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Charles Matthews.
St Leonards Bank

A

LEGEND OF GLENCOE,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

Anderson

A
LEGEND OF GLENCOE,

AND

OTHER POEMS. x✓

NEW YORK

PUBLISHED

BY

JOHN G. BROWN

THE REV. JOHN ANDERSON,

MINISTER OF KINNOULL.

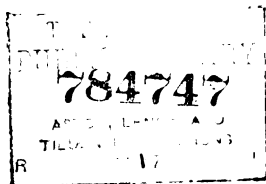
AUTHOR OF 'THE PLEASURES OF HOME.'

London:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, AND
ROBERTS.

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MURRAY AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

THIS VOLUME
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
BY PERMISSION,
TO
The Right Hon. Thomas Babington Macaulay,
AS
A SMALL, BUT SINCERE, TOKEN OF THE PROFOUND ADMIRATION,
WHICH
THE AUTHOR ENTERTAINS FOR HIS BRILLIANT GENIUS,
HISTORICAL EMINENCE, AND TRANSCENDENT
LITERARY ATTAINMENTS.

PREFACE.

THE following Legend was suggested to me, several years ago, by an anecdote, given by General Stewart in his 'Sketches of the Highlanders.' 'The belief that punishment of the cruelty, oppression, or misconduct of an individual descended as a curse on his children, to the third and fourth generation, was not confined to the common people. All ranks were influenced by it, believing that, if the curse did not fall upon the first or second generation, it would inevitably descend upon the succeeding. The late Colonel Campbell of Glenlyon retained this belief through a course of thirty years' intercourse with the world, as an officer of the Forty-Second Regiment and of Marines. He was grandson of the

Laird of Glenlyon, who commanded the military at the massacre of Glencoe, and who lived in the Laird of Glencoe's house, where he and his men were hospitably received as friends and entertained, a fortnight before the execution of his orders. He was playing at cards with the family when the first shot was fired, and the murderous scene commenced. Colonel Campbell was an additional Captain in the Forty-Second Regiment in 1748, and was put on half-pay. He then entered the Marines, and in 1762 was Major, with the brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and commanded 800 of his corps at the Havannah. In 1771 he was ordered to superintend the execution of the sentence of a court-martial on a soldier of marines, condemned to be shot. A reprieve was sent; but the whole ceremony of the execution was to proceed until the criminal was upon his knees, with a cap over his eyes, prepared to receive the volley. It was then he was to be informed of his pardon. No person was to be told

previously ; and Colonel Campbell was directed not to inform even the firing party, who were warned that the signal to fire would be the waving of a white handkerchief by the commanding officer. When all was prepared, and the clergyman had left the prisoner on his knees, in momentary expectation of his fate, and the firing party were looking with intense attention for the signal, Colonel Campbell put his hand into his pocket for the reprieve, and pulling out the packet, the white handkerchief accompanied it, and catching the eyes of the party, they fired, and the unfortunate prisoner was shot dead. The paper dropped through Colonel Campbell's fingers, and clapping his hand to his forehead, he exclaimed, "The curse of God and of Glencoe is here ; I am an unfortunate, ruined man." He desired the soldiers to be sent to the barracks, instantly quitted the parade, and soon afterwards retired from the service.'

From this extract, the reader will see that I have

taken the poet's licence, and am guilty of a wilful anachronism. This was necessary to my plan. The chief design of this legend is to trace the workings of remorse in a superstitious mind, and to illustrate the misery of crime. By means of a poetical tale, I would humbly add my comment to the declaration, that 'the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest.' The above-mentioned anecdote struck me as furnishing good materials for a purpose of this character ; and, by applying it to one of the principal actors in the appalling tragedy of Glencoe, I trust the moral, which it conveys, is rather deepened than otherwise. Of course, it was absolutely necessary that I should introduce into my poem one who was employed in the 'massacre ;' and I hope to be allowed the licence, yielded times without number, viz., that of narrating as happening to one what in reality happened to another, more especially as the solemn lesson of the incident in question is not in any way altered or impaired.

I have introduced a Monk, with a view to illicit more naturally the feelings of the narrator, and, also, to avoid the monotony of a lengthened monologue. For the last-mentioned reason, a few pauses occur in the course of the narrative, and the connection is maintained by a sentence or two of prose, instead of a page or two of verse, which, from the necessity of their being explanatory, could scarcely fail to be flat and commonplace.

Before bringing these prefatory remarks to a conclusion, the Author may, perhaps, be permitted to take notice of some remarks which were made upon a recent publication of his, 'The Pleasures of Home.' In that poem he was accused, by several members of the press, of imitating Pope, Goldsmith, Rogers, and Campbell—of resembling, in short, any person except himself. To resemble so many distinguished poets involves a Protean talent, to which the humble author of this volume can advance no claim. He begs leave, in all sincerity, to say, that he was

never troubled with the consciousness of imitating any one ; and, if evidences of imitation had been apparent to himself, he would never have had the assurance of appearing before the public. All minds, capable of warm admiration of genius, will, unconsciously, reflect, to some extent, the peculiar colouring of their favourite authors ; and to this offence the writer of this small volume may plead guilty, but to nothing more. To associate small things with great, Byron writes to a friend—‘It is mortifying to be accused of imitation. The passage in Crabbe I never saw ; and as for Scott, I have only adopted his lyric style, which belongs to Milton, to Gray, to Coleridge, and to any one else.’ With these remarks, the Author commits his new venture to the good-nature and candour of the public.

MAY, 1857.

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A LEGEND OF GLENCOE.

'The wicked are like the troubled sea.'

A GUARDIAN angel talketh

With the gentle and the good ;

With the guilty ever walketh

A fiend of bitter mood.

Like the tempest-troubled billow,

The wicked cannot rest ;

Sleep dwells not by his pillow,

Nor peace within his breast.

By a fear, that never pities,

He is haunted and pursued,

'Mid the throng of busy cities,

In the depth of solitude.

Though power and wealth caress him,

He is nature's poorest slave ;

For the present cannot bless him,

And the future will not save.

A

LEGEND OF GLENCOE.

~~~~~  
In a rocky pass of the Pyrenees, towards sunset, two persons, a Monk and a Hermit, are seen approaching a solitary hut.

~~~~~  
HERMIT.

BEGONE ! old man ! nor haunt in vain
The threshold of this lonely shed.
More welcome far the sleety rain,
Or the blast raging round my head,
Than the false word, and falser smile
Of man, the accursed priest of guile.

Speak not of peace—this bosom hides
A heart more tortured than the tides,
When the tornado raves.

