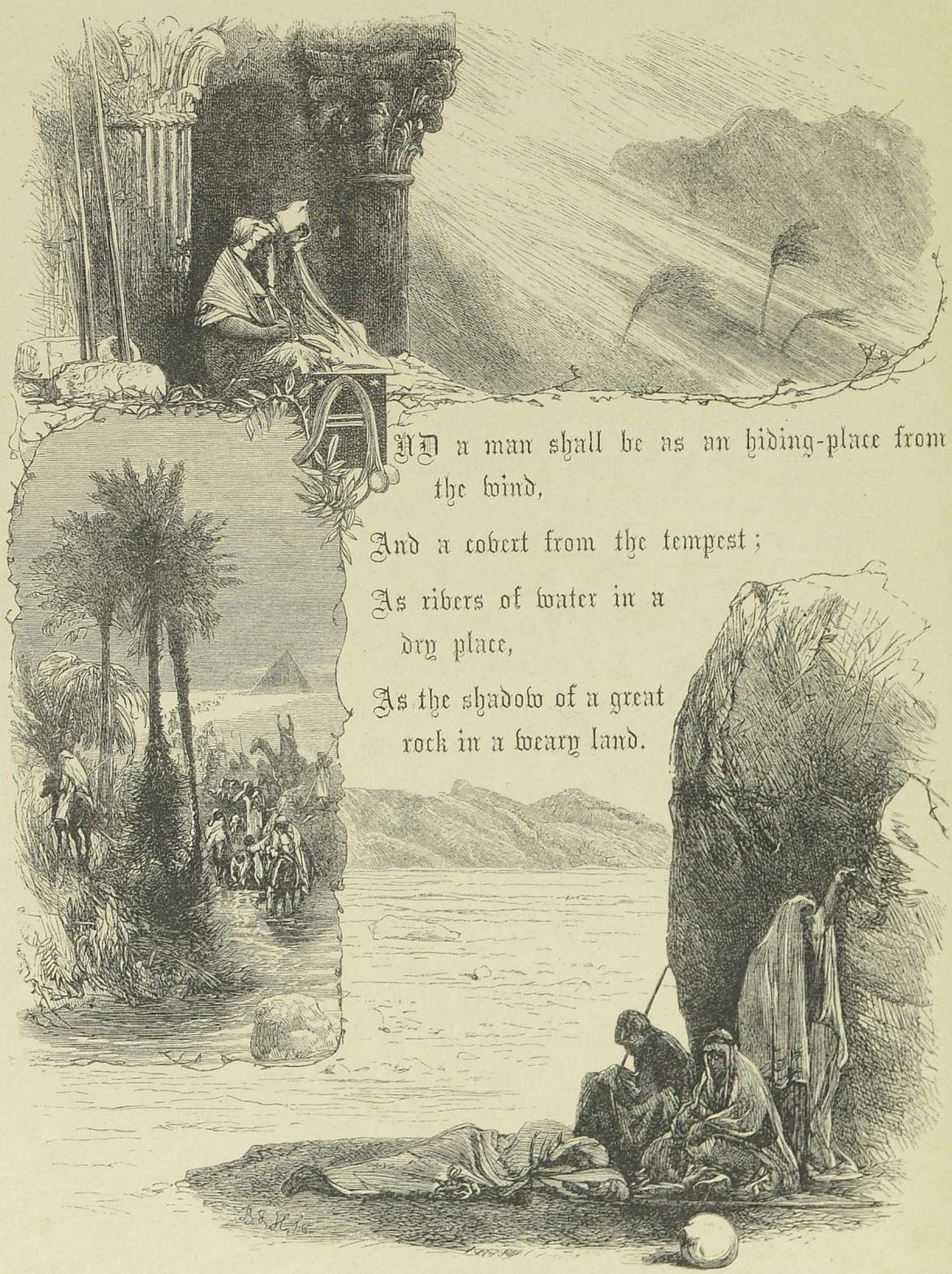
ALL things are calm, and fair, and passive. Earth
Looks as if lulled upon an angel's lap
Into a breathless, dewy sleep: so still
That we can only say of things, They be!

The lakelet now, no longer vexed with gusts,
Replaces on her breast the pictured moon
Pearled round with stars.

How strangely fair
Yon round still star, which looks half suffering from,
And half rejoicing in its own strong fire,
Making itself a lonelihood of light,
Like Deity, where'er in Heaven it dwells.
How can the beauty of material things
So win the heart and work upon the mind,
Unless like-natured with them? Are great things
And thoughts of the same blood?
They have like effect, for mind
And matter speak, in causes, of one God.
The inward and the outward worlds are like;
The pure and gross but differ in degree.
Tears, feeling's bright embodied form, are not
More pure than dewdrops, Nature's tears, which she
Sheds in her own breast for the fair which die.
The sun insists on gladness; but at night,
When he is gone, poor Nature loves to weep.

* * * *

The glory of the world
Is on all hands. In one encircling ken
I gaze on river, sea, isle, continent,
Mountain, and wood, and wild, and fire-tipped hill,
And lake, and golden plain, and sun, and Heaven,
Where the stars brightly die, whose death is day.



AND a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind,

And a cobert from the tempest;

As ribers of water in a dry place,

As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

GLOW-WORMS.

I HAVE been turning glow-worms to an use this evening, which no naturalist probably ever thought of—reading the Psalms by their cool green radiance. I placed six of the most luminous insects I could find in the grass at the top of the page; moving them from verse to verse, as I descended. The experiment was perfectly successful. Each letter became clear and legible, making me feel deeply and gratefully the inner life of the Psalmist's adoration: "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy goodness."

I know that poetry has turned the fire-fly into a lantern. Southey enables Madoc to behold the features of his beautiful guide by the flame of two fire-flies, which she kept prisoners in a cage, or net of twigs, underneath her garments. But, surely, I am the discoverer of the glow-worm taper. And it answers the purpose admirably. By the help of this emerald of the hedgerow and mossy bank, I can read, not only the hymns of saints to God, but God's message to me. As the glittering grass of the Indian hills taught me wisdom, so these glow-worms are a light to my feet and a lantern to my path. I ought to employ my everyday blessings and comforts as I have been using these insects. I could not have read "Even-song" among the trees by night, unless I had moved the lamp up and down. One verse shone, while the rest of the page was dark. Patience alone was needed. Line by line, the whole psalm grew bright. What a lesson and consolation to me in my journey through the world! Perhaps to-day is a cloudy passage in my little calendar; I am in pain, or sorrow of mind or body; my head throbs, or my heart is disquieted within me. But the cool sequestered paths of the Gospel garden are studded with glow-worms. I have only to stoop and find them.

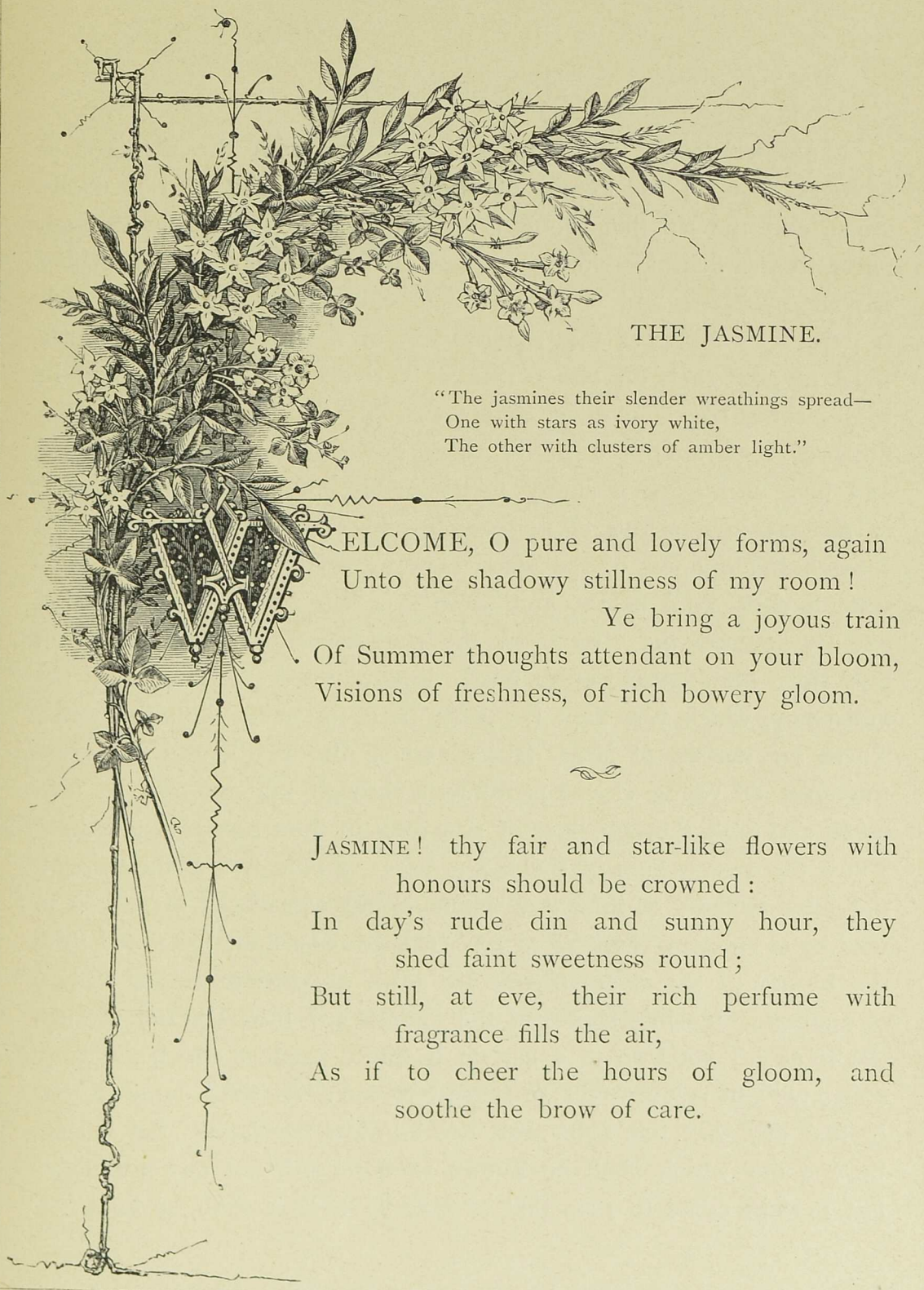
Yesterday was healthfuller and more joyous. My spirits were gayer; my mind was peacefuller; kind friends visited me; or God seemed to lift up the light of His countenance upon me. These recollections are my lanterns in the dark. The past lights up the present. I move my glow-worms lower on the page, and read to-day by yesterday.

Not for myself only should these thoughts be cherished. Every beam of grace that falls upon my path ought to throw its little reflection along my neighbour's. Whatever happens to one is for the instruction of another. Even the glow-worm, humblest of stars, has its shadow. Boyle, the friend of Evelyn, makes some excellent remarks on the spiritual eloquence of woods, fields, and water, and all their swarming inhabitants. They who pass Summer-time in the country are especially called to listen and look. The man who goes forth to his work and labour until the evening, has his teacher by his side. The haymakers, who

"Drive the dusky wave along the mead,"

may remind him of the penitent, who said that his heart was withered like grass, so that he forgot to eat his bread; the leafy elm, that shelters the noon-day rest of the reaper, should tell him how the man who stood not in the way of sinners is to be "like a tree planted by the water-side, of which the leaf shall not wither;" and the orchard, that gives shade and fragrance to the cottage door, ought to speak of that ripening warmth of Christian faith, which is to "bring forth more fruit in its age."

When a devout heart knows really how and what to observe, it has advanced a great way towards the comprehension and application of the Apostle's assurance, that "all things work together for good to them that love God." The glow-worm, like the star, has its speech and language. The Christian is at church in his toil and in his loneliness; when the sun shines or the moon rises. The foot of his ladder may rest on a tuft of grass, or a few flowers, but the top reaches to heaven.



THE JASMINE.

"The jasmines their slender wreathings spread—
One with stars as ivory white,
The other with clusters of amber light."

WELCOME, O pure and lovely forms, again
Unto the shadowy stillness of my room!
Ye bring a joyous train
Of Summer thoughts attendant on your bloom,
Visions of freshness, of rich bowery gloom.

JASMINE! thy fair and star-like flowers with honours should be crowned:
In day's rude din and sunny hour, they shed faint sweetness round;
But still, at eve, their rich perfume with fragrance fills the air,
As if to cheer the hours of gloom, and soothe the brow of care.

SUMMER DAYS.

PLEASANT scenes come up this afternoon with the mention of Summer days. I see depths of wood, where all the light is coolly green, and the rippling brook is crystal clear. I see vistas through pines, like cathedral vaults; the space enclosed looks on a sunshiny day almost black, and a bit of bright blue sky at the end of each is framed by the trees into the likeness of a Gothic window. I see walls of grey rock on either side of a river, noisy and brawling in winter time, but now quiet and low. For two or three miles the walls of rock stretch onward; there are thick woods above them, and here and there a sunny field: masses of ivy clothe the rock in places; long sprays of ivy hang over. I walk on in thought till I reach the opening of the glen; here a green bank slopes upward from a dark pool below, and there is a fair stretch of champaign country beyond the river; on the summit of the green bank, on this side, mouldering, grey, ivied, lonely, stand the ruins of the monastery, which has kept its place here for seven hundred years. There are masses of large daisies varying the sward, and the sweet fragrance of young clover is diffused through all the air. I turn aside, and walk through lines of rose-trees in their summer perfection. I hear the drowsy hum of the laden bees. Suddenly it is the twilight, the long twilight of Scotland, which would sometimes serve you to read by at eleven o'clock at night. The crimson flush has faded from the bosom of the river; if you are alone its murmur begins to turn to a moan; the white stones of the churchyard look spectral through the trees. Then I go to a certain beautiful promise which the deepening twilight seldom fails to suggest to me: "It shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark. But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light."

THE EVENING CLOUD.

A CLOUD lay cradled near the setting sun;
A gleam of crimson tinged its braided snow:
Long had I watched the glory moving on,
O'er the still radiance of the lake below;
Tranquil its spirit seemed, and floated slow,
E'en in its very motion there was rest;
While every breath of eve that chanced to blow,
Wafted the traveller to the beauteous west.
Emblem, methought, of the departed soul,
To whose white robe the gleam of bliss is given,
And by the breath of mercy made to roll
Right onward to the golden gates of heaven,
Where to the eye of faith it peaceful lies,
And tells to man his glorious destinies.

HYMN FOR JULY.

"The burden and heat of the day."—*St. Matthew* xx. 12.

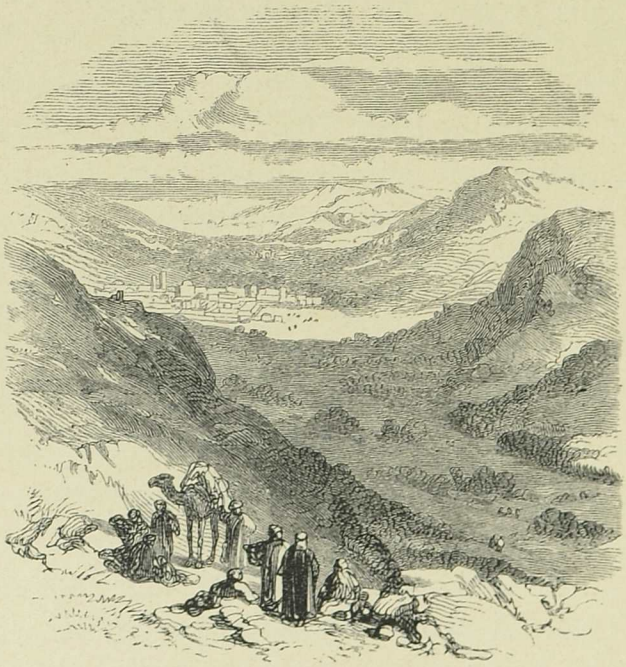
WHEN at midday my task I ply
With labouring hand or watchful eye,
I need the timely aid of prayer
To guard my soul from worldly care.

