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MONTICELLO

Selected Short Poems

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She walks in beauty

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

June 12, 1814

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

'Tis time the heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not thus—and 'tis not here—
Such thoughts should shake my soul nor now,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece—she is awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through whom
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regrett'st thy youth, why live?
The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

Missolonghi, Greece, 22 January 1824

To Caroline

Oh when shall the grave hide for ever my sorrow?
Oh when shall my soul wing her flight from this clay?
The present is hell, and the coming to-morrow
But brings, with new torture, the curse of to-day.

From my eye flows no tear, from my lips flow no curses
I blast not the fiends who have hurl'd me from bliss;
For poor is the soul which bewailing rehearses
Its querulous grief, when in anguish like this.

Was my eye, 'stead of tears, with red fury flakes bright'ning,
Would my lips breathe a flame which no stream could assuage
On our foes should my glance launch in vengeance its lightning,
With transport my tongue give loose to its rage.

But now tears and curses, alike unavailing,
Would add to the souls of our tyrants delight;
Could they view us our sad separation bewailing
Their merciless hearts would rejoice at the sight.

Yet still, though we bend with a feign'd resignation,
Life beams not for us with one ray that can cheer;
Love and hope upon earth bring no more consolation,
In the grave is our hope, for in life is our fear.

Oh! when, my adored, in the tomb will they place me,
Since, in life, love and friendship for ever are fled?
If again in the mansion of death I embrace thee,
Perhaps they will leave unmolested the dead.

Farewell to the Muse

Thou Power! who hast ruled me through Infancy's days,
Young offspring of Fancy, 'tis time we should part;
Then rise on the gale this the last of my lays,
The coldest effusion which springs from my heart.

This bosom, responsive to rapture no more,
Shall hush thy wild notes, nor implore thee to sing;
The feelings of childhood, which taught thee to soar,
Are wafted far distant on Apathy's wing.

Though simple the themes of my rude flowing Lyre,
Yet even these themes are departed for ever;
No more beam the eyes which my dream could inspire,
My visions are flown, to return,—alas, never!

When drain'd is the nectar which gladdens the bowl,
How vain is the effort delight to prolong!
When cold is the beauty which dwelt in my soul,
What magic of Fancy can lengthen my song?

Can the lips sing of Love in the desert alone,
Of kisses and smiles which they now must resign?
Or dwell with delight on the hours that are flown?
Ah, no! for those hours can no longer be mine.

Can they speak of the friends that I lived but to love?
Ah, surely Affection ennobles the strain!
But how can my numbers in sympathy move,
When I scarcely can hope to behold them again?

Can I sing of the deeds which my Fathers have done,
And raise my loud harp to the fame of my Sires?
For glories like theirs, oh, how faint is my tone!
For Heroes' exploits how unequal my fires!

Untouch'd, then, my Lyre shall reply to the blast—
'Tis hush'd; and my feeble endeavors are o'er;
And those who have heard it will pardon the past,
When they know that its murmurs shall vibrate no more.

And soon shall its wild erring notes be forgot,
Since early affection and love is o'ercast:
Oh! blest had my Fate been, and happy my lot,
Had the first strain of love been the dearest, the last.

Farewell, my young Muse! since we now can ne'er meet;
If our songs have been languid, they surely are few:
Let us hope that the present at least will be sweet—
The present—which seals our eternal Adieu.
1807 [First published in 1832]

'And wilt thou weep when I am low?'

And wilt thou weep when I am low?
Sweet lady! speak those words again:
Yet if they grieve thee, say not so—
I would not give that bosom pain.

My heart is sad, my hopes are gone,
My blood runs coldly through my breast;
And when I perish, thou alone
Wilt sigh above my place of rest.

And yet, methinks, a gleam of peace
Doth through my cloud of anguish shine:
And for a while my sorrows cease,
To know thy heart hath felt for mine.

Oh lady! blessd be that tear—
It falls for one who cannot weep;
Such precious drops are doubly dear
To those whose eyes no tear may steep.

Sweet lady! once my heart was warm
With every feeling soft as thine;
But Beauty's self hath ceased to charm
A wretch created to repine.

Yet wilt thou weep when I am low ?
Sweet lady! speak those words again:
Yet if they grieve thee, say not so—
I would not give that bosom pain.