Talk not of hope—a second breath
Shall sooner seek the vaults of death,
 And stir our fathers' graves!
Waste not thy vain compassion here;
My misery claims no sigh, no tear.
Breathe not of bliss—yon blasted tree
Shall bloom ere bliss revisit me.
Hast thou a balm can salve the heart
Pierced by remorse's venom'd dart?
Hast thou a drug can steep the brain,
Till memory wake to all but pain?
I've felt, and still must feel, the worst—
Can'st thou redeem what God hath curst?
Then bid a long, a blighted track
Of years from age to youth roll back.
Bid grief undo what guilt hath done!
Bid frenzy cease to rend and sear!
Can'st thou allay my pangs—even one?
Old man! What dotage brings thee here?

So spake the Hermit of the wood
That trembles o'er Gavarni's flood.

Men wist not why he came, nor whence.
No foot had trod his residence,—
A wretched hut, where night could shed
Her dews upon his lonely bed,
And muttering winds at will might creep,
On sightless foot, around his sleep.
A thousand feet beneath his wall
He saw the abyssmal waters fall,
And oft, upon a misty ledge,
That shudders o'er the torrent's edge,
He mused, until the drifting spray
Dript from his floating locks of grey,
And night, like bird of sable plume,
Rose darkly from that gorge of gloom.
And oft hath midnight's pallid Queen
Beheld him rooted there ;
For man hath mental moods, I ween,
To which fair noonday's cloudless sheen
And midnight's murkiest air
Are both alike—an inner strife
Veiling all signs of outward life—
A world within the breast awaking,

With sights and sounds of its own making.
Ah ! bleak the thoughts, and all unblest,
That rob yon Hermit of his rest,
And fix him o'er that gulf profound,
Unmoved by sight, unstirred by sound.
Fierce, fierce the soul, that sympathy
Seeketh so oft, wild surge in thee !

Unsocial Stranger ! who is he ?
Why comes he there to watch and weep ?
No tongue can solve the mystery.
But wild conjecture will not sleep ;
And some surmise he crossed the sea
Pursued by guilt—but what the crime
They know not—nor the distant clime.
But this they know—he never seeks
His fellow-men, nor idly speaks
To woodman met at evening's hour ;
And when St Mary's convent-tower
Rocks to the pensive vesper-bell,
Ne'er was the stranger seen to tell
His holy beads, or breathe a prayer ;

And peasant-boys, belated there,
Have marked him, at that sacred sound,
Start, wildly-gazing, from the ground,
As if the sad and solemn note
Had found an echo in his thought—
A plummet dropt by memory
Into the depth of days gone by !

MONK.

Penance, in deep contrition done,
Can win thee what it oft hath won.
Confession owns a mystic power
To hallow sorrow's saddest hour,
To pluck remorse's venom'd dart
From the most lorn and wretched heart,
And ope the golden gates of grace
For the most guilty of thy race.
Thy care, thy crime—I know them not ;
But this, mysterious man ! I know,
The world hath never mourned the blot,
And man hath never felt the woe,

That mercy cannot cleanse and calm
With heavenly hand and holy balm.

HERMIT.

Spare ! spare me, Monk ! these dreams of thine.
Such peace can ne'er on earth be mine.
Speak ye of happier hours to come ?
Bid ring-doves seek their rifled home !
Preach ye of moments wrung from pain ?
Of memories skilled to charm again ?
Bid autumn clothe the skeleton
Of shadowy leaf with greenness gone !
But promise not my wretchedness
One hope to cheer, one joy to bless.
Folly may yield to thought and time.
Years cannot salve the wounds of crime.
Folly is but a vagrant breath
That shakes the tree in idle joy.
Crime is the poisoned blast of death,
That touches, only to destroy.

My youth was like a crystal brook,
That flows in beauty and in song
By many a green and shady nook,
Through summer days so bright and long.
All beautiful and happy things,
The flower, the lone cloud's wanderings,
The vesper star's pale visitings,
Were deeply-mirrored all by me,
In the pure depths of sympathy.
And rich beyond the miser's dream,
Though little gold or land possessing,
The evening shade, the morning beam,
Fell o'er me like a blessing.
But soon a dark, unholy strife
Raged 'mid the wastes of onward life.
O'er crime's black rocks in tumult driven,
No flower of earth, no star of heaven,
Lie pictured in that stream—but there,
Like dreams of madness and despair,
Or coiling serpents lean and lithe,
The tortured waters toil and writhe,
Sending abroad a dismal cry,
Voiced with unhallowed agony.

MONK.

Beneath yon convent's peaceful roof
Are hearts once lorn and lost as thine—
Hearts that have made no fruitless proof
Of penance and of love divine.
Oh! tread the pathway these have trod.
Thou, too, shalt win the smile of God.
Hope shall her blackened torch relume.
Joy's leafless bough again shall bloom.

A weary wanderer sought that Fane,
Wild was his mien, and crazed his brain ;
It seemed that o'er his brow the tide of care
Had fretted long with cold and sullen wave,
Leaving an epitaph, in furrows there,
Of hopes and joys long mouldered in the grave.
He was a moody and a silent man.
The sun of summer failed to warm his heart.
Flowers, as they breathed, and streamlets, as they
 ran,
To him no ray of gladness could impart.
The merry laugh of childhood made him start,

As if it sent him back to some far time,
When his soul writhed not with the worm of
crime !

But God, in mercy, o'er his mental night
Breathed but a word—the darkness turned to
light !

Stranger ! 'tis mine to urge the power
By which I live to bless that hour.
My guilt and grief are now like wrack
That drifts along the tempest's track.
God's mercy, like a healthful wind,
Arose—nor left one cloud behind.
Once more a sky of tranquil blue
O'er my glad spirit sheds its dew ;
And if, at times, bleak memories rise
From the deep caverns of my brain,
In faith's bright beam the vapour dies,
And all is hope's pure light again.
Oh ! let thy burdened spirit lay
Its load on Faith's maternal breast,
As a weary wave in a quiet bay,
From stormy seas rolls on to rest.

Thou, too, shalt hear a "still small voice"
Bidding thy mourning soul rejoice !

HERMIT.

Father ! my heart is strangely stirred,
And yet we own a different creed ;
Not thine the tongue my childhood heard ;
I prize not mass ; I tell not bead ;
But thou, like me, hast grieved and erred.
This much upon thy face I read ;
For from distress, no less than blood,
There springs a mystic brotherhood.
'Tis this that gives these tones of thine
Power o'er this bleeding heart of mine.