Thou, Lord, didst consecrate this hour
To mind us of Thy saving power,
Thy living water's heavenly spell,
The mystery of Jacob's well.

There, about noon, with toil oppressed,
Feebly Thy voice its plaint expressed:
"Give Me to drink!" O wondrous woe!
God thirsts, from whom all blessings flow!

Our spirits faint upon the way;
We bear the burden of the day:
'Tis then for strength to Thee we turn,
Sit at Thy feet, and wisdom learn.

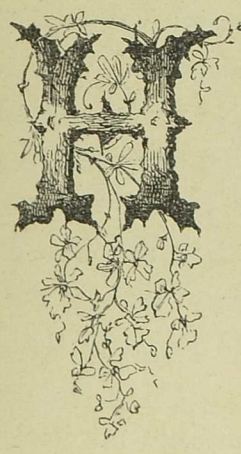
We ask of Thee the gift of God,
Pure water from the vital flood,
To cure our feverish thirst of sin,
A well of water deep within.



"They reap every one his corn in the field."
Job xxiv. 6.

AUGUST.

"Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn: they shout for joy, they also sing."—*Psalm* lxv. 11–13.



HOW fair a sight, that vest of gold,
Those wreaths that August's brow enfold!
Oh, 'tis a goodly sight and fair
To see the fields their produce bear,
Waved by the breeze's lingering wing,
So thick, they seem to laugh and sing;
And call the heart to feel delight,
Rejoicing in the bounteous sight;
And call the reaper's skilful hand,
To cull the riches of the land!
'Tis fair to see the farmer build,
Now here, now there, throughout the field,
With measuring eye correct, that leaves
Fit space between, the numbered sheaves
In shocks progressive! As he piles
The still increasing heaps, with smiles
He counts, and feels his heart run o'er
With gladness at the growing store;
But ill received unless repaid
With thankfulness to Him who made
His sun arise, His rain descend;
And for the good He deigns to lend
Reserves a part Himself, decreed
The stranger and the poor to feed.

AUTUMN THOUGHTS.

THIS is one of those soft, lulling afternoons, when in Thomson's expressive line—

> "His sweetest beams
> The sun sheds equal o'er the meekened day."

Not that the season has really begun to fade. I cannot yet say of Our Village, "How beautiful the lane is to-day, decorated with a thousand colours! The brown road and the rich verdure that borders it, strewed with the pale yellow leaves of the elm, just beginning to fall; hedgerows glowing with long wreaths of the bramble in every variety of purplish red. How very beautiful is the lane!" No; several days, or even weeks, must glide away before that picture will be ours. But the gardens and wood begin to look pensive.

While I speak the shadowy gust has shaken a leaf into my hand. Gone at last! It lived through the Summer, and only died this afternoon. Some leaves of the same bough I found withered or broken off in the early Spring, almost before the light foot of the linnet had made it tremble. Gradually unfolding their hidden verdure under the fostering rain and sun, they looked lovely. But a change soon appeared in their texture. The vivid hue waxed pale, the vigour declined; the delicate tracery of artery and vein, by which the life-blood of the tree is circulated, was wasted and defaced; the leaves shrivelled up, and, after fluttering to and fro upon the branch, were drifted into the path and trodden under foot. Why did these leaves wither and die? An insect, minute, almost imperceptible, had fastened upon them. Day after day, hour after hour, it clung with devouring appetite, slowly but surely extracting all the life and strength; and so, while their leafy kindred waved joyously in

the breath of May, and the balmy sun played upon them, the work of death was going on, and the leaves were falling from the bough.

And if many of this sylvan family perish in the Spring, surely some of the family of man die also; not in the outer framework of limb and feature, but in the precious inward life of spiritual, intellectual being. The fireside of English homes and the foliage ot the wood give the same warning. Through the slow developments of infancy and childhood the understanding expands into verdure, beneath the ripening influences of affection. The eyes of the household turn with lingering tenderness to the youngest leaf upon the tree. How often, how soon, a change is visible! The sweet purity and freshness decline; then the circulation of the spiritual blood is impeded. Whence comes the mournful alteration? Still the leaf of our woods is only an image of the leaf of our affections. It was an insect *there;* it is an insect *here.* Some reptile passion, almost hidden from the eyes of love, has fastened upon the budding faculties of youth, and clings to them day by day with a deadly constancy of hunger.

It is a solemn spectacle to behold a Christian spirit, in the waning lustre of life, becoming lovelier every hour; having a sublimer faith, a brighter hope, a kinder sympathy, a gentler resignation. How could Johnson, with his treasures of wisdom, virtue, and experience, give utterance to the melancholy complaint: "Thus pass my days and nights in morbid weakness, in unseasonable sleepiness, in gloomy solitude, with unwelcome visitors or ungrateful exclusions, in variety of wretchedness!" Not thus ought the philosopher and saint to bid farewell to the living. Rather, like the Autumn leaf, he glows into decay, and kindles into death. The Sun of Paradise, already risen over his soul, burns through the delicate fibres of thought, feeling, and desire; making every word and deed beautiful beyond utterance, in the radiancy of truth, hope, and peace.

I have been deeply impressed by a late writer's sublime parable of a man shut up in a fortress, under sentence of perpetual

imprisonment, and obliged to draw water from a reservoir which he may not see, but into which no fresh stream is ever to be poured. How much it contains he cannot tell. He knows the quantity is not great; it may be extremely small. His imprisonment having been long, he has already drawn out a considerable supply. The diminution increases daily; and how, it is asked, "would he feel each time of drawing, and each time of drinking it?" Not as if he had a perennial spring to go to: "I have a reservoir, I may be at ease." No; "I had water yesterday, I have water to-day; but my having had it yesterday, and my having it to-day, is the very cause that I shall not have it on some day that is approaching."

Surely this is a beautiful image, and true as beautiful. It is no violent metaphor to represent life as a fortress, and man a prisoner within its gate. Time is the dark reservoir from which he drinks; but he cannot descend to examine its depth or its quantity. He draws his supply from a fountain fed by invisible pipes. Nay, we do not often see the fountain. We conceal it with thick trees; we strive to hide Time. Still, if we would linger by it for a moment, we might discover the various flow of the water at different seasons of the human year. In Spring and Summer —our childhood and early youth—the sunshine of hope silvers every drop; and if we look into the stream, the voice of some fair spirit might almost be heard speaking to us from the crystal shrine. In Autumn and Winter days—our mature manhood and old age—the fountain pours a languider and darker current. But the thing to be remembered in Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, is, that the reservoir which feeds the fountain is being exhausted. Every drop that fell in our sunniest days lessened the water that remains. We had life *yesterday*, and we have life *to-day*: the probability, the certainty, is, that we shall not have it on some day that is approaching.

CORN-FIELDS.

When on the breath of Autumn breeze,
From pastures dry and brown,
Goes floating, like an idle thought,
The fair white thistle-down;
O then, what joy to walk at will
Upon the golden harvest-hill!

What joy in dreamy ease to lie
Amid a field new-shorn,
And see all round, on sun-lit slopes,
The piled-up stacks of corn;
And send the fancy wandering o'er
All pleasant harvest-fields of yore.

I feel the day—I see the field,
The quivering of the leaves,
And good old Jacob and his house
Binding the yellow sheaves;
And at this very hour I seem
To be with Joseph in his dream.

I see the fields of Bethlehem,
And reapers many a one,
Bending unto their sickles' stroke,
And Boaz looking on;
And Ruth, the Moabitess fair,
Among the gleaners stooping there.

Again, I see a little child,
His mother's sole delight,
God's living gift of love unto
The kind, good Shunammite;
To mortal pangs I see him yield,
And the lad bear him from the field.

The sun-bathed quiet of the hills,
The fields of Galilee,
That eighteen hundred years ago
Were full of corn, I see;
And the dear Saviour take His way
'Mid ripe ears on the Sabbath-day.

O golden fields of bending corn,
How beautiful they seem!
The reaper-folk, the piled-up sheaves,
To me are like a dream:
The sunshine and the very air
Seem of old time, and take me there.

THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE EVANESCENT.

"He hath made every thing beautiful in his time."—*Ecclesiastes* iii. 11.

I PRAISED the earth in beauty seen,
With garlands gay of various green;
I praised the sea whose ample field
Shone glorious as a silver shield;
And earth and ocean seemed to say,
"Our beauties are but for a day!"

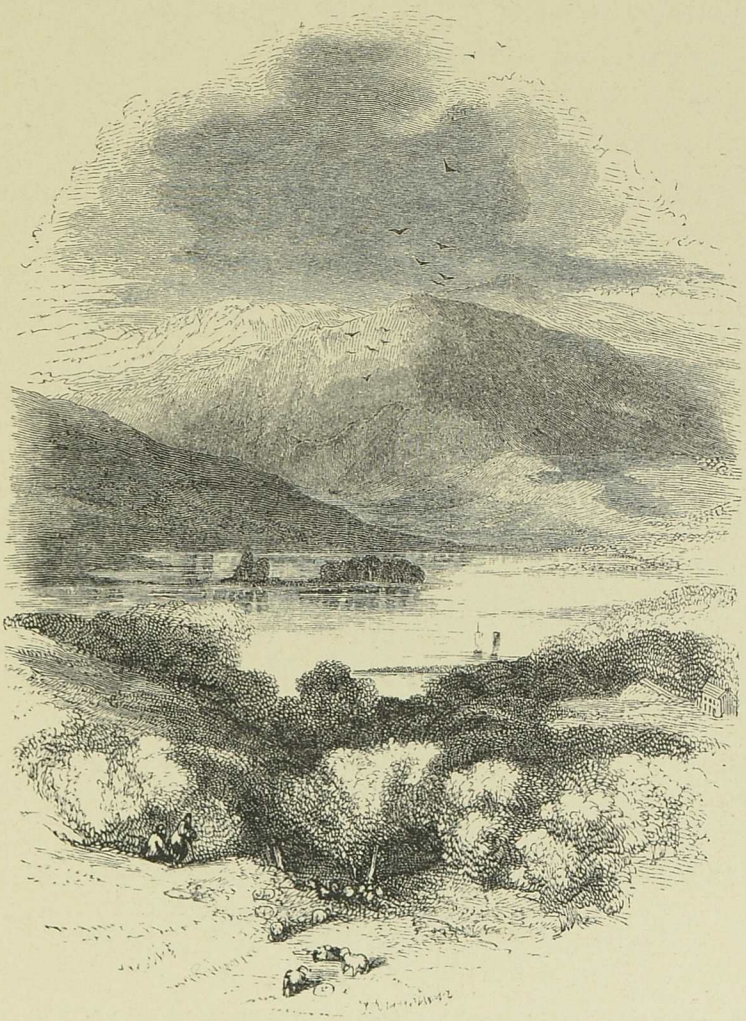
I praised the sun, whose chariot rolled
On wheels of amber and of gold;
I praised the moon, whose softer eye
Gleamed sweetly through the Summer sky;
And moon and sun in answer said,
"Our days of light are numbered!"

O God! O Good beyond compare!
If thus Thy meaner works are fair;
If thus Thy bounties gild the span
Of ruined earth and sinful man;
How glorious must the mansion be
Where Thy redeemed shall dwell with Thee!

THE REAPERS.

"The harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm."
Isaiah xvii. 5.

SOON as the morning trembles o'er the sky,
And, unperceived, unfolds the spreading day;
Before the ripened field the reapers stand
In fair array, each by the lass he loves,
To bear the rougher part, and mitigate,
By nameless gentle offices, her toil.
At once they stoop, and swell the lusty sheaves;
While through their cheerful band the rural talk,
The rural scandal, and the rural jest,
Fly harmless, to deceive the tedious time,
And steal unfelt the sultry hours away.
Behind, the master walks, builds up the shocks,
And, conscious, glancing oft on every side
His sated eye, feels his heart heave with joy.
The gleaners spread around, and here and there,
Spike after spike, their sparing harvest pick.
Be not too narrow, husbandman! but fling
From the full sheave, with charitable stealth,
The liberal handful. Think, oh! grateful think!
How good the God of harvest is to you,
Who pours abundance o'er your flowing fields,
While these unhappy partners of your kind
Wide-hover round you, like the fowls of heaven,
And ask their humble dole.



RYDAL WATER.

SOFT as a cloud is yon blue ridge—the mere
Seems firm as solid crystal, breathless, clear,
And motionless; and, to the gazer's eye,
Deeper than ocean, in the immensity
Of its vague mountains and unreal sky!

But, from the process in that still retreat,
Turn to minuter changes at our feet;
Observe how dewy twilight has withdrawn
The crowd of daisies from the shaven lawn,
And has restored to view its tender green,
That, while the sun rode high, was lost beneath
their dazzling sheen—
An emblem this of what the sober hour
Can do for minds disposed to feel its power!
Thus oft, when we in vain have wished away
The petty pleasures of the garish day,
Meek eve shuts up the whole usurping host,
(Unbashful dwarfs each glittering at his post,)
And leaves the disencumbered spirit free
To reassume a staid simplicity.

ROCK POOLS.

"His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel,
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to Heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say, 'My Father made them all!'"

WHAT a delight it is to scramble among the rough rocks that gird this iron-bound coast, and peer into one after another of the thousand tide-pools that lie in their cavities! * *

I do not wonder that when Southey had an opportunity of seeing some of these beautiful quiet basins, hollowed in the living rock, and stocked with elegant plants and animals, having all the charm of novelty to his eye—they should have moved his poetic fancy, and found more than one place in the gorgeous imagery of his oriental romances. Just listen to him.

"It was a garden still beyond all price,
Even yet it was a place of Paradise.
* * *
And here were coral bowers,
And grots of madrepores,
And banks of sponge, as soft and fair to eye
As e'er was mossy bed
Whereon the wood-nymphs lie
With languid limbs in Summer's sultry hours.
Here, too, were living flowers,
Which, like a bud compacted,
Their purple cups contracted,
And now, in open blossom spread,
Stretch like green anthers many a seeking head.
And arborets of jointed stones were there,
And plants of fibres fine as silkworm's thread;
Yea, beautiful as mermaid's golden hair
Upon the waves dispread,
Others that like the broad banana growing
Raised their long wrinkled leaves of purple hue,
Like streamers wide outflowing."