13 August 1808 [First published in 1809]

OSSIAN'S ADDRESS TO THE SUN IN 'CARTHON'

Oh! thou that roll'st above thy glorious Fire,
Round as the shield which graced my god-like Sire,
Whence are the beams, O Sun! thy endless blaze,
Which far eclipse each minor Glory's rays?
Forth in thy Beauty here thou deign'st to shine!
Night quits her car, the twinkling stars decline,
Pallid and cold the Moon descends to cave
Her swinging beams beneath the Western wave;
But thou still mov'st alone, of light the Source—
Who can o'ertake thee in thy fiery course?
Oaks of the mountains fall, the rocks decay,
Weigh'd down with years the hills dissolve away.
A certain space to yonder Moon is given,
She rises, smiles, and then is lost in Heaven.
Ocean in sullen murmurs ebbs and flows,
But thy bright beam unchanged for ever glows!
When Earth is darken'd with tempestuous skies,
When Thunder shakes the sphere and Lightning flies,
Thy face, O Sun, no rolling blasts deform,
Thou look'st from clouds and laughest at the Storm.
To Ossian, Orb of Light! thou look'st in vain,
Nor canst thou glad his aged eyes again,
Whether thy locks in Orient Beauty stream,

Or glimmer through the West with fainter gleam—
But thou, perhaps, like me with age must bend;
Thy season o'er, thy days will find their end,
No more yon azure vault with rays adorn,
Lull'd in the clouds, nor hear the voice of Morn.
Exult, O Sun, in all thy youthful strength!
Age, dark unlovely Age, appears at length,
As gleams the moonbeam through the broken cloud
While mountain vapours spread their misty shroud—
The Northern tempest howls along at last,
And wayworn strangers shrink amid the blast.
Thou rolling Sun who gild'st those rising towers,
Fair didst thou shine upon my earlier hours!
I hail'd with smiles the cheering rays of Morn,
My breast by no tumultuous Passion torn—
Now hateful are thy beams which wake no more
The sense of joy which thrill'd my breast before;
Welcome thou cloudy veil of nightly skies,
To thy bright canopy the mourner flies;
Once bright, thy Silence lull'd my frame to rest,
And Sleep my soul with gentle visions blest;
Now wakeful Grief disdains her mild controul,
Dark is the night, but darker is my Soul.
Ye warring Winds of Heav'n your fury urge,
To me congenial sounds your wintry Dirge:
Swift as your wings my happier days have past,
Keen as your storms is Sorrow's chilling blast;

To Tempests thus exposed my Fate has been,
Piercing like yours, like years, alas unseen.
1805 [First published in 1898]

‘DEAR DOCTOR, I HAVE READ YOUR PLAY’

Dear Doctor, I have read your play,
Which is a good one in its way,
Purges the eyes, and moves the bowels,
And drenches handkerchiefs like towels
With tears that, in a flux of grief,
Afford hysterical relief
To shatter'd nerves and quicken'd pulses,
Which your catastrophe convulses.
I like your moral and machinery;
Your plot, too, has such scope for scenery!
Your dialogue is apt and smart;
The play's concoction full of art;
Your hero raves, your heroine cries,
All stab, and everybody dies;
In short, your tragedy would be
The very thing to hear and see;
And for a piece of publication,
If I decline on this occasion,
It is not that I am not sensible
To merits in themselves ostensible,
But—and I grieve to speak it—plays
Are drugs—mere drugs, Sir, nowadays.
I had a heavy loss by Manuel —

Too lucky if it prove not annual—
And Sotheby, with his damn'd Orestes
(Which, by the way, the old bore's best is),
Has lain so very long on hand
That I despair of all demand;
I've advertis'd—but see my books,
Or only watch my shopman's looks;
Still Ivan , Ina and such lumber
My back-shop glut, my shelves encumber.
There's Byron too, who once did better,
Has sent me—folded in a letter—
A sort of—it's no more a drama
Than Darnley , Ivan or Kehama :
So alter'd since last year his pen is,
I think he's lost his wits at Venice,
Or drain'd his brains away as stallion
To some dark-eyed and warm Italian;
In short, Sir, what with one and t'other,
I dare not venture on another.
I write in haste; excuse each blunder;
The coaches through the street so thunder!
My room's so full; we've Gifford here
Reading MSS with Hookham Frere,
Pronouncing on the nouns and particles
Of some of our forthcoming articles,
The Quarterly —ah, Sir, if you
Had but the genius to review!