Old man ! thou see'st these bitter tears—
Ah ! memory's fount is hard to drain !
Things not of hours, or days, but years—
Sad symbols of unsleeping pain ;
A life of grief and blasted hope
Crushed into every burning drop !

And yet they bring a respite too,
As thunder-showers can purge the air,
Till clouds depart, and all is blue,
As if no storm had ere been there.
A troop of thoughts sweep sadly past,
Like sere leaves on an autumn blast,
With faintly-mingled breath of flowers,
Winged from the fields of sunnier hours,
Soft whispers of a sinless day
Too bright to last—for ever passed away.
I owe thee much—this calm is thine—
And one wild tale of blood is mine—
In darkness done—in frenzy wrought—
And mourned through half a life of thought.

The Hermit falls into melancholy silence—then, with forced resolution, looks wildly around, and thus proceeds with his confessions—

HERMIT.

These frowning rocks—this savage dell
They seem no strangers to mine eyes.

Hath fate despatched me here to tell
The horrors wrought 'neath other skies?
When on these craggy shapes I gaze,
Bathed in the sunset's purple rays;
When, from this yawning gorge profound,
Booms on mine ear the torrent's sound;
When, through the lurid, lowering sky,
Rings, fierce and fell, that eagle's cry;
When yonder ghostlike vapours sail
On silent pinion from the vale;
Steals o'er my soul that fearful time,
Scowls on my sight that scene of crime,
Threatens that widowed Form—and—worse!
Rings in mine ear that fatal Curse!

Deep-buried 'mong my native hills,
A glen of darkest shadow lies.
Its sides are furred with countless rills,
That seem to pour from distant skies.
There noonday wears a cheerless shade,
The sunbeam pours a saddened ray,
The bee ne'er plies his busy trade,

The bird ne'er carols from the spray.
The screaming erne with bloody beak,
The mist-wreath, rising cold and slow,
The blast, that wails from cave and peak,
These love the shades of wild Glencoe.

Few scenes of earth might suit so well
The deeds that wring my soul to tell.
Nature in sackcloth sitteth there,
Sad, solitary, bleak, and bare ;
As if she mourned the havoc done
By Man, her fairest, noblest son !

A race of bold and hardy men
For ages held that Highland Glen.
They were a rude and rugged band
Who kept their birthright by the brand,
And deemed the rocks that round them rose
Impervious to all human foes.
One echo there of foeman's tread,
Would whelm his unprotected head,
With fragments, vast as cloud-wrecks driven

O'er the tumultuous deep of heaven ;
For toppling crag on crag lay piled,
Till you would think a feeble child
Could loosen, from those ramparts rude,
Destruction on a multitude !

Full well I know, to stranger's eye
A bleaker home there might not seem,
That gloomy lake—that narrow sky,
 That melancholy stream !
But charms of magic might were there,
Though stern that mountain-gorge and bare.
The Clansmen loved it as their home,
Where, free as breezes, they might roam.
By Cona's wave their fathers sleep ;
The sounds, that woke their infant ear,
Pouring their murmurs soft and deep
O'er the brown heath that wraps their bier.
Not for the Southern's sunny plain,
Waving with seas of golden grain ;
Not for his lawns and stately woods,
Would they exchange those solitudes !

More welcome far those rocks arrayed
In morning's grey and misty plaid,
The cataract's foam, the heather-bloom,
Cona's dark lake and stream of gloom,
Than lowland strath and southern mart,
Where freedom dies beneath the reign of art.

Alas ! that fraud should weave a tale,
Where open force might ne'er prevail.
In vain those rocks did nature pile—
What power can cope with human guile ?
Where blooms that Eden 'neath the sky,
Without some deadly serpent nigh ?

Far sooner shalt thou sail

A sea without a wave ;

Far sooner shalt thou hail

A land without a grave ;

Or trace a mountain river

Without a roaring fall,

Than a mortal meet without deceit,

Oh ! rarest of them all !

Eternal gloom that night enfold !

C

When kindness was so ill repaid—
When foreign craft and southern gold
In murder drenched the soldier's blade,
And roused in this remorseful breast
Spectres of guilt that will not rest.

When winter's snowy fleece was shed
O'er ferny brake and mountain-head ;
When cottage lattice, from afar,
Twinkled, a bright, domestic star ;
When sheep were bleating in the fold,
When songs were sung, and tales were told,
Amid that scene of peace we came,
Led by a traitor to his race ;
His was an ancient Highland name,
But private feud, and love of place
Wrought on a nature cold and base,
And made him the accursed tool
Of one who sought by fear to rule.

Some said he knew not of our plan,
That kingly and that crafty man ;

Yet 'tis my faith no deed was done,
No plot was hatched in his domain,
But his command enforced the one—
The other formed in his dark brain.
Thick as his subtle shafts might fall,
He shod and feathered one and all!

We won their love—an easy task—
Suspicion mates not with the true;
For they, who wear no faithless mask,
Deem others void of falsehood too.
We won their love—oh! would that hate
Had risen grimly in our path!
This bosom would not bear the weight
Of human crime and Heaven's own wrath.
If blood upon this hand were red,
In manly strife it had been shed.
We won their love—oh! fatal prize!
And history won a bloody leaf.
There pours no flood from winter's skies
Can wash those stains of guilt and grief,
That redly glare before mine eyes.

The darkest night brings no relief ;
For he, who takes the wage of crime,
Lives with a demon from that time—
Shape never seen—power undefined—
A presence lodged within the mind ;
Sleeping, or waking, with us still,
Vague, hideous, indestructible.
What reason's heavenly temple then,
But pain's abode and passion's den ?
Remorse excited, quiet dead,
And God's own bright Shechinah fled !

The misty moon rose, dull and red,
Behind Dun Fion's spectral head ;
And, like a watch-dog in a dream,
Muttered and growled the sullen stream ;
When o'er the silent, sleeping vale
Broke the wild flame and fearful wail ;
While frenzied forms, in weeds of white,
Rushed through the wintry wastes of night,
Like spirits winged by pain and fear
From penal fires and dungeons drear,

On every hearth a traitor stands,
With dripping steel and gory hands.
The hireling slaughter, long-designed,
On its red path is stealing ;
And, ringing o'er the rushing wind,
The sharp death-shot is pealing.
Mother and infant on her breast
Sank with one blended cry to rest.
The tottering form, the thin, grey hair,
No favour found, no mercy there.
Some started up to grasp the blade
By craft beyond their reach conveyed ;
And fell, invoking Heaven to speed
The vengeance to themselves denied,
Thinking, that, if their foe might bleed,
They scarcely with regret had died.
Some perished 'mid the friendless drift—
Unburied still their bones may lie,
Bleaching within the crag's rude rift,
Where terror lent them wings to fly.
But crowning horror ! when our band
Together drew at sunrise red,

*An infant's pale and severed hand*¹
Pointed to heaven amid the dead !
Oft have I seen the trampled plain,
Where strove the stalwart and the brave,
Cumbered with relics of the slain,
Strewn thickly there by war's wild wave ;
But ah ! those fingers, wan and weak,
Oft pillowed on a mother's breast—
Oh, memory ! cease of these to speak,
And I will meekly bear the rest.
That hand in vision oft I see
Closing the gates of heaven on me !