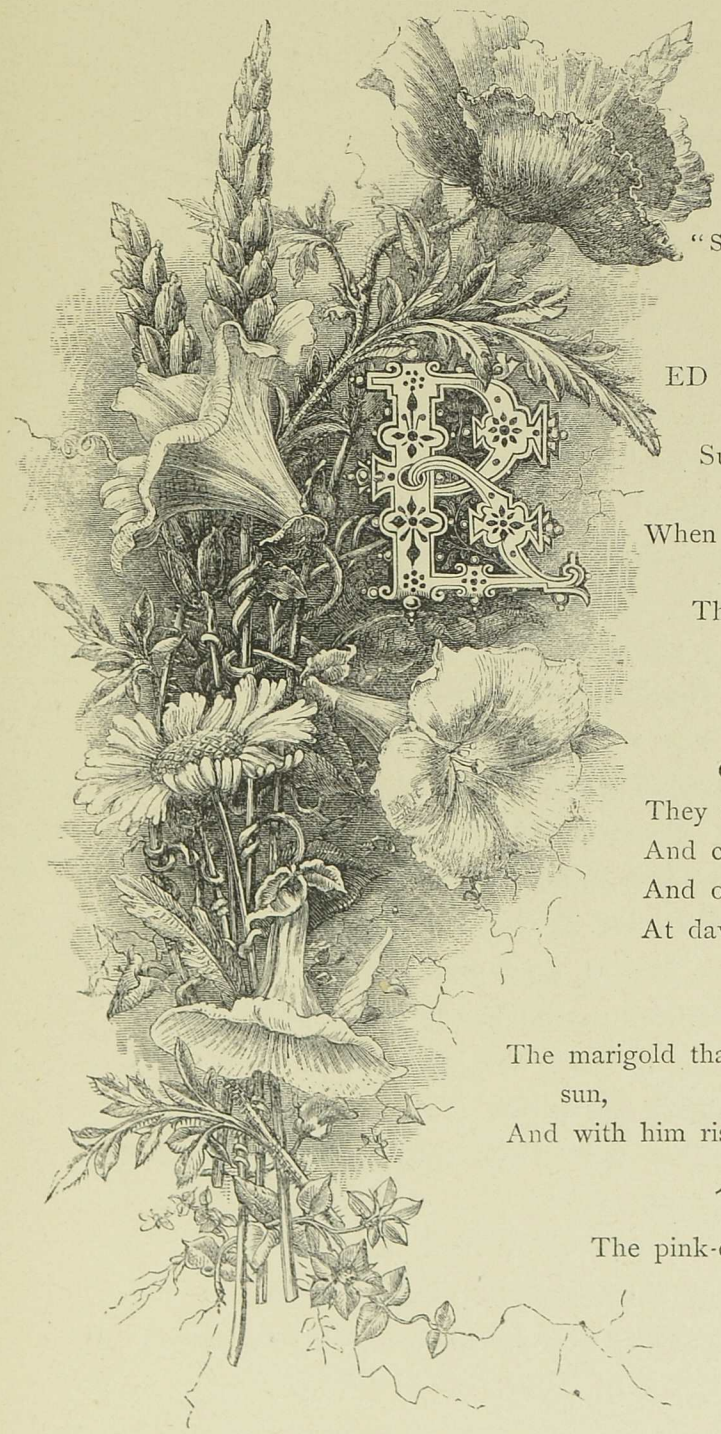
When we look at a lovely object like this, we are conscious of a positive enjoyment, arising from the gratification of our sense of beauty; a sort of appetite, if I may so call it, implanted in our nature by the beneficent Creator, expressly for our satisfaction. The garden which the Lord God prepared for unfallen man was furnished with every tree that was "pleasant to the sight" as well "as good for food." And surely it is not too much to suppose that even in the Infinite Mind of God Himself there is a quality analogous to this in us, the sense of material beauty, the approval of what is in itself lovely in form, and colour, and arrangement, and pleasure in the contemplation of it—distinct from, and independent of the question of relative fitness or moral excellence. If such a supposition needs proof, I would simply adduce the profuse existence of beauty in created things, and refer to the word that, "For His pleasure they are and were created."

But there is another point of view from which a Christian—by this expression I mean one who by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ has passed from death unto life, and not one who puts on the title as he would a garment, merely for convenience or custom's sake—looks at the excellent and the beautiful in Nature. He has a personal interest in it all; *it is a part of his own inheritance.* As a child roams over his father's estate, and is ever finding some quiet nook, or clear pool, or foaming waterfall, some lofty avenue, some bank of sweet flowers, some picturesque or fruitful tree, some noble and wide-spread prospect—how is the pleasure heightened by the thought ever recurring—All this will be *mine* by-and-by!

* * * * *

The sin-pressed earth, groaning and labouring now under the pressure of the Fall, is a part of the inheritance of the Lord Jesus, bought with His blood. He has paid the price of its redemption, and at the appointed time will reign over it. But when the Lord reigneth, His people shall reign too; and hence their song is, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood . . . . and we shall reign on the earth." "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come," but unto Him who, though Son of God, is likewise Son of man, even to Him in association with the "many sons" whom He is bringing to glory.

And thus I have a right to examine, with as great minuteness as I can bring to the pleasant task, consistently with other claims, what are called the works of Nature. And if any one despise the research as mean and little, I reply that I am scanning the plan of my inheritance. And when I find any tiny object rooted to the rock, or swimming in the sea, in which I trace with more than common measure the grace and delicacy of the Master-hand, I may not only give Him praise for His skill and wisdom, but thanks also, for that He hath taken the pains to contrive, to fashion, to adorn this, *for me.*



CORN-FLOWERS.

"Standing like Ruth among the golden corn."

THE POPPY.

RED soldier of the golden corn!
Such wert thou called in childhood's days,
When standing out at sunny morn,
Thou seemed to set the field a-blaze.

CONVOLVULUSES.

They run up the corn,
And climb up the thorn,
And open their flowers
At dawning of morn.

The marigold that goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises weeping.

The pink-eyed pimpernel.

FOREST HYMN.

FATHER, Thy hand
Hath reared these venerable columns, Thou
Didst weave this verdant roof. Thou didst look down
Upon the naked earth, and, forthwith, rose
All these fair ranks of trees. They in Thy sun
Budded, and shook their green leaves in Thy breeze,
And shot towards heaven. The century-living crow,
Whose birth was in their tops, grew old and died
Among their branches; till, at last they stood,
As now they stand, massy, and tall, and dark,
Fit shrine for humble worshipper to hold
Communion with his Maker. These dim vaults,
These winding aisles of human pomp or pride
Report not. No fantastic carvings show,
The boast of our vain race, to change the form
Of Thy fair works. But Thou art here—Thou fill'st
The solitude. Thou art in the soft winds,
That run along the summit of these trees
In music;—Thou art in the cooler breath,
That, from the inmost darkness of the place,
Comes, scarcely felt;—the barky trunks, the ground,
The fresh, moist ground, are all instinct with Thee.
Here is continual worship;—Nature, here,
In the tranquillity that Thou dost love,
Enjoys Thy presence.
Thou hast not left
Thyself without a witness, in these shades,
Of Thy perfections: grandeur, strength, and grace,
Are here to speak of Thee.

THE RISING MOON.

The moon is up! How calm and slow
She wheels above the hill!
The weary winds forget to blow,
And all the world lies still.

The way-worn travellers with delight
The rising brightness see,
Revealing all the paths and plains,
And gilding every tree.

It glistens where the hurrying stream
Its little ripple heaves;
It falls upon the forest shade,
And sparkles on the leaves.

So once on Judah's evening hills
The heavenly lustre spread;
The Gospel sounded from the blaze,
And shepherds gazed with dread.

And still that light upon the world
Its guiding splendour throws:
Bright in the opening hours of life,
But brighter at the close.

The waning moon in time shall fail
To walk the midnight skies;
But God hath kindled this bright light
With fire that never dies.

HYMN IN HARVEST.

"And the earth was reaped."—*Revelation* xiv. 16.

THE angel comes, he comes to reap
The harvest of the Lord!
O'er all the earth with fatal sweep,
Wide waves his flaming sword.

And who are they, in sheaves to bide
The fire of vengeance bound?
The tares, whose rank luxuriant pride
Choked the fair crop around.

And who are they, reserved in store,
God's treasure-house to fill?
The wheat, a hundred-fold that bore
Amid surrounding ill.

O King of Mercy! grant us power
Thy fiery wrath to flee,
In Thy destroying angel's hour,
O gather us to Thee!

Moon of Harvest! herald mild
Of plenty, rustic labour's child,
Hail! O hail! I greet thy beam
As soft it trembles o'er the stream,
And gilds the straw-thatched hamlet wide,
Where innocence and peace reside.

KIRKE WHITE.

SEPTEMBER.

"And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon."—*Deuteronomy* xxxiii. 13, 14.

MEANWHILE to glad September's dawn,
Together hath mild Autumn drawn
Rich gifts from bounteous Nature's stores;
And still about his footsteps pours
Profusely from the copious horn,
Fruits well matured and golden corn.

Eve after eve, to glad the scene,
With brief the intervals between,
Her risings, each successive night,
Eve after eve, with aspect bright,
Scarce minished, Nature's timely boon,
Comes forth full-orbed, the harvest-moon.

LESSONS OF AUTUMN.

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."—*St. John* v. 17.

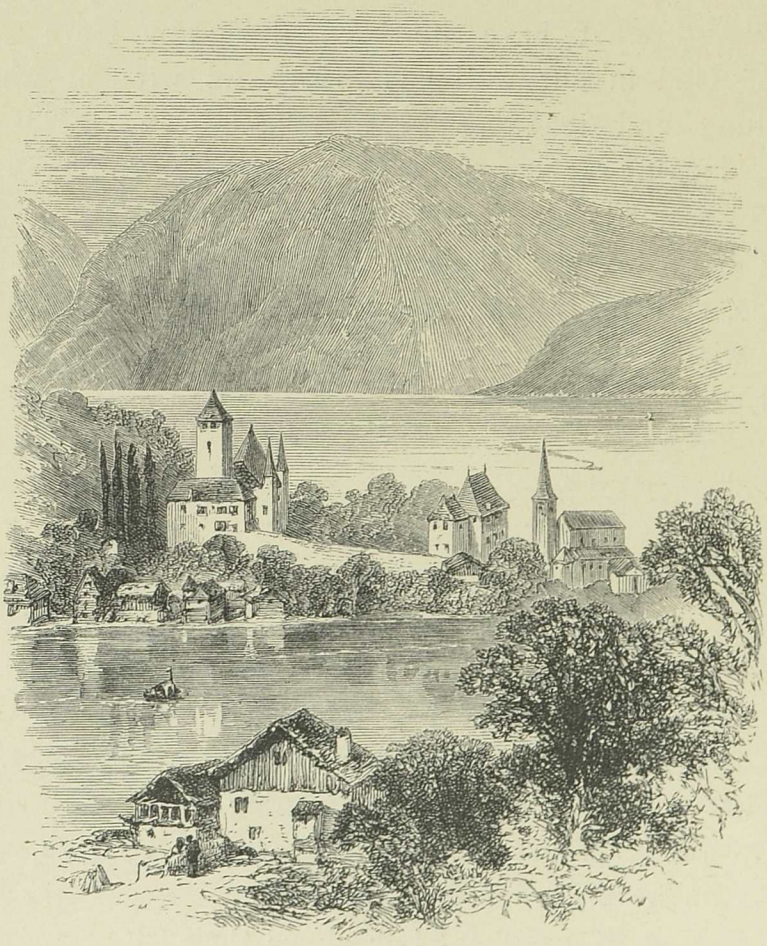
During the days that have gone since May, the Spring has been lost in Summer, and the Summer has been swallowed up by Autumn, and now, Autumn is solemnly subsiding into Winter. *Then* we were looking with joy and wonder upon resurrection, transformation, transfiguration, growth, and creation. Then we were witnesses of the annual miracle of causing Aaron's rod to blossom, and of turning water into wine. The new crest of the "wanton lapwing"—the brighter iris of the "burnished dove"—"the blue eggs bursting into young robins"—the gaudy, gauzy flies rising through the waters from the aureliæ and larvæ which had been their prison-house—the Spring flowers, pure as virgins and spotless as brides—the blossoms of innumerable orchard trees, defying the imitation of the painter, howsoever skilled in colouring—were but specimens of beauteous and vital changes in sea, on earth, and in sky; changes in which all living things participated. *Then* was the day of promise, and *now* the reaped fields, the full garners, the stripped fruit trees, show that this is the day of fulfilment. We have, in present possession, what the Spring sweetly told us we should inherit and enjoy; and the earth, satisfied, as it were, with the fruit of her work, is like the labourer in his home at eventide, quietly preparing for that sleep which will invigorate her for a new season of production. Shutting out of sight the spirit-world, and looking only at the tiny orb in the material universe which is our present home, what mighty works appear to have been wrought around us by our Father in heaven since we last met! He has opened all the fountains of life and beauty, and has replenished every cistern, and filled every cup, and has caused some cups to flow over. And now the Supreme Worker

is giving firmness and stability to things feeble and tender; now He is changing the sap of trees into solid wood, and is preparing to seal many of the springs of life with frost and ice, and to cover them with snow, until the fulness of time shall come for opening these life-founts again. Thus has God been working, and thus is He working still; and the thought of Divine activity suggests the question, "And what have we been doing?" Have we been followers of God in our working? Have we wrought wisely and well, begetting and renewing what is useful, and beautiful, and good? Or, looking at ourselves in another relation and aspect, have we blossomed abundantly, and brought forth fruit unto perfection; have we yielded increase; are we now as corn more or less ripe, and ready for the garner; or are we like the chaff which the wind driveth away, and like the withered leaves around us falling?

REMINISCENCES OF SWITZERLAND.

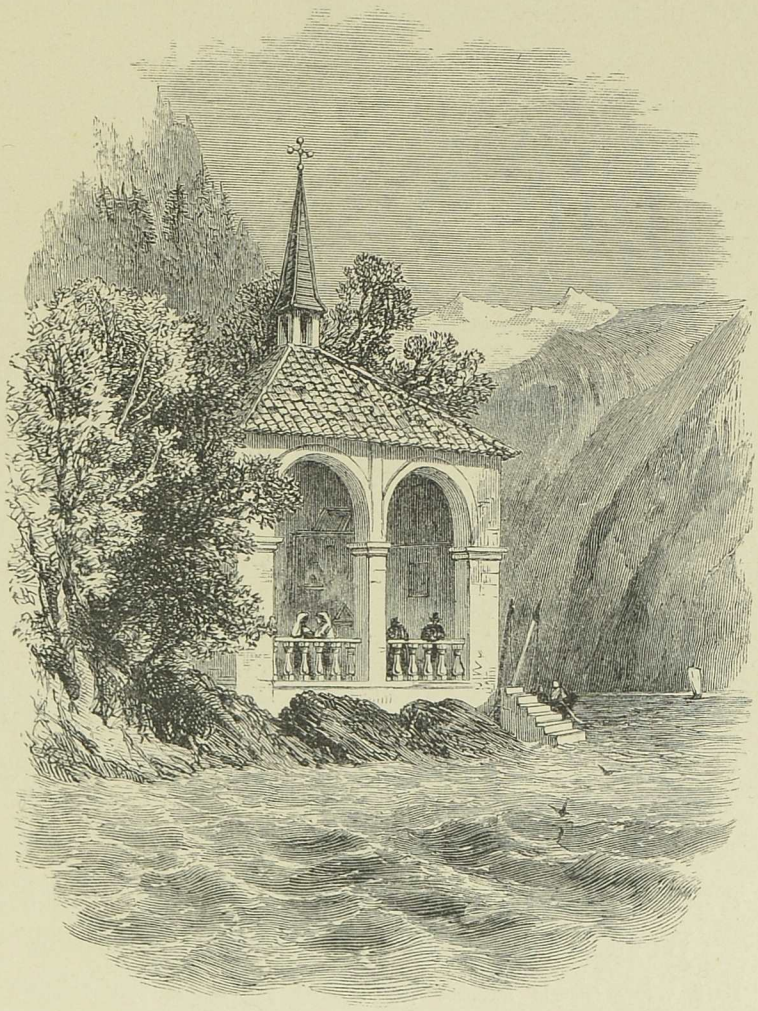
THESE gray majestic cliffs that tower to heaven,
These glimmering glades and open chesnut groves,
That echo to the heifer's wandering bell,
Or woodman's axe, or steersman's song beneath,
As on he urges his fir-laden bark,
Or shout of goat-herd boy above them all,
Who loves not? And who blesses not the light,
When through some loop-hole he surveys the lake,
Blue as a sapphire-stone, and richly set
With chateaux, villages, and village-spires,
Orchards, and vineyards, Alps and alpine snows.

Yet there is,
Within an eagle's flight, and less, a scene
Still nobler, if not fairer, (once again
Would I behold it ere these eyes are closed,



For I can say, "I also have been there!")
That sacred lake withdrawn among the hills,
Its depth of waters flanked as with a wall
Built by the giant race before the flood;

Where not a cross or chapel but inspires
Holy delight, lifting our thoughts to God
From God-like men,—men in a barbarous age,
That dared assert their birthright, and displayed



Deeds half divine, returning good for ill;
That in the desert sowed the seeds of life,
Framing a band of small republics there,
Which still exist, the envy of the world!

Who would not land in each, and tread the ground;
Land where Tell leaped ashore; and climb to drink
Of the three hallowed fountains? He that does,
Comes back the better.

THE HOUR OF DEATH.

"Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am."—*Psalm* xxxix. 4.

LEAVES have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set; but all,
Thou hast *all* seasons for thine own, O Death!