A smart critique upon St. Helena,
Or if you only would but tell in a
Short compass what—but, to resume;
As I was saying, Sir, the room—
The room's so full of wits and bards,
Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres and Wards,
And others, neither bards nor wits—
My humble tenement admits
All persons in the dress of Gent.,
From Mr. Hammond to Dog Dent.
A party dines with me today,
All clever men who make their way:
Crabbe, Malcolm, Hamilton and Chantrey
Are all partakers of my pantry.
They're at this moment in discussion
On poor De Staël's late dissolution.
Her book, they say, was in advance—
Pray Heaven she tell the truth of France!
'Tis said she certainly was married
To Rocca, and had twice miscarried,
No—not miscarried, I opine—
But brought to bed at forty nine.
Some say she died a Papist; some
Are of opinion that's a hum;
I don't know that—the fellow, Schlegel,
Was very likely to inveigle
A dying person in compunction

To try the extremity of unction.
But peace be with her! for a woman
Her talents surely were uncommon.
Her publisher (and public too)
The hour of her demise may rue,
For never more within his shop he—
Pray—was she not interr'd at Coppet?
Thus run our time and tongues away;
But, to return, Sir, to your play;
Sorry, Sir, but I cannot deal,
Unless 'twere acted by O'Neill.
My hands are full—my head so busy,
I'm almost dead—and always dizzy;
And so, with endless truth and hurry,
Dear Doctor, I am yours,

JOHN MURRAY

[21] August, 1817

'So we'll go no more a roving'

[From a letter to Thomas Moore, February
28, 1817 - Venice. First published in 1830]

So we'll go no more a roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And Love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a roving
By the light of the moon.

'And thou art dead, as young and fair'

*Heu, quanto minus est cum reliquis
versari quam tui meminisse!*

[Alas, how much less it is to mix with
those who remain than to remember thee!][*]

And thou art dead, as young and fair

As aught of mortal birth;

And form so soft, and charms so rare,

Too soon return'd to Earth!

Though Earth receiv'd them in her bed,

And o'er the spot the crowd may tread

In carelessness or mirth,

There is an eye which could not brook

A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low,

Nor gaze upon the spot;

There flowers or weeds at will may grow,

So I behold them not:

It is enough for me to prove

That what I lov'd, and long must love,

Like common earth can rot;

To me there needs no stone to tell,

'T is Nothing that I lov'd so well.

Yet did I love thee to the last

As fervently as thou,

Who didst not change through all the past,

And canst not alter now.

The love where Death has set his seal,

Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,

Nor falsehood disavow:

And, what were worse, thou canst not see

Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;

The worst can be but mine:

The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,

Shall never more be thine.

The silence of that dreamless sleep

I envy now too much to weep;

Nor need I to repine

That all those charms have pass'd away,

I might have watch'd through long decay.

The flower in ripen'd bloom unmatch'd

Must fall the earliest prey;

Though by no hand untimely snatch'd,

The leaves must drop away:

And yet it were a greater grief

To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,

Than see it pluck'd to-day;

Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

I know not if I could have borne
To see thy beauties fade;
The night that follow'd such a morn
Had worn a deeper shade:
Thy day without a cloud hath pass'd,
And thou wert lovely to the last,
Extinguish'd, not decay'd;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

As once I wept, if I could weep,
My tears might well be shed,
To think I was not near to keep
One vigil o'er thy bed;
To gaze, how fondly! on thy face,
To fold thee in a faint embrace,
Uphold thy drooping head;
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain,
Than thus remember thee!

The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity
Returns again to me,
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught except its living years

February 1812 [First published in 1812]

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!
Seaham, February 17, 1815

Darkness

[Originally entitled *The Dream*]

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.
 The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
 Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
 Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
 Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
 Morn came and went—and came, and brought no day,
 And men forgot their passions in the dread
 Of this their desolation; and all hearts
 Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light:
 And they did live by watchfires—and the thrones,
 The palaces of crowned kings—the huts,
 The habitations of all things which dwell,
 Were burnt for beacons; cities were consum'd,
 And men were gather'd round their blazing homes
 To look once more into each other's face;
 Happy were those who dwelt within the eye
 Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch:
 A fearful hope was all the world contain'd;
 Forests were set on fire—but hour by hour
 They fell and faded—and the crackling trunks
 Extinguish'd with a crash—and all was black.
 The brows of men by the despairing light
 Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits
 The flashes fell upon them; some lay down