The Arab of the Libyan waste
Would scorn such faithless deeds to share.
Sacred to him are all who taste
His sober cup, his frugal fare ;
But we had thronged M'Ian's board
That very night we laid him low.
Methinks I see the Highland lord,

¹ See Macaulay's account of the massacre.

His stately form, his locks of snow.
The faggots flashed with ruddy glow ;
Round went the toast, the song, the jest ;
And when at length we rose to go,
We thought of bloodshed, not of rest.
When next I saw M'Ian's form,
His snowy locks were stiff with gore,
While, heedless of the drifting storm,
He lay beside his friendly door.
One faggot gleamed—it flashed—it set !
Darkness fell o'er that hearth for ever.
That boding hour—I feel it yet—
That scene can fade from memory—never !

Wild shrieked the tempest through the Glen,
Like demons in delirious mirth
To see the hands of Christian men
So well achieve their work on earth ;
And ever on the fitful gale
Would break a long, despairing wail.
There's something in a human cry
Beyond all Nature's agony—

The fearful cry that ringeth mercy's knell—
The heart's wild wail that shrieks to Hope, fare-
well !

Wild with the havoc of the night,
And dizzy with the dismal light,
 Flashing from roof and wall ;
Scared by the rugged shapes that bent
From Malmor's shattered battlement,
 Like fiends o'er some dread carnival—
I felt as one, who, in a dream,
Hears the fierce shout, the frenzied scream,
 And reels amid a throng,
Struggling to flee, but lacking power ;
The victim of a hideous hour,
 That seemeth ages long.
When sense resumed her shaken throne
I breathed—I stood—but not alone—
 The dead were at my feet !
Oh ! how I longed for their deep peace,
Where earthly care and trouble cease,
 Their rest appeared so sweet !

What runneth warm upon my hand ?
What crimson's thus my naked brand ?
Oh, God ! where slept Thine ire ?
Why did not I that moment die,
Blasted by heaven's own fire ?
But oh ! ye ghastly, gory dead !
Deeply avenged are ye.
The poorest wretch, who begs his bread,
Would ill exchange with me !
What though his bed may be the sod,
His roof the icy sky ?
He hath not made a foe of God ;
He need not fear to die.
'Tis sin that maketh poor indeed ;
To sin alone 'tis given
To strip a soul of mercy's meed,
To rob of earth and heaven.
Check the brook upon the mountain,
Fix the bubble on the fountain,
The sunbeam on the lea ;
Keep the cloud from sailing,
Or the blast from wailing—

Then, o'er crime prevailing,
Peace will visit me !

The night-beam slept on the cottage wall—
A hundred homes lay hushed in sleep.
Oh ! never more that beam shall fall
On slumber there so calm and deep.
The morn arose from heaven's bright gate—
Those hundred homes are desolate !
The night dew weeps on the roofless hearth—
Oh ! whither hath fled its feast of mirth ?
The feast is spread—but the red hill-fox,
Lured to the prey from Malmor's rocks,
And the birds that build on the mountain's
brow,
Are the guests that flock to the revel now !

Morn saw us on our homeward way ;
Few care among the dead to stay.
Each beam from heaven too well betrayed
All that was foully wrought in shade.
Wild-scowling crags hung o'er our head ;

Deep-muttering echoes dodged our tread,
Like phantom-voices of the dead.
The startled bird from the carcase flew,
And, screaming, wheeled through the cloudless blue ;
Then swept away on his wing of wind,
Leaving our fettered souls behind.
In silence through the still defile
We sped, and spake no word the while ;
For now, concealed from mortal ken,
 Conscience arose within,
And acted, in our thoughts, again
 That dark and deadly sin.
Ah ! there is toil, whose end is rest,
 A worthy path that leads to peace ;
But there is work, that stirs the breast
 Into a hell that ne'er shall cease.
Silent we sped—nor did we dare
To gaze into each other's face,
Dreading to read a record there
Of bloodshed dastardly and base.
Foul is the deed that cannot bear
 Thy beams, thou blessed sun !

Hapless the heart that may not share
Its woes at least with one.

Not thus at Wynendale we felt,
Though death at every blow was dealt ;
Not thus on Ramillies we stood,
Though crimson every blade with blood ;
Not thus from Blenheim's field we strode,
Though every step was on a breast,
Where once the light of being glowed,
Now senseless as the sod it prest.
No ! we could then exchange the glance
So full of rapture stern and high ;
For we had tamed the pride of France,
And quelled her stately chivalry ;
And felt that ages, yet to rise,
Would laud our hard-won victories,
And chronicle each famous spot
Where slumbers many a gallant Scot,
Buried with plaid and keen claymore,
His rest achieved, his warfare o'er—

His deeds the theme of harp and tongue
In winter nights so long and cold—
His name the watchword of the young,
The proud remembrance of the old !
Yes ! there is strife that gilds the page,
And sheds a halo round the slain,
When, foot to foot, brave ranks engage
In Freedom's cause, and heap the plain.
And oh ! the thrill that warriors feel,
When, hushed the tumult, sheathed the steel,
And sepulchred in holy ground
The honoured dead—they gaze around,
To meet the eye, to clasp the hand
Of those who shared that deadly hour,
When, like a reef on stormy strand,
They broke the bold invader's power.
Historic dead ! who sleep afar
On the red plain of Oudenarde ;
True Sons of Mist ! who courted death
On Sheriffmoor's immortal heath ;
Leal-hearted Gael ! who formed a ring
On Flodden Field around your king—

Long shall the Muse of Scotia tell
Where proudly stood and nobly fell
The plaided bands, whose hallowed tombs
Shall win full many a manly tear,
To valour due, to freedom dear,
While thistle waves and heather blooms !
This, Father ! this is worthy strife,
Ennobling death, or gilding life ;
But thou, base slaughter of the night !
Thy country's foulest stain !
No regal name can make thee bright,
Or shield thee from disdain.
Full many a pilgrim, yet unborn,
Will tread that Pass with grief and scorn ;
And still, above each earthly spot,
That speaks of guilt and woe,
Thy turf shall bear the basest blot,
Thou dark and dread Glencoe !