Youth and the opening rose
May look like things too glorious for decay,
And smile at thee—but thou art not of those
That wait the ripened bloom to seize their prey.

We know when moons shall wane,
When Summer birds from far shall cross the sea,
When Autumn's hue shall tinge the golden grain;
But who shall teach us when to look for thee?

Is it when Spring's first gale
Comes forth to whisper where the violets lie?
Is it when roses in our paths grow pale?
They have *one* season—*all* are ours to die.

GEORGE III. AND THE DYING GIPSY.

GEORGE III. once, when hunting early in the season, became separated from his suite. He was returning alone through the forest to Windsor, when he fancied that he heard the cry of human distress. As he rode forward he heard it more distinctly. The curiosity and kindness of the sovereign led him instantly to the spot. It was a little green plot on one side of the forest, where was spread on the grass, under a branching oak, a little pallet, half covered with a kind of tent. Near to the root of the tree he observed a little swarthy girl about eight years of age, on her knees, while her little black eyes ran down with tears. "What is the cause of your weeping?" he asked. "For what do you pray?" The little creature started up from her knees, and pointing to the tent, said, "Oh, sir, my dying mother!" "What?" said his Majesty, dismounting, "what, my child? tell me all about it."

The little creature now led the king to the tent, where lay a middle-aged woman in the last stages of a decline, and in the last moments of life. The little girl wept aloud, and stooping down, wiped the death-sweat from her mother's face. The king, much affected, asked the child her name, her family, and how long her mother had been ill. Just at that moment another gipsy girl, much older, came to the spot. She had been to Windsor, and brought some medicine for her dying mother. Observing a stranger, she curtsied modestly, and hastening to her mother, knelt by her, kissed her, and burst into tears. "What, child," said his Majesty, "can be done for you?" "Oh, sir," she replied, "my dying mother wanted a religious person to teach her, and to pray with her before she died. I ran all the way before it was light this morning to Windsor, and asked for a minister, but could get no one to come

with me." The dying woman seemed sensible of what her daughter was saying, and her countenance was much agitated. "God has sent me to instruct and comfort your mother," said the king. He then sat down by the side of the pallet, and taking the hand of the dying gipsy, discoursed on the demerit of sin, and the nature of redemption. He then pointed her to Christ, the all-sufficient Saviour. While doing this, the poor creature seemed to gather

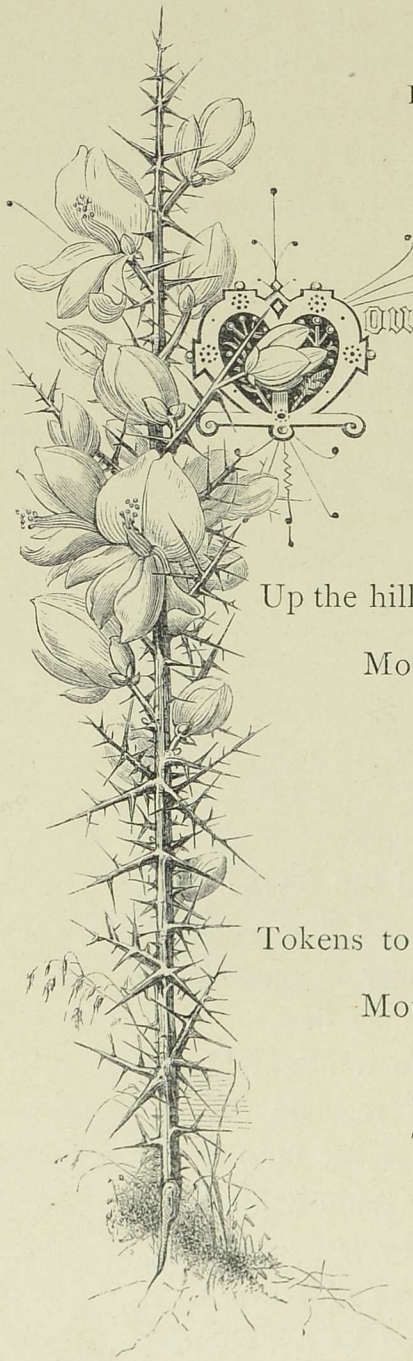
consolation and hope; her eyes sparkled with brightness, and her countenance became animated. She looked up—she smiled; but it was the last smile; it was the glimmering of expiring nature. As the expression of peace, however, remained strong in her countenance, it was not till some time had elapsed, that they perceived the struggling spirit had left mortality.

It was at this moment that some of his Majesty's attendants, who had missed him at the chase, and had been riding through the forest in search of him, rode up, and found him comforting the afflicted gipsies. It was an affecting sight, and worthy of everlasting record in the annals of kings.

He now rose up, put some gold into the hands of the weeping girls, promised them his protection, and bade them look to Heaven. He then wiped the tears from his eyes, and mounted his horse. His attendants, greatly affected, stood in silent admiration. Lord L—— was going to speak, but his Majesty turned to the gipsies, and pointing to the breathless corpse, and to the weeping girls, said, with strong emotion, "Who, my lord, who, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto these?"

THE GOSSAMER.

O'er faded heath-flowers spun, or thorny furze,
The filmy gossamer is lightly spread;
Waving in every sighing air that stirs,
As fairy fingers had entwined the thread.
A thousand trembling orbs of lucid dew
Spangle the texture of the fairy loom,
As if soft sylphs, lamenting as they flew,
Had wept departed Summer's transient bloom.
But the wind rises, and the turf receives
The glittering web: so evanescent fade
Bright views that youth with sanguine heart believes;
So vanish schemes of bliss by fancy made;
Which, fragile as the fleeting dews of morn,
Leave but the withered heath and barren thorn.



LESSONS FROM THE GORSE.

"See! Nature, with Midas-like touch,
Here turns a whole common to gold."

Mountain gorses, ever-golden,
Cankered not the whole year long!
Do ye teach us to be strong,
Howsoever pricked and holden
Like your thorny blooms, and so
Trodden on by rain and snow,
Up the hill-side of this life, as bleak as where ye grow?

Mountain blossoms, shining blossoms,
Do ye teach us to be glad
When no Summer can be had,
Blooming in our inward bosoms?
Ye, whom God preserveth still,
Set as lights upon a hill,
Tokens to the wintry earth that Beauty liveth still!

Mountain gorses, do ye teach us
From that academic chair,
Canopied with azure air,
That the wisest word man reaches
Is the humblest he can speak?
Ye, who live on mountain peak,
Yet live low along the ground, beside
the grasses meek!

THE SUMMER SHOWER.

"Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it . . . Thou makest it soft with showers."—*Psalm* lxv. 9, 10.

BEFORE the stout harvesters falleth the grain,
As when the strong storm-wind is reaping the plain;
And loiters the boy in the briery lane;
But yonder aslant comes the silvery rain,
Like a long line of spears brightly burnished and tall.

Adown the white highway, like cavalry fleet,
It dashes the dust with its numberless feet;
Like a murmurless school, in their leafy retreat,
The wild birds sit listening, the drops round them beat;
And the boy crouches close to the blackberry wall.

The swallows alone take the storm on their wing,
And, taunting the tree-sheltered labourers, sing;
Like pebbles the rain breaks the face of the spring,
While a bubble darts up from each widening ring;
And the boy in dismay hears the loud shower fall.

But soon are the harvesters tossing the sheaves;
The robin darts out from his bower of leaves;
The wren peereth forth from the moss-covered eaves;
And the rain-spattered urchin now gladly perceives
That the beautiful bow bendeth over them all.

HYMN FOR SEPTEMBER.

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet."—*Psalm* viii. 6.

O SACRED Providence, who from end to end
Strongly and sweetly movest! shall I write,
And not of Thee, through whom my fingers bend
To hold my quill? shall they not do Thee right?

Of all the creatures both in sea and land,
Only to man Thou hast made known Thy ways;
And put the pen alone into his hand,
And made him secretary of Thy praise.

Beasts fain would sing; birds ditty to their notes;
Trees would be tuning on their native lute
To Thy renown: but all their hands and throats
Are brought to man, while they are lame and mute.

Man is the world's high priest: he doth present
The sacrifice for all; while they below
Unto the service mutter an assent,
Such as springs use that fall, and winds that blow.

He that to praise and laud Thee doth refrain,
Doth not refrain unto himself alone,
But robs a thousand who would praise Thee fain;
And doth commit a world of sin in one.

And now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

KEATS.

OCTOBER.

"The year's decline, 'midst storms and floods,
The thund'ring chase, the yellow fading woods."

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun!
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit, the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel—to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'erbrimmed their clammy cells.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them—thou hast thy music too,
While barred clouds bloom the soft dying day,
And touch the stubble plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft,
Or sinking, as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourne;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now, with treble soft,
The redbreast whistles from a garden croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

FOREST SCENERY IN AUTUMN.

But see the fading many-coloured woods,
Shade deepening over shade, the country round
Imbrown; a crowded umbrage, dusk, and dun,
Of every hue, from wan-declining green
To sooty dark. These now the lonesome Muse,
Low-whispering, lead into their leaf-strown walks
And give the season in its latest view.

Meantime, light shadowing all, a sober calm
Fleeces unbounded ether; whose least wave
Stands tremulous, uncertain where to turn
The gentle current; while illumined wide,
The dewy-skirted clouds imbibe the sun,
And through their lucid veil his softened force
Shed o'er the peaceful world. Then is the time
For those whom wisdom and whom nature charm,
To steal themselves from the degenerate crowd,
And soar above this little scene of things;
To tread low-thoughted vice beneath their feet;
To soothe the throbbing passions into peace,
And woo lone Quiet in her silent walks.

* * * *

The pale descending year, yet pleasing still,
A gentler mood inspires; for now the leaf
Incessant rustles from the mournful grove,
Oft startling such as, studious, walk below,
And slowly circles through the waving air.
But should a quicker breeze amid the boughs
Sob, o'er the sky the leafy deluge streams;

Till, choked and matted with the dreary shower,
The forest-walks, at every rising gale,
Roll wide the withered waste, and whistle bleak.
Fled is the blasted verdure of the fields;
And, shrunk into their beds, the flowery race
Their sunny robes resign. E'en what remained
Of stronger fruits falls from the naked tree;
And woods, fields, gardens, orchards, all around
The desolated prospect thrills the soul.

THE FIELDS IN OCTOBER.

Arise, thou child of Nature, rise!
Arouse thy slumbering spirit now!
The Autumn sheaves are on the hill,
And solemn are the woods and still,
With clustering fruits on every bough.

There 's merry laughter in the field,
And harmless jest, and frolic rout;
And the last harvest-wain goes by
With its rustling load so pleasantly,
To the glad and clamorous harvest shout.

There are busy gleaners in the field—
The old, whose work is never done,
And eager, laughing, childish bands
Rubbing the ears in their little hands,
And singing 'neath the Autumn sun.

There are peasants in the hamlets low,
Busied among their orchard-trees,
Where the pleasant apples are red and gold,
Like token-fruits of those of old,
In the gardens of the Hesperides!

And boys are busy in the woods,
Gathering the ripe nuts, bright and brown;
In shady lanes the children stray,
Looking for blackberries through the day,—
Those berries of such old renown!

DEPARTURE OF THE SWALLOWS.

Ye gentle birds, that perch aloof,
And smooth your pinions on my roof,
Preparing for departure hence,
Ere Winter's angry threats commence;
Like you, my soul would smooth her plume
For longer flights, beyond the tomb.
May God, by whom is seen and heard
Departing man and wandering bird,
In mercy mark me for His own,
And guide me to the land unknown!

"WE ALL DO FADE AS A LEAF."

Sweet Sabbath of the year!
While evening lights decay,
Thy parting steps methinks I hear
Steal from the world away.

Amid thy silent bowers
'Tis sad, but sweet to dwell,
When falling leaves and drooping flowers
Around me breathe farewell.

Along thy sunset skies
Their glories melt in shade,
And, like the things we fondly prize,
Seem lovelier as they fade.

Thy scene each vision brings
Of beauty in decay;
Of fair and early faded things,
Too exquisite to stay.

Of joys that come no more;
Of flowers whose bloom is fled;
Of farewells wept upon the shore;
Of friends estranged or dead.

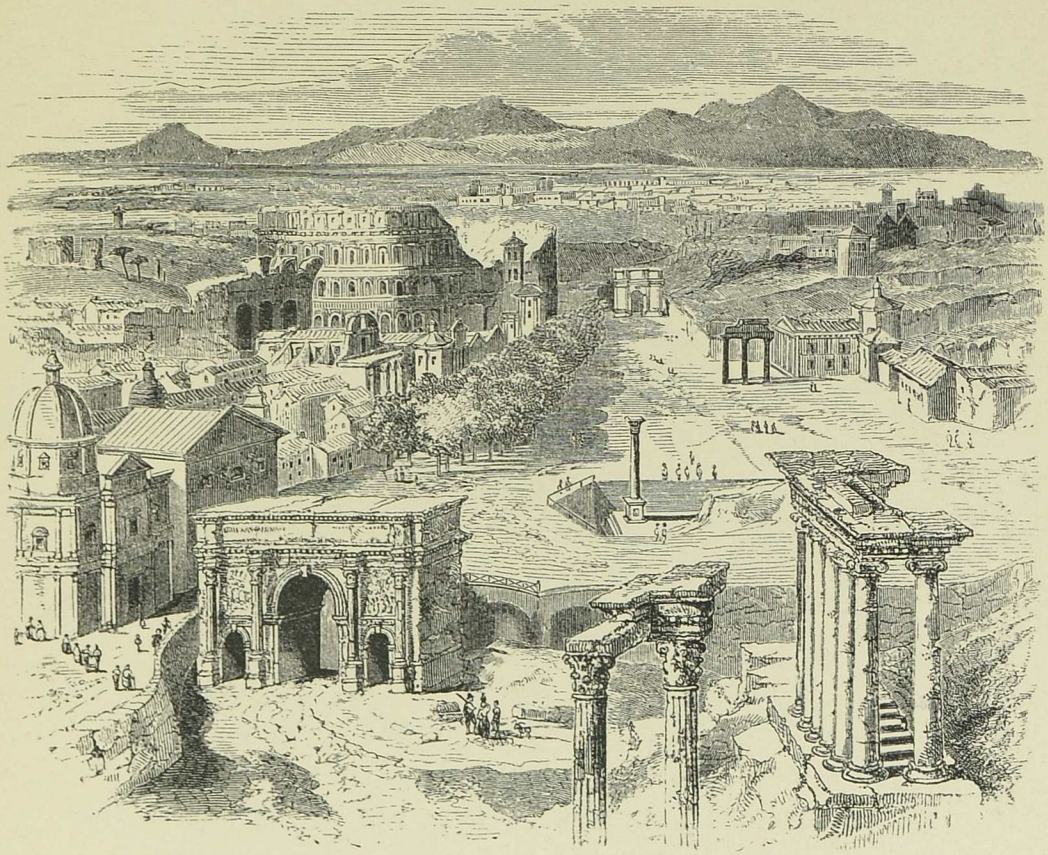
Of all that now may seem
To memory's tearful eye,
The banished beauty of a dream
O'er which we gaze and sigh.

THE DECAY OF NATURE.

There is a fearful spirit busy now;
Already have the elements unfurled
Their banners: the great sea-wave is upcurled:
The cloud comes: the fierce winds begin to blow
About, and wildly on their errands go;
And quickly will the pale red leaves be hurled
From their dry boughs, and all the forest world,
Stripped of its pride, be like a desert show.
I love the moaning music which I hear
In the bleak gusts of Autumn, for the soul
Seems gathering tidings from another sphere,
And, in sublime, mysterious sympathy,
Man's bounding spirit ebbs and swells more high,
Accordant to the billow's loftier roll.