And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest
 Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smil'd;
 And others hurried to and fro, and fed
 Their funeral piles with fuel, and look'd up
 With mad disquietude on the dull sky,
 The pall of a past world; and then again
 With curses cast them down upon the dust,
 And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd: the wild birds shriek'd
 And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
 And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes
 Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd
 And twin'd themselves among the multitude,
 Hissing, but stingless—they were slain for food.
 And War, which for a moment was no more,
 Did glut himself again: a meal was bought
 With blood, and each sate sullenly apart
 Gorging himself in gloom: no love was left;
 All earth was but one thought—and that was death
 Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
 Of famine fed upon all entrails—men
 Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh;
 The meagre by the meagre were devour'd,
 Even dogs assail'd their masters, all save one,
 And he was faithful to a corse, and kept
 The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,
 Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead
 Lur'd their lank jaws; himself sought out no food,

But with a piteous and perpetual moan,
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand
Which answer'd not with a caress—he died.
The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but two
Of an enormous city did survive,
And they were enemies: they met beside
The dying embers of an altar-place
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things
For an unholy usage; they rak'd up,
And shivering scrap'd with their cold skeleton hands
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
Blew for a little life, and made a flame
Which was a mockery; then they lifted up
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld
Each other's aspects—saw, and shriek'd, and died—
Even of their mutual hideousness they died,
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written Fiend. The world was void,
The populous and the powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless—
A lump of death—a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes and ocean all stood still,
And nothing stirr'd within their silent depths;
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal: as they dropp'd
They slept on the abyss without a surge—
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,

The moon, their mistress, had expir'd before;
The winds were wither'd in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them—She was the Universe.

Diodati, July 1816

When We Two Parted

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted,
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this!

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow;
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame:
I hear thy name spoken
And share in it's shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me-
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee
Who knew thee too well;

How long shall I rue thee
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met:
In silence I grieve
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee?-
With silence and tears.

1808 [First published in 1816]

Translation from Anacreon

Mingle with the genial bowl
The Rose, the flow'est of the Soul,
The Rose and the Grape together quaff'd,
How doubly sweet will be the draught!
With Roses crown our jovial brows,
While every cheek with Laughter glows;
While Smiles and Songs, with Wine incite,
To wing our moments with Delight.
Rose by far the fairest birth,
Which Spring and Nature cull from Earth—
Rose with sweetest perfume given,
Breathes our thoughts from Earth to Heaven—
Rose whom the Deities above,
From Jove to Hebe, dearly love,
When Cytherea's blooming Boy
Flies lightly through the dance of Joy,
With him the Graces then combine,
And rosy wreaths their locks entwine,
Then will I sing divinely crown'd,
With dusky leaves my temples bound—
Lyaeus! in thy bowers of pleasure,
I'll wake a wildly thrilling measure.
There will my gentle Girl and I
Along the mazes sportive fly,

Will bend before thy potent throne—
Rose, Wine, and Beauty, all my own.

1805 [First printed in 1898 from a manuscript in the possession of John Murray.]

To Caroline

Think'st thou I saw thy beauteous eyes,
Suffus'd in tears, implore to stay;
And heard unmov'd thy plenteous sighs,
Which said far more than words can say?

Though keen the grief thy tears exprest,
When love and hope lay both o'erthrown;
Yet still, my girl, this bleeding breast
Throbb'd, with deep sorrow, as thine own.

But, when our cheeks with anguish glow'd,
When thy sweet lips were join'd to mine;
The tears that from my eyelids flow'd
Were lost in those which fell from thine.

Thou could'st not feel my burning cheek,
Thy gushing tears had quench'd its flame,
And, as thy tongue essay'd to speak,
In sighs alone it breath'd my name.

And yet, my girl, we weep in vain,
In vain our fate in sighs deplore;
Remembrance only can remain,
But that, will make us weep the more.

Again, thou best belov'd, adieu!
Ah! if thou canst, o'ercome regret,
Nor let thy mind past joys review,
Our only hope is, to forget!

[1805]

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

My sister! my sweet sister! if a name
Dearer and purer were, it should be thine.
Mountains and seas divide us, but I claim
No tears, but tenderness to answer mine:
Go where I will, to me thou art the same
A lov'd regret which I would not resign.
There yet are two things in my destiny—
A world to roam through, and a home with thee.