What form o'er Cona's water stands,
With wretched garb and gory hands ?
What seeks the lonely woman there ?

Her robe is rent—her breast is bare—
Far-floating streams her coal-black hair.
Horror! a corse is at her feet!
A bloody plaid its winding-sheet;
And bent, like grey sepulchral stone,
O'er martyr's grave in moorland lone,
She pours her unavailing moan.
Slow winds our troop. The rigid form,
Like pine-tree tost on gusty storm,
Wild-rising from her wail of woe,
Howls down her eldrich curse below,
Till cliff and cave, with boding sound,
Scatter a hundred curses round.

‘Cruel and faithless!
Dream not to go
On your way scatheless
From havoc and woe.
Wrongs of the bleeding
In heaven are pleading.
Soon shall be speeding
Its merciless blow.

Vacant each shealing
Beside the cold wave.
Death's sleep is sealing
The eyes of the brave.
So may your homes be,
Peace die and hope flee,
Cheerless your life-time—unhallowed your grave !
By the wild slaughter,
Drenching the heath—
By the dark water,
Crimsoned with death—
By this lone breast to be comforted never,
Cling to them, curse of the childless for ever !'

She ceased, and waved her bony hand
In threatening o'er our cowering band,
One moment more—that form is gone !
Is it a dream ? Are we alone ?
A dream ! what rankling thoughts remain !
That curse, like venom, fills each vein ;
And keener than a foeman's sword
Smites every dread, prophetic word,

My fortunes from that hour must fade—

I felt it then, as now I feel.

Had I not turned a stainless blade

To murder's base and bloody steel?

Who harbours crime within his breast

Fosters a serpent fierce and fell,

To blast his hope, to mar his rest,

And antedate the stings of hell.

The Hermit here pauses, and falls into a reverie, nor appears willing to continue his confessions. 'Why,' he asks, 'should he proceed to speak of a past, which cannot be undone, and the horrors of which are ever before his eyes?' The Monk, with all the zeal and urgency of his order, importunes him to complete his confession, and so share the burden of his misery. Pointing to a vine, which has wound itself around the trunk and branches of an aged elm, he exclaims,—

See! yonder purple-tasseled vine,

That climbs into the light of day;

Round the rough elm those tendrils twine

That else were prostrate on the clay,

Each but an abject, grovelling thing,

Scarce grateful for the dews of spring;

D

But now, like bride with bridal gem,
Richly it decks its wreathed stem.
Thy sorrow share—its heaviness
Will load thy brooding heart the less,
And fruits of peace and joy may glow
Where all is bleak and barren now.
God yearns sweet mercy to dispense,
And never will His love refuse
The pensive flowers of penitence,
Watered with sorrow's holy dew.

HERMIT.

Old man ! I doubt confession's spell—
Can words undo the guilty deed ?
As waves by wandering only swell,
As streams by running gather speed,
Each out-burst of my wretched soul
Hurries my feelings past control.
Eventful years have passed away
Since first I felt a man of crime,
And yet it seems like yesterday,

That dread, that ever-present time !
Remorse may rack, but ne'er destroy,
Immortal as man's purest joy.
Oft have I felt like sailor thrown
By surging wave on island lone—
A howling sea before him spread,
A starless sky above his head,
A bleak and houseless waste behind,
Within, a dark, despairing mind,
A mocking voice that cries, 'remain,
And meet a death of lingering pain,
Or plunge into that yawning wave,
And try the caverns of the grave !'
At best 'twere but a change of ill ;
For nature will pursue us still ;
Where good or evil memories dwell,
There beameth Heaven, or frowneth Hell.

My restless foot might roam and range
From place to place, from change to change ;
But as the roaming sailor sees
The pole star burning clear

O'er the wide realms of blast and breeze,
One Form was ever near,
On mount and moor, o'er field and flood,
And still her vengeful cry was—' blood !'
Oft waking from the dreams of night,
My dagger caught the pale moonlight ;
When, with a tear from childhood brought,
Would memory charm mine evil thought,
And prompt a prayer—but ere it burst
My heart had made my lips accurst.

Years fled—then war, with iron hand,
Plucked from its sheath my rusting brand,
And bore me to a distant land.
The Curse was there!—for that was life.
Unscathed I rode o'er fields of strife,
Through clouds of smoke—through seas of gore
My courser swept—the Curse before !
Stern warriors sank on every side ;
My war-steed sprang in air—and died,
But I lived on, unhelmed and bare :
Death passed me by—the Curse was there !

I stood amid a world of war :

Blood marked my blade, this breast no scar !

Father ! they deeply err who deem

The Widow's curse a dotard's dream.

No phantom of a fevered brain

Has doomed, and dooms me still, to pain.

E'en as the parent of our kind,

When Eden-bliss lay far behind,

And Heaven grew threatening, cursed the sod

Whereon his blasting footstep trod ;

So round my dark and deadly path

Close the bleak shades of woe and wrath,

Till peace before this form retreats,

And hope no more her cheering tale repeats.

The Hermit proceeds to narrate, in broken and disjointed language, how the spell of the curse began to work ; how every effort of his seemed to be guided, by an unseen hand, to an unexpected result ; and how every element, carefully gathered together for happiness, became an additional source of misery. He gives an instance of the *fatality* which seemed to accompany all his proceedings. When

engaged in active service abroad, his foster-brother incurred sentence of death on account of some inferior breach of duty. As the Hermit advances in his narrative, the past seems to rise again vividly and painfully before him ; and, along with his feelings, his words assume a more definite arrangement.

HERMIT.

Oh ! it was hard that he should die,
When life was young and hope beat high.
It seemed a mockery to me
That Evan's proud and princely form,
Ere thrice the sun had set, should be
Spoil for corruption and the worm !
As here I stand, half-crazed, uncouth,
Thou can'st not dream the love I bore
To him, companion of my youth,
Whose face I shall behold no more.
My Foster-brother warm and true !
One breast had cradled both to sleep ;
In the same sports to strength we grew,
And braved the same tumultuous deep.
Oft had we robbed the osprey's nest,

Beetling above the ocean's breast,
Where the dark-caverned Hebrides
Seem to devour the raging seas,
And toss their spiry heads on high
To catch the mist-cloud sweeping by.
Oft had we chased the tawny deer,
Where blooms the heath o'er hill and dale ;
And checked the black-cock's bold career,
Loud-whirring down the mountain gale.
Oft had we couched on one grey plaid,
Beside the flickering camp-fire laid ;
And stemmed the blood-red surge of strife,
As if one spirit lent us life.
Friend of my soul ! how bleeds my breast
O'er the sad chance that laid thee low,
Thou know'st, if, from thy heaven of rest,
Thine eyes can read a mortal's woe.
Thou see'st the grief that maddens me.
Thou know'st I would have died for thee !