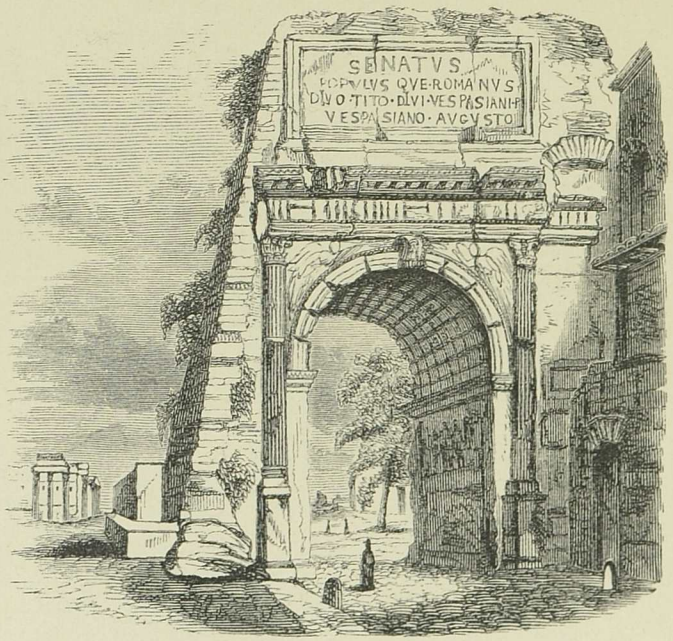
THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA IN AUTUMN.

HERE and there
Rude heaps, that had been cities, clad the ground
With history. And far and near, where grass
Was greenest, and the unconscious goat browsed free,



The teeming soil was sown with desolations,
As though Time—striding o'er the field he reaped—
Warmed with the spoil, rich droppings for the gleaners
Threw round his harvest way. Frieze, pedestal,
Pillars that bore through years the weight of glory,

Then took their rest. Tombs, arches, monuments,
Vainly set up to save a name, as though
The eternal served the perishable; urns,
Which winds had emptied of their dust, but left
Full of their immortality. In shrouds
Of reverent leaves, rich works of wondrous beauty
Lay sleeping.



* * * Rank weeds and grasses,
Careless and nodding, grew, and asked no leave,
Where Romans trembled. Where the wreck was saddest,
Sweet pensive herbs, that had been gay elsewhere,
With conscious mien of place rose tall and still,
And bent with duty. Like some village children
Who found a dead king on a battle-field,
And with decorous care and reverent pity
Composed the lordly ruin, and sat down,

Grave without tears. At length the giant lay,
And everywhere he was begirt with years,
And everywhere the torn and mouldering Past
Hung with the ivy. For Time, smit with honour
Of what he slew, cast his own mantle on him,
That none should mock the dead.

"EARTH'S CHILDREN CLEAVE TO EARTH."

EARTH'S children cleave to earth—her frail
Decaying children dread decay.
Yon wreath of mist that leaves the vale,
And lessens in the morning ray,
Look, how, by mountain rivulet,
It lingers as it upward creeps,
And clings to fern and copsewood set
Along the green and dewy steeps :
Clings to the fragrant kalmia, clings
To precipices fringed with grass,
Dark maples where the wood-thrush sings
And bowers of fragrant sassafras ;
Yet all in vain—it passes still
From hold to hold, it cannot stay,
And in the very beams that fill
The world with glory, wastes away,
Till, parting from the mountain's brow,
It vanishes from human eye,
And that which sprang of earth is now
A portion of the glorious sky.

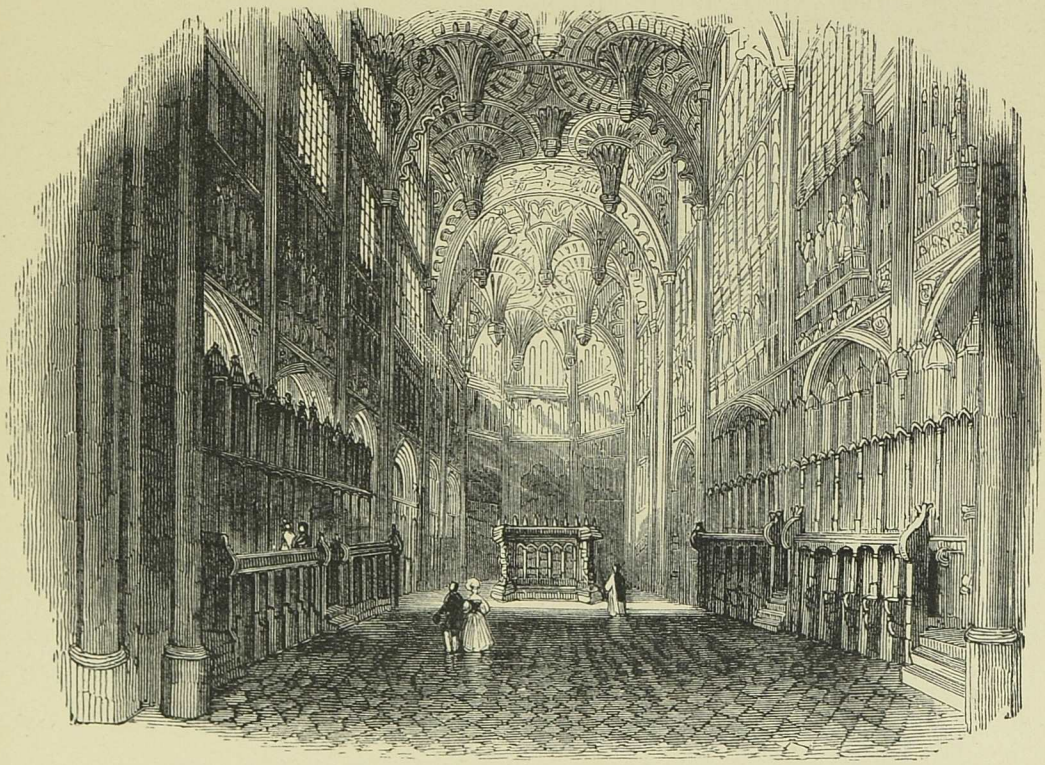
AUTUMN'S FAREWELL.

YET one smile more, departing, distant sun!
One mellow smile through the soft vapoury air,
Ere, o'er the frozen earth, the loud winds run,
Or snows are sifted o'er the meadows bare.
One smile on the brown hills and naked trees,
And the dark rocks whose summer wreaths are cast,
And the blue gentian flower, that in the breeze
Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last.
Yet a few sunny days, in which the bee
Shall murmur by the hedge that skirts the way,
The cricket chirp upon the russet lea,
And man delight to linger in thy ray.
Yet one rich smile, and we will try to bear
The piercing winter frost, and winds, and darkened air.

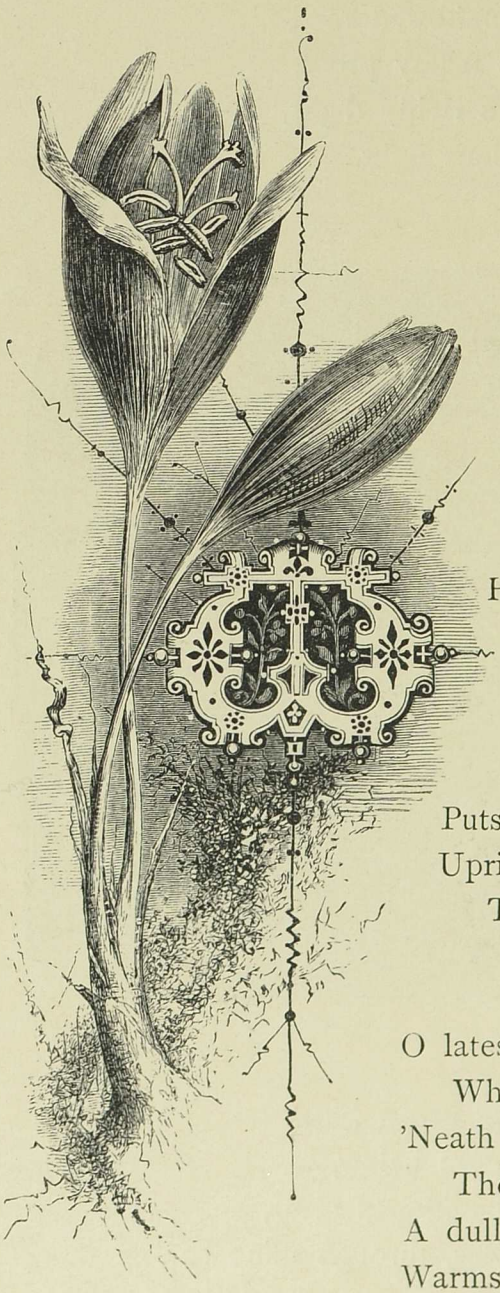
"IL PENSEROSO."

OFT, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging low with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room,
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the earth;
Or the bellman's drowsy charm,
To bless the doors from nightly harm.

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters pale,
And love the high-embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.



There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.



THE AUTUMN CROCUS.

"Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late, and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end."

HEN brighter hours are passing away,
And gloomy looks the shortening day,
The herald of Autumn sere
Puts forth its leafless head,
Uprising in the mead,
To deck the path of the declining year.

O latest in the train of flowers
Which bounteous Nature strews,
'Neath misty skies, in hoary dews,
Thou smil'st—in chilling showers:
A dull, slant beam, no breath of Spring,
Warms and unfolds thy blossoming.

Yet dear thy smile; to me as dear
As any in Flora's gayest bowers:
For thou canst wake a thought to cheer
The coming gloom of life's late hours;
Show that dim age by hope may be
Happy as thoughtless infancy.

Oh! grant that hope, like thee, loved flower,
May blossom in my waning day,
Though earthly storms around me lour,
And darksome be my weary way;
Then, passed the grave's cold Winter, may I rise,
With fruits of peace, to bright and cloudless skies.

AUTUMNAL BEAUTY.

THE brown Autumn came. Out of doors it brought to the fields the prodigality of the yellow harvest—to the forest, revelations of light, and to the sky, the sharp air, the morning mist, the red clouds at evening. Within doors—the sense of seclusion, the stillness of closed and curtained windows, musings by the fireside, books, friends, conversation, and the long meditative evenings. To the farmer it brought surcease of toil—to the scholar, that sweet delirium of the brain which changes toil to pleasure. It brought the wild duck back to the reedy marshes of the south; it brought the wild song back to the fervid brain of the poet. Without, the village street was paved with gold; the river ran red with the reflection of the leaves. Within, the faces of friends brightened the gloomy walls; the returning footsteps of the long-absent gladdened the threshold: and all the sweet amenities of social life again resumed their interrupted reign.

HYMN FOR OCTOBER.

BEHOLD the western evening's light!
It melts in deepening gloom;
So calmly Christians sink away,
Descending to the tomb.

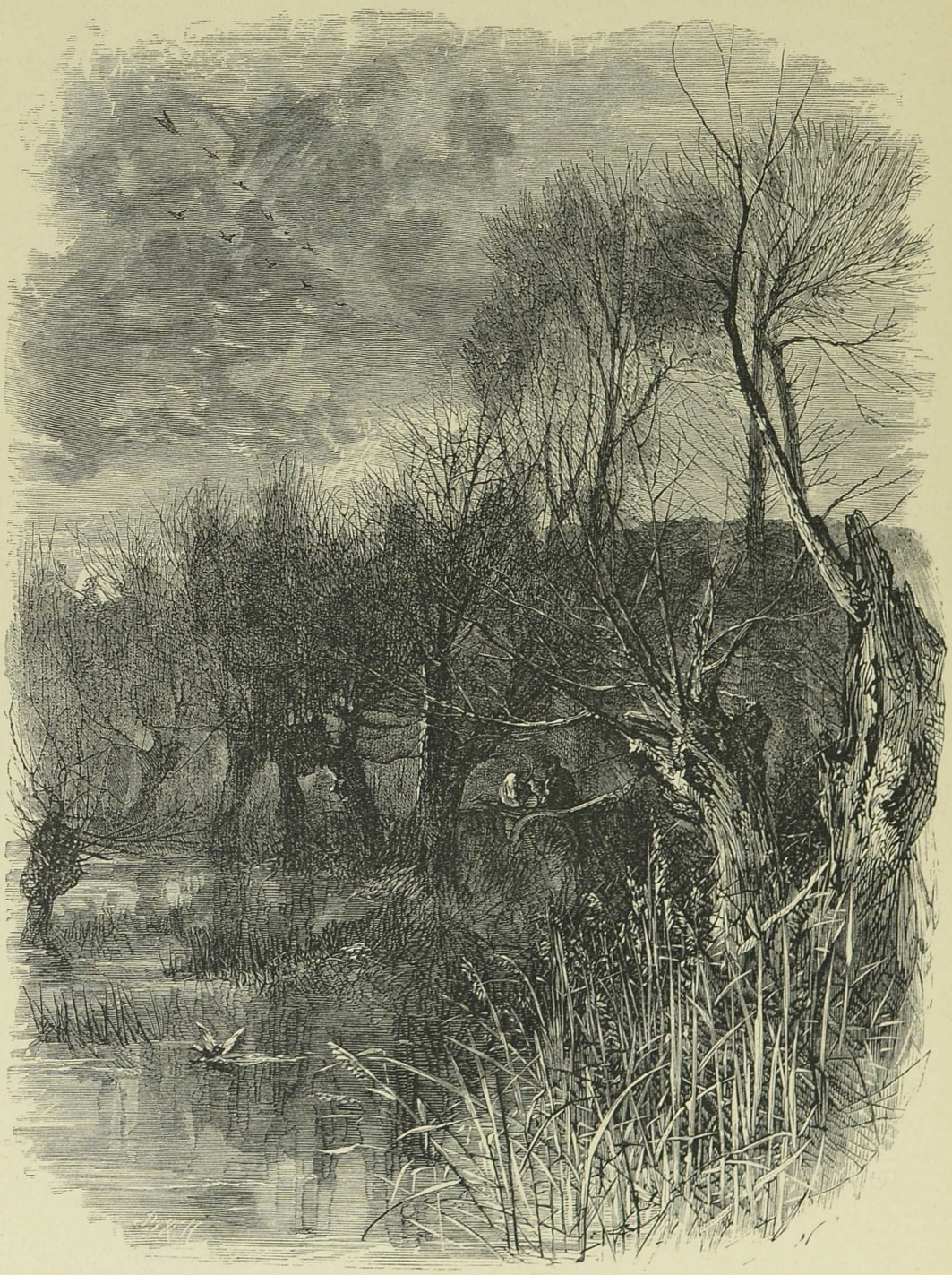
The wind breathes low; the withering leaf
Scarce whispers from the tree;
So gently flows the parting breath,
When good men cease to be.

How beautiful on all the hills
The crimson light is shed!
'Tis like the peace the Christian gives
To mourners round his bed.

How mildly on the wandering cloud
The sunset beam is cast!
'Tis like the memory left behind
When loved ones breathe their last.

And now, above the dews of night,
The star of eve appears;
So faith springs in the hearts of those
Whose eyes are dim with tears:

And soon the morning's happier light
Its glory shall restore,
And eyelids that are sealed in death
Shall wake, to close no more.

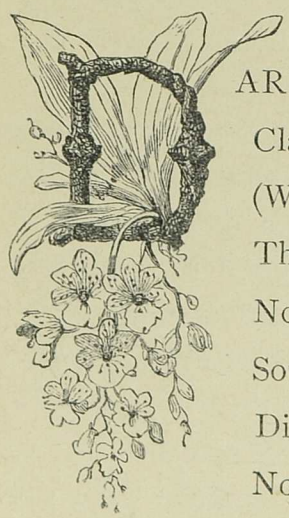


Red o'er the forest peers the setting sun,
The line of yellow light dies fast away
That crowned the eastern copse: and chill and dun
Falls on the moor the brief November day.

KEBLE.

NOVEMBER.

"I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness."—*Jer.* iv. 25, 26.



DARK-VISAGED visitor, who comest here,
Clad in thy mournful tunic, to repeat
(While glooms and chilling rains enwrap thy feet)
The solemn requiem of the dying year;
Not undelightful to my list'ning ear
Sound thy dull showers, as o'er my woodland seat,
Dismal and drear, the leafless trees they beat:
Not undelightful, in their wild career,
Is the wild music of thy howling blasts,
Sweeping the groves' long aisle, while sullen Time
Thy stormy mantle o'er his shoulder casts,
And, rocked upon his throne, with chant sublime,
Joins the full-pealing dirge, and Winter weaves
Her dark sepulchral wreath of faded leaves.

THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS.

THE melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year,
Of wailing winds and naked woods, and meadows brown and sere.
Heaped in the hollows of the grove, the Autumn leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread.
The robin and the wren are flown; and from the shrubs the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves; the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie; but cold November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again.

The wind-flower and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the briar-rose and the orchis died amid the Summer glow;
But on the hill the golden-rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook in Autumn beauty stood,
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men,
And the brightness of their smile was gone from upland, glade, and glen.

And now, when comes the calm, mild day, as still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their Winter home;
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill—
The South Wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died—
The fair, meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side!
In the cold, moist earth we laid her, when the forests cast the leaf,
And we wept, that one so lovely should have a life so brief.
Yet not unmeet it was, that one like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.

NOVEMBER BONFIRES.

SELDOM have I seen anything more striking and impressive in picturesque effect than the celebration of the fifth of November in the Old World villages which dot these Sussex Downs. As the evening drew on, crowds of men and boys began to assemble round a huge pile of faggots and tar-barrels which had been constructed on the highest point of the hill. They chanted at intervals what seemed to be the refrain of an old English ballad, probably contemporaneous with the Gunpowder Plot itself. By nine o'clock it was pitch dark. A sharp frosty wind blew keenly over the bleak down. Now for the great event of the night. The parson and the squire, for whom we had been waiting, arrived, and were greeted by a hearty cheer, which rang out, in the still night air, with a fulness which only Englishmen can give. The sound was heard in the village far away below us, and the bells struck up from the old church tower with a merry peal. Glimmering lights flashed out here and there, gradually breaking into a broader, brighter glare as the bonfires were lit up in the valley and on the adjacent heights. The clergyman gave a short and appropriate address on the event commemorated, speaking of God's providential care of England in seasons of peril, reprehending the crime contemplated, denouncing popery strongly, yet without bitterness, and calling upon his parishioners to live as

loyal subjects and good Christians. The squire then stepped forward, and igniting a wisp of straw, thrust it into the huge pile, which caught fire rapidly, and soon was all a-flame. The men cheered, the boys danced and shouted, the dogs barked, fireworks cracked and hissed in every direction. What grand masses of light and shade! How the tongues of flame shot up high into the air, and then fell back with magical variation. Ever and anon the

blazing mass would suddenly sink down into some internal crater, and a shower of sparks would fly aloft and seem to lose themselves amongst the stars. How far it is well to retain the memorials of bygone animosities and crimes I do not now stop to ask; but to the inhabitant of a country so spic and span new as America, these records of a remote past perpetuated into the present are strangely impressive.

TWEED-SIDE IN WINTER.

NOVEMBER'S sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sere.
Late, gazing down the steepy linn
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trilled the streamlet through:
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our forest hills is shed;
No more, beneath the evening's beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam;
Away hath passed the heather-bell
That bloomed so rich on Needpath fell;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yare.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To sheltered dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines:
In meek despondency they eye
The withered sward and wintry sky,

And far beneath their summer hill,
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill:
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold;
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

CALM DECAY.

"Everywhere the spirit of some sad power seems to direct the time: it hides from us the blue heavens; it walks through the fields, and lays the damp ungathered harvest low; it steals the Summer bloom from the infant cheeks; it makes old age shiver to the heart; it goes to the churchyard and chooses many a grave. It is God that goes his yearly round; that gathers up the appointed lives; and, even where the hour is not come, engraves by pain and poverty many a sharp and solemn lesson on the heart."

THE morning mist is cleared away,
Yet still the face of heaven is grey,
Nor yet th' autumnal breeze has stirred the grove.
Faded, yet full, a paler green
Skirts soberly the tranquil scene.
The redbreast warbles round this leafy cove.

Sweet messenger of "calm decay,"
Saluting sorrow as you may,
As one still bent to find or make the best,
In thee, and in this quiet mead
The lesson of sweet peace I read,
Rather in all to be resigned than blest.

'Tis a low chant, according well
With the soft solitary knell,
As homeward from some grave beloved we turn,
Or by some holy deathbed dear,
Most welcome to the chastened ear
Of her whom Heaven is teaching how to mourn.

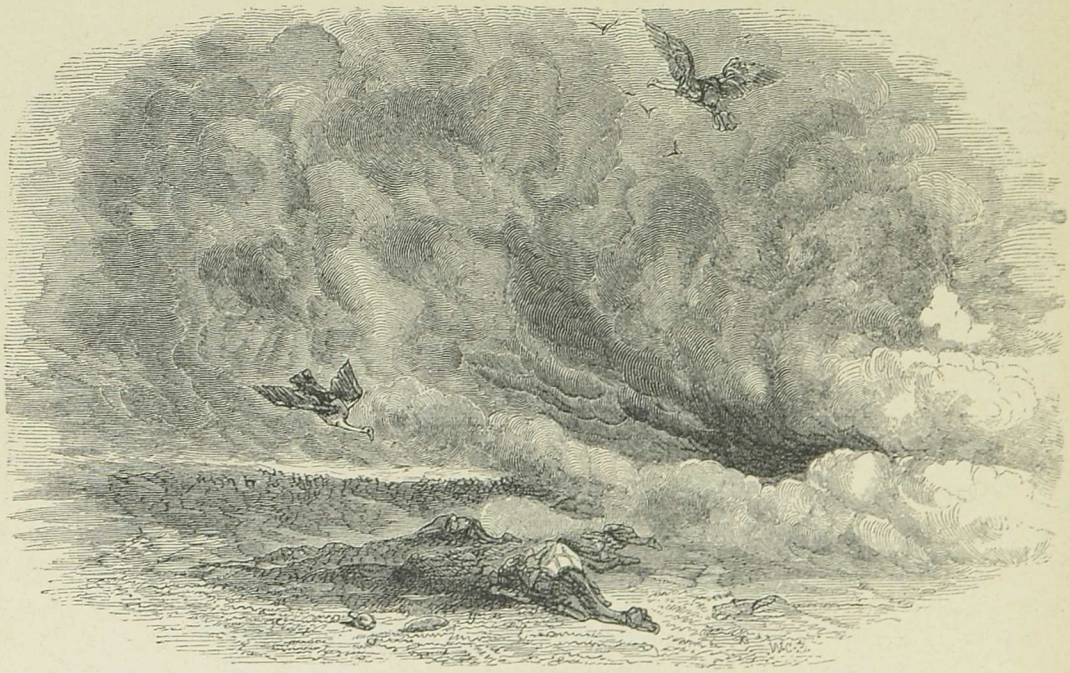
O cheerful, tender strain! the heart
That duly bears with you its part,
Singing so thankful to the dreary blast,
Though gone and spent its joyous prime,
And on the world's autumnal time,
'Mid withered hues and sere, its lot be cast:

That is the heart for thoughtful seer,
Watching, in trance nor dark nor clear,
Th' appalling future, as it nearer draws:
His spirit calmed the storm to meet,
Feeling the rock beneath his feet,
And tracing through the cloud th' Eternal Cause.

WINTER TALES.

At night, when all, assembling round the fire,
Closer and closer draw till they retire,
A tale is told of India or Japan,
Of merchants from Golcond, or Astracan,
What time wild Nature revelled unrestrained,
And Sinbad voyaged, and the caliphs reigned:—

Of knights renowned from holy Palestine,
And minstrels, such as swept the lyre divine,
When Blondel came, and Richard in his cell
Heard, as he lay, the song he knew so well :—
Of some Norwegian, while the icy gale
Rings in her shrouds, and beats her iron-sail
Among the shining Alps of polar seas
Immovable—for ever there to freeze !
Or some great caravan, from well to well
Winding as darkness on the desert fell,
In their long march, such as the Prophet bids,
To Mecca from the Land of Pyramids,
And in an instant lost—a hollow wave
Of burning sand their everlasting grave !



SONNET TO WINTER.

THE mellow year is hasting to its close.
The little birds have almost sung their last;
Their small notes twitter in the dreary blast—
That shrill-piped harbinger of early snows.
The patient beauty of the scentless rose,
Oft with the morn's hoar crystal quaintly glassed,
Hangs, a pale mourner for the Summer past,
And makes a little Summer where it grows.
In the chill sunbeam of the faint, brief day
The dusky waters shudder as they shine;
The russet leaves obstruct the straggling way
Of oozy brooks, which no deep banks define;
And the gaunt woods, in ragged, scant array,
Wrap their old limbs with sombre ivy twine.

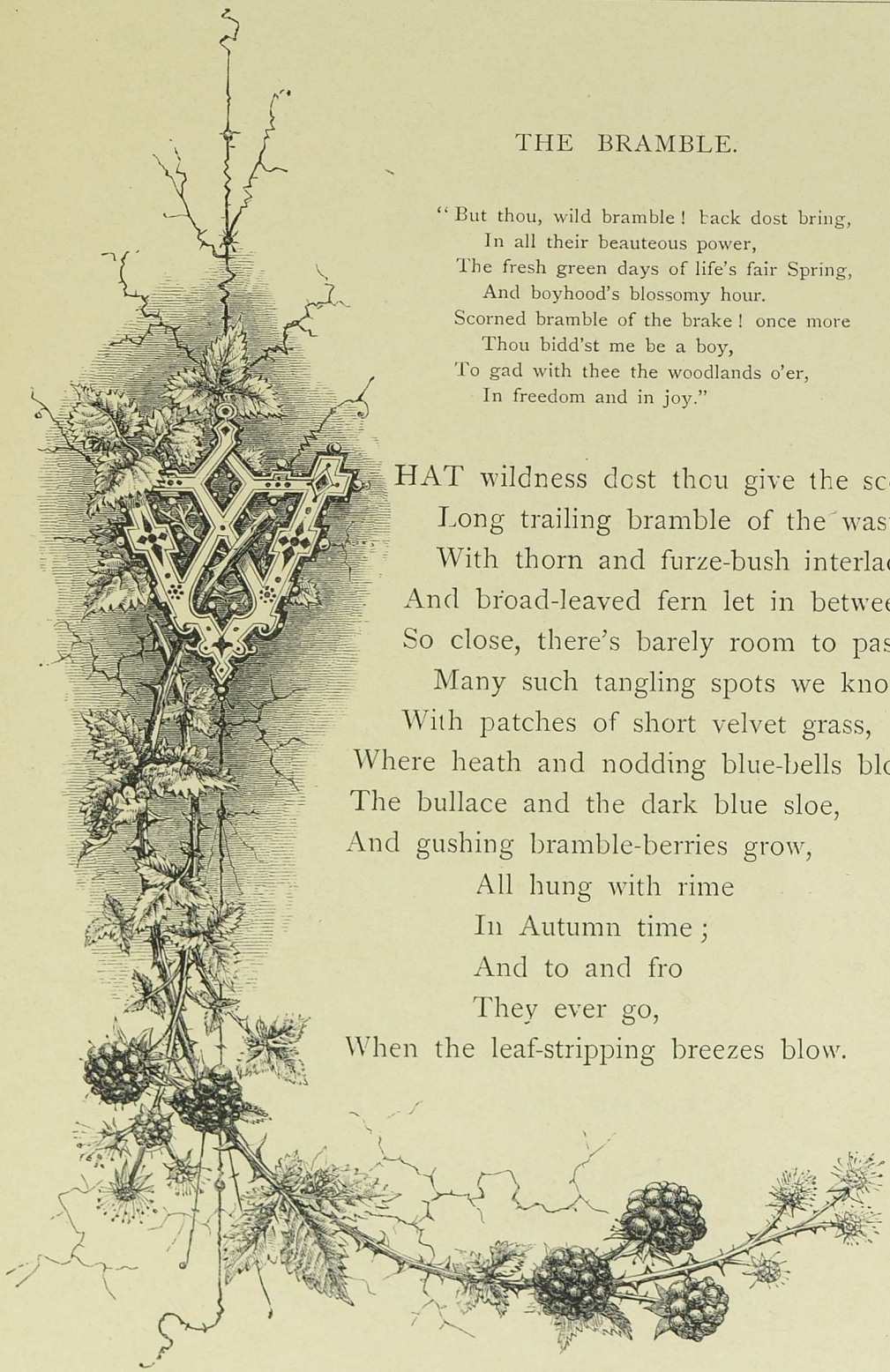
A NOVEMBER SCENE.

I SAW the woods and fields at close of day
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded, and the lands, where lately waved
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturned so lately by the peaceful share.
I saw, far off, the weedy fallow smile
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His favourite herb; while all the leafless groves

That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue,
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change,
Which even now, though silently performed,
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal Nature undergoes.
Fast falls the fleecy shower; the downy flakes
Descending, and with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thickening mantle, and the green
And tender blade, that feared the chilling blast,
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

WINTER MUSIC.

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge, about the new-mown mead:
That is the grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury—he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems, to one in drowsiness half lost,
The grasshopper's among some grassy hills.



THE BRAMBLE.

"But thou, wild bramble! back dost bring,
In all their beauteous power,
The fresh green days of life's fair Spring,
And boyhood's blossomy hour.
Scorned bramble of the brake! once more
Thou bidd'st me be a boy,
To gad with thee the woodlands o'er,
In freedom and in joy."

WHAT wildness dost thou give the scene,
Long trailing bramble of the waste!
With thorn and furze-bush interlaced,
And broad-leaved fern let in between
So close, there's barely room to pass;
Many such tangling spots we know,
With patches of short velvet grass,
Where heath and nodding blue-bells blow,
The bullace and the dark blue sloe,
And gushing bramble-berries grow,
All hung with rime
In Autumn time;
And to and fro
They ever go,
When the leaf-stripping breezes blow.

THE CHRYSANTHEMUM.

LAST smile of the departing year,
Thy sister sweets are flown!
Thy pensive wreath is far more dear
For blooming thus alone!
Thy tender blush, thy simple frame,
Unnoticed might be past;
But now thou com'st, with softer claim,
The loveliest and the last.
Sweet are the charms in thee we find,
Emblem of Hope's gay wing;
'Tis thine to call past bloom to mind,
To promise future Spring.

HYMN FOR NOVEMBER.

"Who shall change our vile body, that it might be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."—*Philippians* iii. 21.

RED o'er the forest peers the setting sun,
The line of yellow light dies fast away
That crowned the eastern copse: and chill and dun
Falls on the moor the brief November day.

Now the tired hunter winds a parting note,
And Echo bids good-night from every glade!
Yet wait awhile, and see the calm leaves float
Each to his rest beneath their parent shade.

How like decaying life they seem to glide!
And yet no second Spring have they in store,
But where they fall, forgotten, to abide
Is all their portion, and they ask no more.

Soon o'er their heads blithe April airs shall sing,
A thousand wild-flowers round them shall unfold,
The green buds glisten in the dews of Spring,
And all be vernal rapture as of old.

Unconscious they in waste oblivion lie,
In all the world of busy life around
No thought of them; in all the bounteous sky
No drop, for them, of kindly influence found.

Man's portion is to die and rise again—
Yet he complains, while these unmurmuring part
With their sweet lives, as pure from sin and stain,
As his when Eden held his virgin heart.

And haply half unblamed his murmuring voice
Might sound in Heaven, were all his second life
Only the first renewed—the heathen's choice,
A round of listless joy and weary strife.