The first were nothing—had I still the last,
It were the haven of my happiness;
But other claims and other ties thou hast,
And mine is not the wish to make them less.
A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past
Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
Revers'd for him our grandsire's fate of yore—
He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

If my inheritance of storms hath been
In other elements, and on the rocks
Of perils, overlook'd or unforeseen,
I have sustain'd my share of worldly shocks,
The fault was mine; nor do I seek to screen
My errors with defensive paradox;

I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

Mine were my faults, and mine be their reward.
My whole life was a contest, since the day
That gave me being, gave me that which marr'd
The gift—a fate, or will, that walk'd astray;
And I at times have found the struggle hard,
And thought of shaking off my bonds of clay:
But now I fain would for a time survive,
If but to see what next can well arrive.

Kingdoms and empires in my little day
I have outliv'd, and yet I am not old;
And when I look on this, the petty spray
Of my own years of trouble, which have roll'd
Like a wild bay of breakers, melts away:
Something—I know not what—does still uphold
A spirit of slight patience; not in vain,
Even for its own sake, do we purchase pain.

Perhaps the workings of defiance stir
Within me—or perhaps a cold despair,
Brought on when ills habitually recur,
Perhaps a kinder clime, or purer air
(For even to this may change of soul refer,
And with light armour we may learn to bear),

Have taught me a strange quiet, which was not
The chief companion of a calmer lot.

I feel almost at times as I have felt
In happy childhood; trees, and flowers, and brooks,
Which do remember me of where I dwelt
Ere my young mind was sacrific'd to books,
Come as of yore upon me, and can melt
My heart with recognition of their looks;
And even at moments I could think I see
Some living thing to love—but none like thee.

Here are the Alpine landscapes which create
A fund for contemplation; to admire
Is a brief feeling of a trivial date;
But something worthier do such scenes inspire:
Here to be lonely is not desolate,
For much I view which I could most desire,
And, above all, a lake I can behold
Lovelier, not dearer, than our own of old.

Oh that thou wert but with me!—but I grow
The fool of my own wishes, and forget
The solitude which I have vaunted so
Has lost its praise in this but one regret;
There may be others which I less may show;
I am not of the plaintive mood, and yet

I feel an ebb in my philosophy,
And the tide rising in my alter'd eye.

I did remind thee of our own dear Lake,
By the old Hall which may be mine no more.
Leman's is fair; but think not I forsake
The sweet remembrance of a dearer shore:
Sad havoc Time must with my memory make
Ere that or thou can fade these eyes before;
Though, like all things which I have lov'd, they are
Resign'd for ever, or divided far.

The world is all before me; I but ask
Of Nature that with which she will comply—
It is but in her summer's sun to bask,
To mingle with the quiet of her sky,
To see her gentle face without a mask,
And never gaze on it with apathy.
She was my early friend, and now shall be
My sister—till I look again on thee.

I can reduce all feelings but this one;
And that I would not; for at length I see
Such scenes as those wherein my life begun,
The earliest—even the only paths for me—
Had I but sooner learnt the crowd to shun,
I had been better than I now can be;

The passions which have torn me would have slept;
I had not suffer'd, and thou hadst not wept.

With false Ambition what had I to do?
Little with Love, and least of all with Fame;
And yet they came unsought, and with me grew,
And made me all which they can make—a name,
Yet this was not the end I did pursue;
Surely I once beheld a nobler aim.
But all is over—I am one the more
To baffled millions which have gone before.

And for the future, this world's future may
From me demand but little of my care;
I have outliv'd myself by many a day,
Having surviv'd so many things that were;
My years have been no slumber, but the prey
Of ceaseless vigils; for I had the share
Of life which might have fill'd a century,
Before its fourth in time had pass'd me by.

And for the remnant which may be to come
I am content; and for the past I feel
Not thankless, for within the crowded sum
Of struggles, happiness at times would steal,
And for the present, I would not benumb
My feelings further. Nor shall I conceal

That with all this I still can look around,
And worship Nature with a thought profound.

For thee, my own sweet sister, in thy heart
I know myself secure, as thou in mine;
We were and are—I am, even as thou art—
Beings who ne'er each other can resign;
It is the same, together or apart,
From life's commencement to its slow decline
We are entwin'd—let death come slow or fast,
The tie which bound the first endures the last!

Ode To Napoleon Buonaparte

'Tis done—but yesterday a King!
And armed with Kings to strive—
And now thou art a nameless thing:
So abject—yet alive!
Is this the man of thousand thrones,
Who strewed our earth with hostile bones,
And can he thus survive?
Since he, miscalled the Morning Star [Lucifer],
Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far.