But to my tale. No blot of blame
Had, till that hour, defiled his name ;

And sleep was banished from my eyes,
Nor food refreshed my weary frame,
Till from our Chief—Oh! glad surprise!
A pardon for my brother came.
But, to impress our ranks with awe
For the stern claims of martial law,
His grave we hollow in the sand,
From the sad troop select the band,
Whose death-shot, on the morn, shall boom
Over a comrade's gory tomb.
Our Chief hath said the blest reprieve,
That bids a loved companion live,
Sees not the light, till, back to bier,
The prisoner deems his sentence near.

Mine is the task—oh! task how sweet!
No lover ere was half so blest,
Hearing the lips of love repeat
Those words that soothe, yet warm, the breast.
The waving of a kerchief white;
This signal to the file is given.
I laid me down in hope that night,

And woke to hell from dreams of heaven !
I half believed the curse was o'er ;
That pardon seemed a sign of this,
And yet it only served the more
To plunge me in a dark abyss ;
Like some poor sailor, whom the wave
First wafts upon the welcome strand,
Then sucks him backward to a grave
Beyond the power of human hand.

The last star wanes—bright morning comes.
Slow moves the file to muffled drums.
The grave is dug—the prisoner there
Wears a subdued, but dauntless air.
Yet, though unmoved the captive stood,
His heart was busy with a brood
Of pensive memories, that roam
O'er the wide ocean from his home,
His Highland home no more to rise
On his fond view, and brim his eyes
With tears, that oldest warriors weep,
When, from red field, or raging deep,

They leap upon their native shore,
And, all their toils forgot, grow young once more.

Short time for fond regrets—the captive's eye
Turns, wistful, on me as the file draws nigh.
A moment claims he from the silent crowd,
Ere earth shall fold him in its dull, cold shroud.
Few are his words—low-whispered, sadly-kind ;
Father ! how rises now upon my mind
That moment, when I heard his last request,
Gazed on his face, and leaned upon his breast ;
And scarce could bind within my yearning heart
The words, that fain would cry, ‘ we shall not part ! ’
And thought ‘ how sweet my lot to bring reprieve,
To say to that high, mourning spirit, live !
For once to save ! no longer to destroy ! ’
The thought shed o'er my soul unwonted joy,
Soothed for a time my keen, remorseful pain,
And half-restored lost happiness again.

The feigned adieu, that mocked my lips, is past.
On each loved face the captive looks his last,

Waves to his comrades silent, sad farewell,
Stands o'er his grave, and calmly waits his knell.
Now hush my heart! full of prophetic bliss;
No death-sign waves—no fatal shot shall hiss.
A moment longer—and these arms shall strain
Yon Foster-brother to my heart again!
The file is placed; but soon your looks of woe
Shall turn to smiles, as bloodless back ye go;
The drums unmuffled, and a comrade freed
From the dread penalty that bids him bleed!

While these fond thoughts distract, yet charm, my
 brain,
From my wild-beating breast my hand hath taen
The *seal of pardon*, and hath waved it high!
Oh! God of heaven! how deadly the reply!
That fatal peal! it startles yet mine ear!
Is that the shout of joy I hoped to hear?
That bloody brow! that lacerated breast!
Were these in fancy, warmly, madly prest?
'Ye murderous throng! ye saw no signal wave;
This—this the pardon! snatch him from the grave!

He cannot—shall not die !’ My brain spun round,
And two cold hearts lay, pulseless, on the ground.
One fills an undeserved, untimely bier.
One lives, and loathes the life it lingers here ;
And proves, old man ! whate’er your dogmas tell,
An evil heart is worse than flaming hell !

The Curse was on me. Time and change are vain
For that which fires the blood and haunts the brain,
Dwells where you dwell, and goes where’er you go ;
Sure as the suns that set, or the tides that flow ;
Scours through the desert, spans the roaring deep,
Frowns at your board, and hovers o’er your sleep !

* * * * *

My heart had still one place of rest,
An isle amid a friendless sea ;
There was a fair and faithful breast
That shared my pain, and throbbed for
me.

Fond, gentle girl ! I see thee now,
The locks, like sunlight, round thy brow—
That marble brow, a tranquil grot
Built for the home of holy thought ;
The swimming radiance of thine eye,
Like the blue depth of summer's sky,
When day is done, and clouds asleep,
Lie gemmed, like isles, on heaven's pure deep.
Pride of my soul ! I see thee yet,
As first in life's clear dawn we met,
Nor thought of ill, nor dreamt of pain,
Our world a world of love and light ;
Oh ! give me back that morn again !
Fond, foolish heart ! thy wish how vain !
Around thee close the shades of night,
And not one star with kindly ray
To light thee on thy stormy way,

By Leman's lake our cottage stood.
In truth it was a lovely home.
It suited well my wayward mood;
In solitude I there might brood,
Or all unquestioned roam,
And watch, with half-unconscious eye,
The snowy sail go bounding by.
And he, who gaz'd upon that cot,
Nested in bowers of freshest green,
Might well exclaim, 'Oh! happy spot!
Ne'er can a trouble there have been!'

Blue, sleeping lake! a summer's eve
By thee might bid me cease to grieve.
The clouds, on many a tempest driven,
The hills, by many a red bolt riven,
As if no other wind would wake,
No lightening cleave, no thunder shake,
Are deep in Leman's tideless lake,
Where scarce the swan can win a breeze
To waft it o'er those slumbering seas,

Like silvery cloud of morn that lies
Lapped in the light of azure skies.

Father ! it is a glorious scene
That lake of heavenly blue,
Set, like a gleaming gem, between •
Those Alps of roseate hue,
When sunset showers her trembling lights
On Villeneuve's stupendous heights,
And robes those giant forms of ice
In living tints of paradise.
There winter piles her glittering throne,
That beam and blast in vain assail,
While, from her feet, the vassal Rhone
Speeds with her tidings through the vale.
There autumn hangs her purple store,
Fair Vevay ! on thy hill of vines ;
And, basking on her sloping shore,
Lausanne in queenly beauty shines.
Grey as the mists of eve that glide
Along that placid, inland sea,
Fond fancy rears your sober pride,

Rocks of romantic Meillerie !
Leman ! amid my dream of life
Oft gleams thy crescent-form so fair ;
Had earth a refuge free from strife,
This soul had found that refuge there.
Oh ! but for human crime and pain,
That scene were Eden o'er again !