Heavy and dull this frame of limbs and heart,
Whether slow creeping on cold earth, or borne
On lofty steed, or loftier prow, we dart
O'er wave or field: yet breezes laugh to scorn

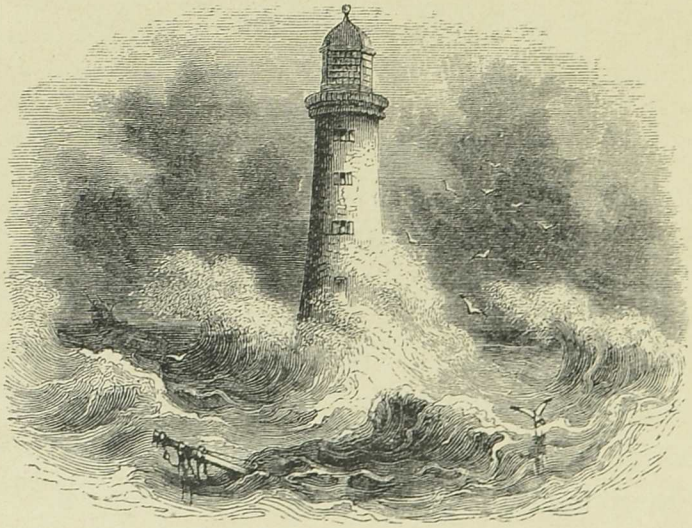
Our puny speed, and birds, and clouds in Heaven,
And fish, like living shafts that pierce the main,
And stars that shoot through freezing air at even—
Who but would follow, might he break his chain?

And thou shalt break it soon ; the grovelling worm
Shall find his wings, and soar as fast and free
As his transfigured Lord with lightning form
And snowy vest—such grace He won for thee,

When from the grave He sprung at dawn of morn,
And led through boundless air thy conquering road,
Leaving a glorious track, where saints, new born,
Might fearless follow to their blest abode.

But first, by many a stern and fiery blast,
The world's rude furnace must thy blood refine,
And many a gale of keenest woe be past,
Till every pulse beat true to airs divine,

Till every limb obey the mounting soul,
The mounting soul, the call by Jesus given :
He who the stormy heart can so control
The laggard body soon will waft to heaven.

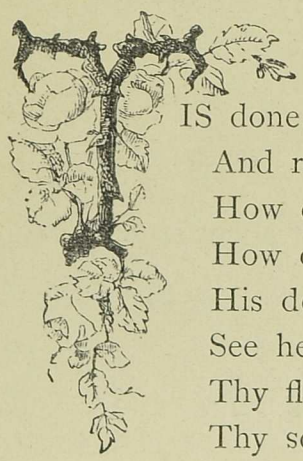


How quiet shows the woodland scene!
Each flower and tree, its duty done,
Reposing in decay serene,
Like weary men when age is won.

KEBLE.

DECEMBER.

"See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train:
Vapours, and clouds, and storms."



IS done! dread Winter spreads his latest glooms,
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquered year.
How dead the vegetable kingdom lies!
How dumb the tuneful! Horror wide extends
His desolate domain. Behold, fond man!
See here thy pictured life; pass some few years,
Thy flowering Spring, thy Summer's ardent strength,
Thy sober Autumn fading into age,
And pale concluding Winter comes at last,
And shuts the scene. Ah! whither now are fled,
Those dreams of greatness? those unsolid hopes
Of happiness? those longings after fame?
Those restless cares? those busy bustling days?
Those gay-spent, festive nights? those veering thoughts,
Lost between good and ill, that shared thy life?
All now are vanished! Virtue sole survives,
Immortal never-failing friend of man.
* * * Ye good distressed!
Ye noble few! who here unbending stand
Beneath life's pressure, yet bear up awhile,
And what your bounded view, which only saw
A little part, deemed evil, is no more:
The storms of wintry Time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded Spring encircle all.

A DOUBTING HEART.

WHERE are the swallows fled?
Frozen and dead,
Perchance, upon some bleak and stormy shore.
O, doubting heart,
Far over purple seas
They wait, in sunny ease,
The balmy southern breeze,
To bring them to their northern home once more.

Why must the flowers die?
Prisoned they lie
In the cold tomb, heedless of tears or rain.
O, doubting heart,
They only sleep below
The soft white ermine snow
While winter winds shall blow,
To breathe and smile upon you soon again.

The sun has hid its rays
These many days;
Will dreary hours never leave the earth?
O, doubting heart,
The stormy clouds on high
Veil the same sunny sky
That soon—for Spring is nigh—
Shall wake the Summer into golden mirth.

Fair Hope is dead, and light
Is quenched in night.

What sound can break the silence of despair?
O, doubting heart,
The sky is overcast,
Yet stars shall rise at last,
Brighter for darkness past,
And angels' silver voices stir the air.

THE FIRST SNOW.

THE first snow came. How beautiful it was, falling so silently all day long, all night long, on the mountains, on the meadows, on the roofs of the living, on the graves of the dead! All white save the river, that marked its course by a winding black line across the landscape; and the leafless trees, that against the leaden sky now revealed more fully the wonderful beauty and intricacy of their branches. What silence, too, came with the snow, and what seclusion! Every sound was muffled, every noise changed to something soft and musical. No more trampling hoofs, no more rattling wheels! Only the chiming sleigh-bells, beating as swift and merrily as the hearts of children.

The Winter did not pass without its peculiar delights and recreations—the singing of the great wood fires, the blowing of the wind over the chimney-tops, as if they were organ-pipes, the splendour of the spotless snow; the purple wall built round the horizon at sunset; the sea-suggesting pines, with the moan of the billows in their branches, on which the snows were furled like sails; the northern lights; the stars of steel; the transcendent moonlight, and the lovely shadows of the leafless trees upon the snow.

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch ober their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of Dabid a Sabiour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heabenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

THE HOLLY-TREE.

O READER! hast thou ever stood to see
The holly-tree?
The eye that contemplates it well, perceives
Its glossy leaves
Ordered by an Intelligence, so wise
As might confound the atheist's sophistries.

Below a circling fence its leaves are seen,
Wrinkled and keen;
No grazing cattle through their prickly round
Can reach to wound;
But as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarmed the pointless leaves appear.

I love to view these things with curious eyes,
And moralize:
And in this wisdom of the holly-tree
Can emblems see,
Wherewith perchance to make a pleasant rhyme,
One which may profit in the after-time.

Thus, though abroad perchance I might appear
Harsh and austere,
To those who on my leisure would intrude
Reserved and rude;
Gentle at home amid my friends I'd be,
Like the high leaves upon the holly-tree.

And as when all the Summer trees are seen
So bright and green,
The holly-leaves their fadeless hues display
Less bright than they;
But when the bare and wintry woods we see,
What then so cheerful as the holly-tree?

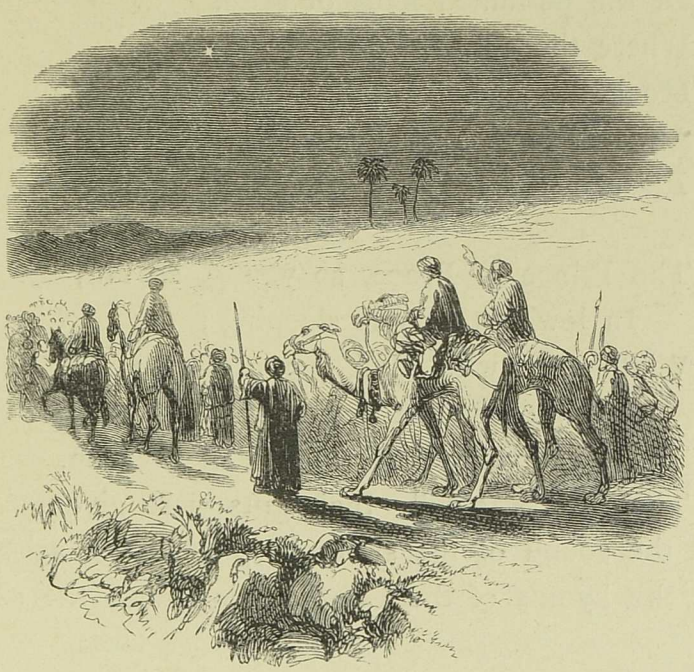
So serious should my youth appear among
The thoughtless throng,
So would I seem among the young and gay
More grave than they,
That in my age as cheerful I may be
As the green Winter of the holly-tree.

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid, the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill to all mankind.



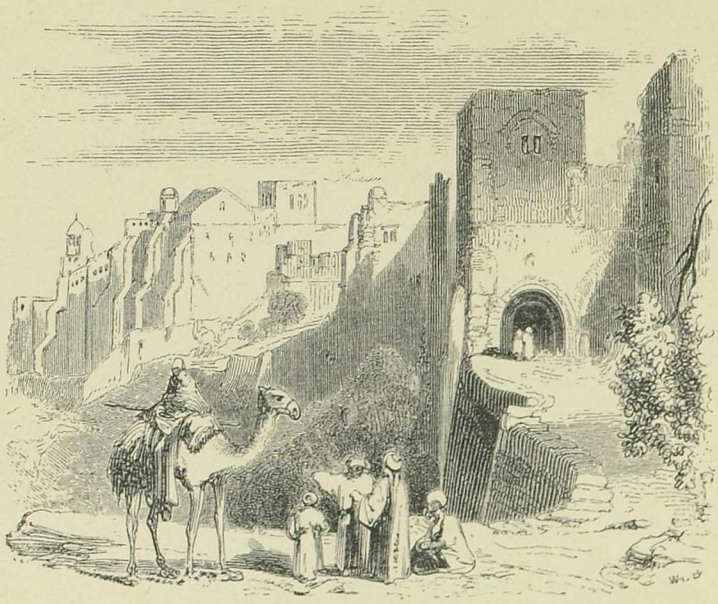
THE NATIVITY.

A STAR appeared, and peaceful threw
Around its holy ray;
It caught the faithful Magi's view,
It led the wondrous way
From far-famed Persia's smiling bowers,
Fair land of beauty, fruits, and flowers.

Each heart throughout the gazing throng
What anxious gladness fills,
While slowly moved that star along
O'er Judah's sacred hills,
And softly fixed its mellow light
On distant Bethlehem's joyful night.

There, unknown to rich and great,
Or the perfumed halls of state,
Where the golden lamps so bright,
Mock the silence of the night,
And the strains of music tender
Rise and fall 'mid scenes of splendour,—

The Prince of Peace, so young, so fair,
In lowly state was sleeping;
While near, with kind, parental care,
His mother watch was keeping.
The Magi viewed the bless'd of Heaven,
Their joy was full—their gifts were given.
Let the sound of the sweet harp of Judah arise!
Let the hymns of the Gentiles ascend to the skies!



HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS MORNING.

Away with sorrow's sigh,
Our prayers are heard on high;
And through heaven's crystal door,
On this our earthly floor,
Comes meek-eyed Peace to walk with poor mortality.

In dead of night profound,
There breaks a seraph sound,
Of never-ending morn;
The Lord of Glory born
Within a holy grot on this our sullen ground.

Now with that shepherd crowd,
If it might be allowed,
We fain would enter there,
With awful hastening fear,
And kiss that cradle chaste in reverend worship bowed.

O sight of strange surprise
That fills our gazing eyes:
A manger coldly strewed,
And swaddling bands so rude,
A leaning mother poor, and Child that helpless lies.

Art Thou, O wondrous sight,
Of lights the very Light,
Who holdest in Thy hand
The sky, and sea, and land;
Who than the glorious heavens art more exceeding bright?

'Tis so; Faith darts before,
And, through the cloud drawn o'er,
She sees the God of all:
Where angels prostrate fall,
Adoring, tremble still, and, trembling, still adore!

No thunders round Thee break,
Yet doth Thy silence speak
From that, Thy Teacher's seat,
To us around Thy feet,
To shun what flesh desires, what flesh abhors to seek.

A WINTER EVENING AT HOME.

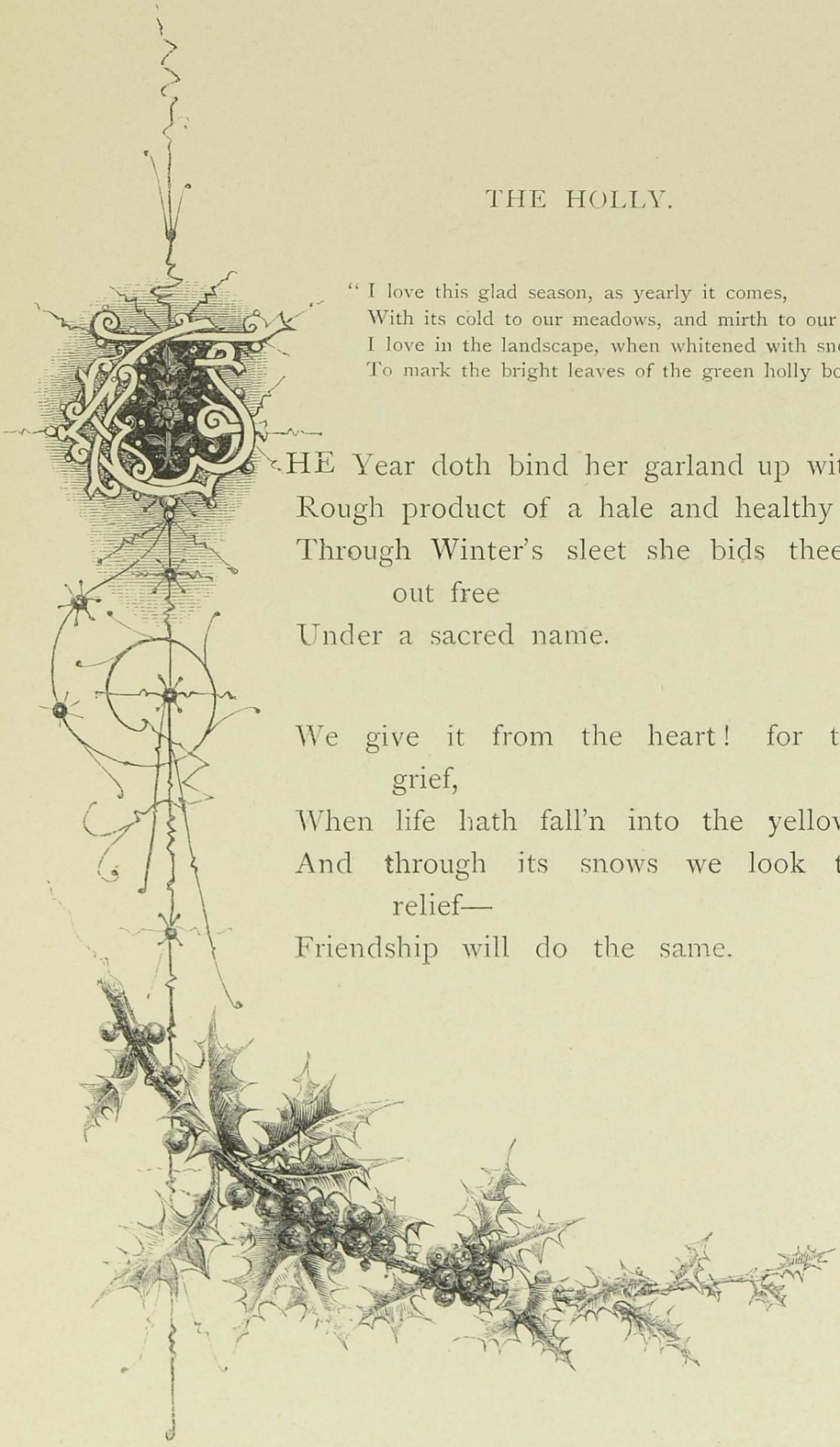
Fair Moon! that at the chilly day's decline
Of sharp December, through my cottage pane
Dost lovely look, smiling, though in thy wane;
In thought, to scenes serene and still as thine,
Wanders my heart, whilst I by turns survey
Thee slowly wheeling on thy evening way;
And this my fire, whose dim unequal light,
Just glimmering, bids each shadowy image fall
Sombrous and strange upon the darkening wall,
Ere the clear tapers chase the deepening night!
Yet thy still orb, seen through the freezing haze,
Shines clear and calm without; and, whilst I gaze,
I think, around me in this twilight gloom
I but remark mortality's sad doom
Whilst hope and joy cloudless and soft appear
In the sweet beam that lights thy distant sphere.

THE HOLLY.

"I love this glad season, as yearly it comes,
With its cold to our meadows, and mirth to our homes;
I love in the landscape, when whitened with snow,
To mark the bright leaves of the green holly bough."