Ill-minded man! why scourge thy kind
Who bowed so low the knee?
By gazing on thyself grown blind,
Thou taught'st the rest to see.
With might unquestioned,—power to save,—
Thine only gift hath been the grave
To those that worshipped thee;
Nor till thy fall could mortals guess
Ambition's less than littleness!

Thanks for that lesson—it will teach
To after-warriors more
Than high Philosophy can preach,
And vainly preached before.

That spell upon the minds of men
Breaks never to unite again,
That led them to adore
Those Pagod things of sabre-sway,
With fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

The triumph, and the vanity,
The rapture of the strife—
The earthquake-voice of Victory,
To thee the breath of life;
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway
Which man seemed made but to obey,
Wherewith renown was rife—
All quelled!—Dark Spirit! what must be
The madness of thy memory!

The Desolator desolate!
The Victor overthrown!
The Arbiter of others' fate
A Suppliant for his own!
Is it some yet imperial hope
That with such change can calmly cope?
Or dread of death alone?
To die a Prince—or live a slave—
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!

He who of old [Milo] would rend the oak,

Dreamed not of the rebound;
Chained by the trunk he vainly broke—
Alone—how looked he round?
Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,
An equal deed hast done at length,
And darker fate hast found:
He fell, the forest prowlers' prey;
But thou must eat thy heart away!

The Roman [Sylla], when his burning heart
Was slaked with blood of Rome,
Threw down the dagger—dared depart,
In savage grandeur, home.—
He dared depart in utter scorn
Of men that such a yoke had borne,
Yet left him such a doom!
His only glory was that hour
Of self-upheld abandoned power.

The Spaniard [Charles V], when the lust of sway
Had lost its quickening spell,
Cast crowns for rosaries away,
An empire for a cell;
A strict accountant of his beads,
A subtle disputant on creeds,
His dotage trifled well:
Yet better had he neither known

A bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne.

But thou—from thy reluctant hand
The thunderbolt is wrung—
Too late thou leav'st the high command
To which thy weakness clung;
All Evil Spirit as thou art,
It is enough to grieve the heart
To see thine own unstrung;
To think that God's fair world hath been
The footstool of a thing so mean;

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him,
Who thus can hoard his own!
And Monarchs bowed the trembling limb,
And thanked him for a throne!
Fair Freedom! we may hold thee dear,
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear
In humblest guise have shown.
Oh! ne'er may tyrant leave behind
A brighter name to lure mankind!

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,
Nor written thus in vain—
Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,
Or deepen every stain:
If thou hadst died as Honor dies.

Some new Napoleon might arise,
 To shame the world again—
But who would soar the solar height,
To set in such a starless night?

Weigh'd in the balance, hero dust
 Is vile as vulgar clay;
Thy scales, Mortality! are just
 To all that pass away:
But yet methought the living great
Some higher sparks should animate,
 To dazzle and dismay:
Nor deem'd Contempt could thus make mirth
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.

And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,
 Thy still imperial bride;
How bears her breast the torturing hour?
 Still clings she to thy side ?
Must she too bend, must she too share
Thy late repentance, long despair,
 Thou throneless Homicide?
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem,—
'Tis worth thy vanished diadem!

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,
 And gaze upon the sea;

That element may meet thy smile—
 It ne'er was ruled by thee!
Or trace with thine all idle hand
In loitering mood upon the sand
 That Earth is now as free!
That Corinth's pedagogue hath now
Transferred his by-word to thy brow.

Thou Timour! in his captive's cage
 What thoughts will there be thine,
While brooding in thy prisoned rage?
 But one—'The world was mine!
Unless, like he of Babylon,
All sense is with thy sceptre gone,
 Life will not long confine
That spirit poured so widely forth—
So long obeyed—so little worth!

Or, like the thief of fire [Prometheus] from heaven,
 Wilt thou withstand the shock?
And share with him, the unforgiven,
 His vulture and his rock!
Foredoomed by God—by man accurst,
And that last act, though not thy worst,
 The very Fiend's arch mock;
He in his fall preserved his pride,
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!

There was a day—there was an hour,
While earth was Gaul's—Gaul thine—
When that immeasurable power
Unsated to resign
Had been an act of purer fame
Than gathers round Marengo's name
And gilded thy decline,
Through the long twilight of all time,
Despite some passing clouds of crime.