Alas ! no rest my spirit knew
Beside that lake so fair and blue.
Like sudden gusts from icy hills,
Came cold forebodings—shadowy ills.
My soul's best treasures made me sad ;
And yet there seemed no danger near ;
The heart hath never learned to love,
That never learned to fear.
My riches, like the miser's gain,
Filled me with pleasure and with pain.

Two rosy boys around us played,
Gamesome as lively summer brooks ;
And when mine eyes that pair surveyed,

My heart would quit its sombre shade ;
It gathered joy from their bright looks.
Oft, 'mid the soft and sunny hours,
Their voices, like the breath of flowers,
Stole to my heart, and won a prayer
For things so guileless, fond, and fair.
And then my heart would wander back,
Over a bleak and blasted track,
To childhood's day—Oh ! not like this—
When life was but a name for bliss.
Then would the scenes of sinless years
Smile on me through a mist of tears,
Till demon voices cried within,
'How different now, thou wreck of sin !'
Then, like a mocking dream of morn,
That vision from my soul was borne,
And I, poor dreamer ! stood again
'Mid a dark world of present pain.

Fair forms of life ! I see them glide,
Glad as the waves they sport beside,
Their tones of mirth more softly sweet

Than waters whispering round their feet.
I see them now, at twilight's hour,
When pearly dew-drops gem the flower,
Like brooks that in the deep lake rest,
Folded upon their mother's breast,
Hushed in the light, but sweet, repose
That only guileless childhood knows,
When life—Oh ! happy, fearless state !
Still sleeps by Eden's golden gate ;
Love's angel-pinions hovering o'er,
And trial's regions—all before.

Brief was the dream that bade me hope.
As if my life-blood, drop by drop,
Were ebbing from its fount away,
Hour after hour, day after day,
I watched our eldest child decay—
Pure, bright, and beauteous to the last,
Like some fair planet in the sky,
That shines till every beam is past,
And dies, delighting still the eye,
Scarce conscious that the orb is set,

And gazing, longing, hoping yet !
We gazed—we hoped—no gleam ! no quiver !
Life's star had set, and set for ever !

Silent and soft as falling snow,
Death from the darkness stole ;
With me he left a load of woe,
To Heaven he bore a soul.
What could I feel but dark despair ?
Had I not deadly cause ?
I knew not how far from Heaven I was,
Till the child whom I loved was there !
Oh ! far beyond the power of thought and speech,
The thing we love, and yet—can never reach !

While we beheld that infant fade,
Around his couch, unconscious, played
His rosy mate—or rambled free,
Wondering at times, perchance, that he
Was left alone to pull the flower,
To watch the bird, to chase the bee,
Through the long day, from hour to hour.

Wearied at last of solitude,
Beside his brother's couch he stood,
And fondly kissed his blooming cheek ;
Why turns he not to smile, or speak ?
He gazed around, as half in pain,
Half in reproach, then bent again,
And put his clustering locks aside,
Took his small hand, and vainly tried
To win one look of happier days ;
But dropt it soon in wild amaze.
With tearful eye he turned around ;
' Why sleeps he now so long and sound,
Mother' ?—She, too, has hid her face ;
And starting wild, in close embrace
The child upon her bosom bowed,
And clasped her neck, and wept aloud.
Yes ! he had died—we thought 'twas sleep ;
But his was rest for dreams too deep.
Gently his soul had taken wing,
E'en as the wandering bird of spring
Checks his wood-note, and flits away,
Whene'er his blooming bowers decay ;

While yet his music, deep and clear,
Is living in our heart and ear.

And now a change, unmarked before,
By slow degrees came stealing o'er
The last, the loveliest flower of earth
That shed sweet odour round our hearth,
And we beheld, in vain despair,
That death had breath'd his venom there.
His brother's lips so pure and red,
Had poured destruction through his veins ;
On silent wing his spirit fled ;
We wept beside his cold remains ;
But ere that spirit soared aloft,
A bright deceit beguiled us oft.
No look of pain, no moan of care,
Made him who withered seem less fair,
Than if a gentle sleep were there !
Calm as a sea of tideless blue,
That eye, where heaven was beaming through.
That cheek, how pure and bright its glow,
Like rose-bud on a wreath of snow.

Is this the icy spell of death,
That beaming eye, that balmy breath,
That smile, so like the summer glow
Speaking of life and love below ;
That cheek, so like a dewy rose ;
That rest, so like a saint's repose !
Death ! I have seen thee oft, and near :
I cannot think that thou art here !

When that dread hour of trouble fell,
Like midnight, o'er my mind,
From words, by thousands loved so well,
No solace could I find.
How could I turn the page divine
With hand so deeply-dyed as mine ?
How could I speak of heavenly faith,
I who had faithless proved ?
'Twas vain—no comfort could I breathe
To her, so fondly loved.
'Mercy' would sound like mockery,
Uttered by lips of one like me.
This was the most unhallowed pain

That yet had pierced my heart and brain.
'Tis awful when, by anguish riven,
You dare not speak of hope or heaven.

Deep in a dim and shady nook,
Fast by a low-complaining brook,
Lone mourner o'er my children's bier,
Broken of heart, I shed no tear ;
For tears, like rain, were shed before,
Nor one would wet mine eyelid more ;
Yet sorrow's current ran below—
How deep, how cold, thou canst not know ;
For thou art barred from those sweet ties,
That wed the heart to hope and joy,
Or fill it with sad memories,
That nought on earth can e'er destroy.

Yes! for a time my burning eye
Excess of grief had rendered dry ;
But who, that plumbed my bosom's deep,
Could say, in truth, 'he does not weep !'
Thus wintry stream at first is seen

To boil above its banks of green,
Till, buried deep in frozen grave,
It rolls a secret, silent wave.

For hours I stood entranced and mute ;
Then tears and words were given to me ;
' Death ! thou hast cropt the fairest fruit :
In mercy spare ! oh ! spare the tree !'
Vain—vain the prayer ! the same fell blight,
That robbed me of my blooming fruit,
Pierced with a swift and cruel might,
And struck the tree through core and root.
Why should she stay ? Her babes were gone,
And beckoned her to haste away,
Where kinder skies in beauty shone,
Where life was one unsetting day.
It was not meet that one so good
Should linger long from heaven for me ;
And soon that lonely man I stood,
That I have been, and still must be.
Ere breathed again the leaves of spring,
Her spirit to its God took wing ;

Like some fond bird that flies its shed,
When all its plummy young have fled,
To seek them through the azure skies,
And meet in some green paradise.