THE Year doth bind her garland up with thee,
Rough product of a hale and healthy tree!
Through Winter's sleet she bids thee shine out free
Under a sacred name.

We give it from the heart! for thus in grief,
When life hath fall'n into the yellow leaf,
And through its snows we look to find relief—
Friendship will do the same.



ANOTHER YEAR.

"Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."—*James* iv. 13, 14.

ANOTHER year, another year!
O! who shall see another year?—
Shalt thou, old man, of hoary head,
Of eyesight dim, and feeble tread?
Expect it not! Time, pain, and grief,
Have made thee like an Autumn leaf,
Ready, by blast or self-decay,
From its slight hold to drop away;
And some sad morn may gild thy bier,
Long, long before another year!

Another year, another year!
O! who shall see another year?—
Shall you, ye young, or you, ye fair?
Ah! the presumptuous thought forbear!
Within the churchyard's peaceful bounds,
Come, pause and ponder o'er the mounds!
Here beauty sleeps! that verdant length
Of grave contains what once was strength!
The child—the boy—the man are here:
Ye may not see another year!

HYMN FOR THE CLOSING YEAR.

A FEW more years shall roll,
A few more seasons come,
And we shall be with those that rest
Asleep within the tomb:
Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that great day;
Oh, wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away!

A few more storms shall beat
On this wild, rocky shore;
And we shall be where tempests cease,
And surges swell no more:
Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that calm day;
Oh, wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away!

A few more Sabbaths here
Shall cheer us on our way,
And we shall reach the endless rest,
Th' eternal Sabbath day:
Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that sweet day;
Oh, wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away!

'Tis but a little while,
And He shall come again,
Who died that we might live, who lives
That we with Him may reign:
Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that glad day;
Oh, wash me in Thy precious blood,
And take my sins away!

CONCLUSION.

ACQUAINT thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to His embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;
Thine eye shall be instructed; and thine heart,
Made pure, shall relish, with Divine delight
Till then unfelt, what hands Divine have wrought.
Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone
And eyes intent upon the scanty herb
It yields them; or, recumbent on its brow,
Ruminate heedless of the scene outspread
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away
From inland regions to the distant main.
Man views it, and admires; but rests content
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,
But not its Author. Unconcerned who formed
The paradise he sees, he finds it such,
And, such well-pleased to find it, asks no more.

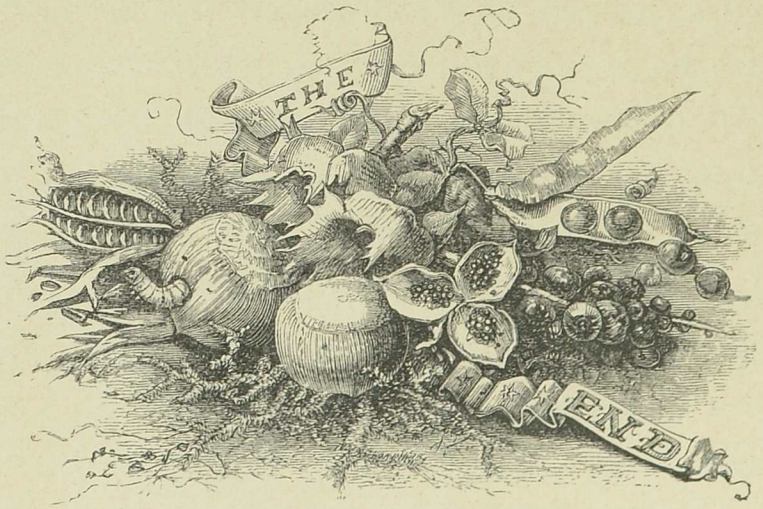
Not so the mind that has been touched from Heaven,
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught
To read His wonders, in whose thought the world,
Fair as it is, existed ere it was.
Not for its own sake merely, but for His
Much more who fashioned it, he gives it praise;
Praise that, from earth resulting, as it ought,
To earth's acknowledged sovereign, finds at once
Its only just proprietor in Him.
The soul that sees Him or receives sublimed
New faculties, or learns at least to employ
More worthily the powers she owned before,
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
Of ignorance, till then she overlooked,
A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms
Terrestrial in the vast and the minute;
The unambiguous footsteps of the God,
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels His throne upon the rolling worlds.
Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds
With those fair ministers of light to man,
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,
Sweet conference. Inquires what strains were they
With which Heaven rang, when every star, in haste
To gratulate the new-created earth,
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God

Shouted for joy. "Tell me, ye shining hosts,
That navigate a sea that knows no storms,
Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,
If from your elevation, whence ye view
Distinctly scenes invisible to man,
And systems, of whose birth no tidings yet
Have reached this nether world, ye spy a race
Favoured as ours; transgressors from the womb,
And hasting to a grave, yet doomed to rise,
And to possess a brighter heaven than yours?
As one who long detained on foreign shores
Pants to return, and when he sees afar
His country's weather-bleached and battered rocks,
From the green wave emerging, darts an eye
Radiant with joy towards the happy land;
So I with animated hopes behold,
And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,
That show like beacons in the blue abyss,
Ordained to guide the embodied spirit home
From toilsome life to never-ending rest.
Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires
That give assurance of their own success,
And that, infused from Heaven, must thither tend."
So reads he Nature, whom the lamp of truth
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!
Which whoso sees no longer wanders lost,

With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built,
With means that were not till by Thee employed,
Worlds that had never been hadst Thou in strength
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.
They are Thy witnesses, who speak Thy power
And goodness infinite, but speak in ears
That hear not, or receive not their report.
In vain Thy creatures testify of Thee,
Till Thou proclaim Thyself. Theirs is indeed
A teaching voice; but 'tis the praise of Thine
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,
And with the boon gives talents for its use.
Till Thou art heard, imaginations vain
Possess the heart, and fables false as hell,
Yet, deemed oracular, lure down to death
The uninformed and heedless souls of men.
We give to chance, blind chance, ourselves as blind,
The glory of Thy work; which yet appears
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved
Then skilful most when most severely judged.
But chance is not; or is not where Thou reign'st:
Thy providence forbids that fickle power
(If power she be that works but to confound)
To mix her wild vagaries with Thy laws.

Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves
Gods such as guilt makes welcome; gods that sleep,
Or disregard our follies, or that sit
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.
Thee we reject, unable to abide
Thy purity, till pure as Thou art pure;
Made such by Thee, we love Thee for that cause,
For which we shunned and hated Thee before.
Then we are free. Then liberty, like day,
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from heaven
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.
A voice is heard that mortal ears hear not,
Till Thou hast touched them; 'tis the voice of song,
A loud Hosanna sent from all Thy works;
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,
And adds his rapture to the general praise.
In that blest moment Nature, throwing wide
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile
The Author of her beauties, who, retired
Behind His own creation, works unseen
By the impure, and hears His power denied.
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word!
From Thee departing they are lost, and rove
At random without honour, hope, or peace.

From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavour, and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But, O thou bounteous Giver of all good,
Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown!
Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor,
And with Thee rich, take what Thou wilt away.



INDEX OF FIRST LINES.

		Page
A cloud lay cradled near the setting sun	*Wilson*	133
A few more years shall roll	*Horatius Bonar*	213
A fragment of a rainbow bright	*Keble*	69
A gold and silver cup	*Sutton*	42
A green and silent spot amid the hills	*Coleridge*	73
A star appeared, and peaceful threw	*Campbell*	207
A thing of beauty is a joy for ever	*Keats*	103
Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste	*Cowper*	215
Ah! why reposest thou so pale?	*Krummacher*	17
All day the low-hung clouds have dropped	*Chaucer*	65
All things are calm, and fair, and passive	*Philip Bailey*	126
Amongst the many buds proclaiming May	*W. Browne*	86
And now comes rosy June; the blue-eyed hours	*Waller*	101
And see where surly Winter passes off	*Thomson*	35
Another year, another year	*Robert Story*	210
Another year with promised blessings rise!	*Bloomfield*	11
Arise, thou child of Nature, rise!	*Mary Howitt*	171
At night, when all, assembling round the fire	*Rogers*	191
Away with sorrow's sigh	*Isaac Williams*	209
Before the stout harvesters falleth the grain	*T. B. Read*	165
Behold the western evening's light	*Anon.*	182
Bird of the wilderness	*Hogg*	59
Bowing adorers of the gale	*Clare*	94
Broods there some spirit here?	*Hemans*	110
But see the fading many-coloured woods	*Thomson*	170
But who the melodies of morn can tell?	*Beattie*	122
By cool Siloam's shady rill	*Heber*	76
Child of the Sun! pursue thy rapturous flight	*Rogers*	116
Come forth, and let us through our hearts receive	*Hemans*	113
Come, ye little revellers gay	"*Lyra Innocentium*"	87
Daisies, ye flowers of lowly birth	*Clare*	42
Dark-visaged visitor, who comest here	*Kirke White*	185
Deep on convent roof the snows	*Tennyson*	12
Dip down upon the northern shore	*Tennyson*	70

		Page
Earth's children cleave to earth—her frail	*Bryant*	177
Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!	*Wordsworth*	59
Fair daffodils, we weep to see	*Robert Herrick*	52
Fair is the face of Spring	*Akenside*	61
Fair Moon! that at the chilly day's decline	*W. L. Bowles*	211
Father, Thy hand hath reared these venerable columns	*Bryant*	150
From the fierce aspect of this river, throwing	*Wordsworth*	108
From the sod no crocus peeps	*R. C. Trench*	40
Hail, beauteous stranger of the grove!	*Logan*	89
Here and there rude heaps, that had been cities, clad the ground	*Sydney Dobell*	175
Here, till return of morn dismissed the farm	*Crabbe*	104
How beautiful is the rain!	*Longfellow*	122
How dazzling white the snowy scene! deep, deep	*Grahame*	9
How fair a sight, that vest of gold	*Bishop Mant*	137
How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean	*George Herbert*	74
How much of memory dwells amidst thy bloom	*Hemans*	114
How withered, perished seems the form	*Mrs. Tighe*	115
I come, I come! ye have called me long	*Hemans*	84
I have found violets. April hath come on	*N. P. Willis*	68
I loved to walk where none had walked before	*Crabbe*	47
I praised the earth in beauty seen	*Heber*	143
I saw the woods and fields at close of day	*Cowper*	193
It was a lovely morning; all was calm	*Bernard Barton*	125
Jasmine! thy fair and star-like flowers with honours should be crowned	*Bernard Barton*	131
Knell of departed years	*Anon.*	10
Last smile of the departing year	*"Literary Gazette"*	196
Leaves have their time to fall	*Hemans*	160
Lessons sweet of Spring returning	*Keble*	66
Loud is the Summer's busy song	*Clare*	121
Meanwhile to glad September's dawn	*Bishop Mant*	155
Mild offspring of a dark and sullen sire	*Kirke White*	41
Mountain gorses, ever golden	*Mrs. Browning*	164
My heart is full of prayer	*M. A. Bacon*	79
Not worlds on worlds in phalanx deep	*J. M. Good*	42
Nothing fair on earth I see	*"Lyra Germanica"*	97
November's sky is chill and drear	*Scott*	189
Now in my walk with sweet surprise	*James Montgomery*	95
O Father! Lord! the All-beneficent! I bless Thy name	*Hemans*	77
O festal Spring! midst thy victorious glow	*Hemans*	49
O gift of God! O perfect day	*Longfellow*	112
O God! by whom the seed is given	*Heber*	44
O reader! hast thou ever stood to see	*Southey*	205

		Page
O sacred Providence, who from end to end	*George Herbert*	166
O Winter, ruler of the inverted year	*Cowper*	38
O'er faded heath-flowers spun, or thorny furze	*L. Jermyn*	163
Oft, on a plat of rising ground	*Milton*	178
Red o'er the forest peers the setting sun	*Keble*	196
Red soldier of the golden corn	*Miller*	149
Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness	*Keats*	169
See once again our village; with its street	*W. Allingham*	126
See the Spring is the earth enamelling	*W. Browne*	83
Soft as a cloud is yon blue ridge—the mere	*Wordsworth*	145
Soon as the morning trembles o'er the sky	*Thomson*	144
Spread around thy tenderest diligence	*Dyer*	71
Sweet Sabbath of the year	*James Montgomery*	173
The angel comes, he comes to reap	*Milman*	152
The billows swell, the winds are high	*Cowper*	62
The cock is crowing	*Wordsworth*	49
The day is ending	*Longfellow*	34
The gorse is yellow on the heath	*C. Smith*	75
The loppèd tree in time may grow again	*Southwell*	22
The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year	*Bryant*	186
The mellow year is hasting to its close	*Hartley Coleridge*	193
The moon is up! How calm and slow	*Peabody*	151
The morning mist is cleared away	*Keble*	190
The night was Winter in his roughest mood	*Cowper*	24
The poetry of earth is never dead	*Keats*	194
The snow has left the cottage roof	*Clare*	29
The stormy March is come at last	*Bryant*	56
The time draws near the birth of Christ	*Tennyson*	206
The year doth bind her garland up with thee	*M. A. Bacon*	212
There is a fearful spirit busy now	*Miss Procter*	174
These as they change, Almighty Father, these	*Thomson*	1
These gray majestic cliffs that tower to heaven	*Rogers*	157
They come! the merry Summer months of beauty, song, and flowers	*William Motherwell*	102
Thou first-born of the year's delight	*Keble*	23
Thou hast thy beauties: sterner ones I own	*Bernard Barton*	33
Thy mighty working, mighty God!	"*Lyra Germanica*"	80
'Tis done! dread Winter spreads his latest glooms	*Thomson*	201
'Tis morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb	*Cowper*	13
Under the green hedges after the snow	*J. Moultrie*	58
Welcome, O pure and lovely forms, again	*Hemans*	131
What dream of beauty ever equalled this!	*William Howitt*	39
What wildness dost thou give the scene!	*Miller*	195
When at midday my task I ply	*James Ford*	133
When brighter hours are passing away	*Anon.*	180
When from its high and sullen cloud	*Bishop Spencer*	54
When on the breath of Autumn breeze	*Mary Howitt*	141

		Page
When Spring unlocks the flowers to paint the laughing soil	*Heber*	26
When Winter winds are piercing chill	*Longfellow*	16
Where are the swallows fled?	*Miss Procter*	202
Whither, midst falling dew	*Bryant*	32
Why comes this fragrance on the Summer breeze	*Thomas Davis*	117
Winter is past—the little bee resumes	*Clare*	56
Ye field flowers! the gardens eclipse you, 'tis true	*Campbell*	96
Ye gentle birds, that perch aloof	*Hayley*	173
Yet one smile more, departing, distant sun!	*Bryant*	178

PROSE EXTRACTS

FROM

"Our Village" (A Frost Scene)	*Miss Mitford*	18
"Beauties of the Country" (February-fill-dike)	*Miller*	31
"Our Village" (Felling Timber)	*Miss Mitford*	50
"Kavanagh" (The First Buds)	*Longfellow*	53
"The Spectator" (On Gladness in Spring)	*Addison*	60
"The Complete Angler" ("The time of the singing of birds is come")	*Izaak Walton*	85
"The Complete Angler" (An Evening in May)	*Izaak Walton*	90
"Broadmead Lectures" (Spring, and its Moral Analogies)	*John Foster*	92
"Chapters on Flowers" (Garden Thoughts)	*Charlotte Elizabeth*	106
"Summer-time in the Country" (Glow-worms)	*R. A. Willmott*	129
"Recreations of a Country Parson" (Summer Days)	*A. K. H. B.*	132
"Summer-time in the Country" (Autumn Thoughts)	*R. A. Willmott*	138
"Rambles of a Naturalist" (Rock-Pools)	*P. H. Gosse*	146
"The Church and the Nation" (Lessons of Autumn)	*Samuel Martin*	156
"Missions among the Gipsies" (George III. and the dying Gipsy)	*Rev. J. Crabbe*	161
"Kavanagh" (Autumnal Beauty)	*Longfellow*	181
"Pages from my Note-book" (November Bonfires)	*An American Artist*	187
"Kavanagh" (The First Snow)	*Longfellow*	203

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