But thou forsooth must be a King
And don the purple vest,
As if that foolish robe could wring
Remembrance from thy breast
Where is that faded garment? where
The gewgaws thou wert fond to wear,
The star, the string, the crest?
Vain froward child of Empire! say,
Are all thy playthings snatched away?

Where may the wearied eye repose
When gazing on the Great;
Where neither guilty glory glows,
Nor despicable state?
Yes—One—the first—the last—the best—
The Cincinnatus of the West,

Whom Envy dared not hate,
Bequeathed the name of Washington,
To make man blush there was but one!

Yes! better to have stood the storm,
A Monarch to the last!
Although that heartless fireless form
Had crumbled in the blast:
Than stoop to drag out Life's last years,
The nights of terror, days of tears
For all the splendour past;
Then,—after ages would have read
Thy awful death with more than dread.

A lion in the conquering hour!
In wild defeat a hare!
Thy mind hath vanished with thy power,
For Danger brought despair.
The dreams of sceptres now depart,
And leave thy desolated heart
The Capitol of care!
Dark Corsican, 'tis strange to trace
Thy long deceit and last disgrace.

AND THOU ART DEAD, AS YOUNG AND FAIR

And thou art dead, as young and fair
As aught of mortal birth;
And form so soft, and charms so rare,
Too soon return'd to Earth!
Though Earth receiv'd them in her bed,
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
In carelessness or mirth,
There is an eye which could not brook
A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low,
Nor gaze upon the spot;
There flowers or weeds at will may grow,
So I behold them not:
It is enough for me to prove
That what I lov'd, and long must love,
Like common earth can rot;
To me there needs no stone to tell,
'T is Nothing that I lov'd so well.

Yet did I love thee to the last
As fervently as thou,
Who didst not change through all the past,

And canst not alter now.
The love where Death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow:
And, what were worse, thou canst not see
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;
The worst can be but mine:
The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,
Shall never more be thine.
The silence of that dreamless sleep
I envy now too much to weep;
Nor need I to repine
That all those charms have pass'd away,
I might have watch'd through long decay.

The flower in ripen'd bloom unmatch'd
Must fall the earliest prey;
Though by no hand untimely snatch'd,
The leaves must drop away:
And yet it were a greater grief
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,
Than see it pluck'd to-day;
Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

I know not if I could have borne
To see thy beauties fade;
The night that follow'd such a morn
Had worn a deeper shade:
Thy day without a cloud hath pass'd,
And thou wert lovely to the last,
Extinguish'd, not decay'd;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

As once I wept, if I could weep,
My tears might well be shed,
To think I was not near to keep
One vigil o'er thy bed;
To gaze, how fondly! on thy face,
To fold thee in a faint embrace,
Uphold thy drooping head;
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain,
Than thus remember thee!
The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity
Returns again to me,

And more thy buried love endears
Than aught except its living years.

PROMETHEUS

Titan! to whose immortal eyes
The sufferings of mortality,
Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise;
What was thy pity's recompense?
A silent suffering, and intense;
The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
All that the proud can feel of pain,
The agony they do not show,
The suffocating sense of woe,
Which speaks but in its loneliness,
And then is jealous lest the sky
Should have a listener, nor will sigh
Until its voice is echoless.

Titan! to thee the strife was given
Between the suffering and the will,
Which torture where they cannot kill;
And the inexorable Heaven,
And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
The ruling principle of Hate,
Which for its pleasure doth create
The things it may annihilate,
Refus'd thee even the boon to die:

The wretched gift Eternity
Was thine—and thou hast borne it well.
All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
Was but the menace which flung back
On him the torments of thy rack;
The fate thou didst so well foresee,
But would not to appease him tell;
And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
And in his Soul a vain repentance,
And evil dread so ill dissembled,
That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen Man with his own mind;
But baffled as thou wert from high,
Still in thy patient energy,
In the endurance, and repulse
Of thine impenetrable Spirit,
Which Earth and Heaven could not convulse,
A mighty lesson we inherit:
Thou art a symbol and a sign
To Mortals of their fate and force;
Like thee, Man is in part divine,
A troubled stream from a pure source;
And Man in portions can foresee

His own funereal destiny;
His wretchedness, and his resistance,
And his sad unallied existence:
To which his Spirit may oppose
Itself—and equal to all woes,
 And a firm will, and a deep sense,
Which even in torture can descry
 Its own concenter'd recompense,
Triumphant where it dares defy,
And making Death a Victory.

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