It haunts me still, that lonely hour,
When mute with misery I did stand
Beside the tokens of a Power
That smote my hopes with iron hand.
Oh! beautiful—most beautiful!
Death scarce could rob a face so fair,
But paused, as if half sorrowful
His fury had descended there!
For once the spoiler wanted heart
To strip the victim of his dart,
And spared the signs of life awhile,
The flushing rose, the settled smile,
The folded hands, the tranquil air,
Like some meek saint's in act of prayer.
So sleeps a weary child at even,
Pillowed upon its mother's breast;
So gently fades the light of heaven,

And, dying, smiling, gilds the west ;
Leaving a glory where it set,
As if it had not vanished yet.
The sun, that sets, again shall rise,
To shed new joy o'er earth and skies ;
But where is she, who o'er distress
An urn of purest balm could pour ?
Earth holds one gentle soul the less,
And heaven one angel more !

But gazing on those speaking lips,
That tranquil brow, those meek blue eyes,
I could not think that death's eclipse
Had darkened life's celestial skies.
Some burdens are in truth so great,
We cannot realize their weight.
Some pangs have such excess of pain
To paralyse both heart and brain,
That time must pass ere we can feel
The crushing load, the rending wheel ;
To feel, oh God ! and pray in vain
That soul and sense would sleep again.

Wife—children—foster-brother—gone !
A fated wretch I stand alone,
With none to guide—with none to cheer ;
Exiled from hope, and dead to fear.
They say there is an Eastern Tree,
Beneath whose fatal shade
No living thing one hour can be,
But it must pine and fade.
No bird can warble from its spray,
No flower can bloom beneath.
If there the stag his limbs should lay,
He courts a certain death.
Nought, save the deadly-venomed snake,
A covert of that tree can make.
Like that accursed tree am I ;
Life seeks my presence but to die !
Nought can a shelter find with me,
Save venomed crime and misery.

Yet, gentle thoughts to me are left ;
Each desert hath its grateful well ;
That spirit is not all bereft

Where hallowed memories dwell.
The memory of my Angel Three
Steals like a spell from Heaven o'er me,
As flowers diffuse their fragrant breath
Through the dark crater's vale of death.
Oft have I thought that memory given
To lead this erring soul to Heaven ;
For when those Angels walk with me,
The Curse and all its phantoms flee,
Abashed from things so pure and fair,
As sunbeams purge the murky air.
But when they fade, once more the power
Of evil hath its vengeful hour,
And mocking spectres, grim and vast,
Drag back my spirit to the past,
And quench in memory's wildest night
My gleams of Heaven so briefly bright.

But why should I retrace a past
Blighted by crime's simoon-like blast ?
Look on my face ! 'twill tell of pain,
For which a thousand words are vain.

The splintered wall, the shattered keep,
Where years of buried memories sleep,
While human fingers fail to trace
The record of each ruined place,
Can give the rapt, inquiring eye
A light to read their story by,
And breathe a tale of shot and shell
Louder than lay or chronicle.
For every wrinkle on this brow,
And bleaching hair upon this head,
Conceive a bitter pang—and thou
Part of mine agony hast read.
The heart alone its trouble knows,
For there is sorrow passing speech;
The history of human woes
Is written where no eye can reach—
Save His, who made that secret leaf,
Traced with the iron pen of grief.

Yes! I am childless, friendless now—
A trunk without one gladsome leaf;
But they, who in their guilt will plough,


Must reap in madness and in grief.
'Twas meet that I should plundered be
Of all the joy that man can know ;
For mercy pled in vain with me
Amid thy rocks, accurst Glencoe !
'Be sure your sin will find you out !'
Just God of Heaven ! Thy words are true.
O'er land and sea I've roved about,
But never peace, nor comfort knew,
Since—shame to every warrior stout !
My sword in murder's cause I drew.

Father ! the curse was big with wrath,
When those Three Altars, fed with care,
Lay spoiled and shivered in my path,
No flame of life bright-burning there.
Then, in my presence, shadowy, pale
As floating mist in mountain-vale
At evening grey, a Spirit stood !
Her scowling brow was dark with blood.
I knew her by a crimsoned sword ;
I knew her by a sleepless word ;

I knew her by a vacant home ;
A hopeless soul, a new-made tomb !
Still as a lake, when winds are by
And waves are charmed, her glassy eye ;
It chilled my frame through vein and bone,
Cold as the crag the snow lies on.
Full well I felt that she was here,
Risen from a nameless, turfless bier,
To triumph o'er the wreck of fate,
A heart, like her's, all desolate ;
To mock my grief and tell with might,
How deep a Widow's curse can blight !

There is a fearful mood of mind,
More sad than sorrow—dark as sin—
When the soul's vision waxeth blind
To all without and all within ;
When from the firmament of sense
The sun of reason dies away,
And not one star's bright influence
Atoneth for the loss of day ;
Cheerless and ' void ' as primal night,

Ere God proclaimed the birth of light.
That torpor o'er my bosom came—
How long I know not, cannot say ;
For noon and night were all the same ;
Clouds of thick darkness o'er me lay ;
Till, on a lovely summer's day,
I wandered idly to the grave
That held my lost ones by the wave.'
What touched my sluggish heart—or how—
Who made that heart can best declare ;
But I awoke to sense, and now
A weeping, feeling man stands there.
Thus the poor maniac idly dreams
'Mid his own groves and native streams,
Till something greets his aimless gaze
Well loved of old—then buried days,
With all their cherished train, roll back
Through memory's long-deserted track :
Long-frozen feelings burst their chain,
Tumultuous throb through heart and vein :
Thought, rising from the sleep of years,
Flows forth in warm, reviving tears,



And spreads before his wondering eye
The records of a life gone by !¹

MONK.

Hermit ! a voice of holy might
Once bade the raging waters sleep :
Arrested at its wildest height,
The tempest crouched upon the deep :
Then, like a sweet and dewy balm,
O'er Galilee went forth a calm.
That voice can soothe thy spirit yet,
And bid thee hope—revive—forget !

, HERMIT.

My tale is done. Thou know'st the whole,
My deadly crime—my dismal doom.
This body soon must find a tomb ;
Where then shall dwell my guilty soul ?
Or have I suffered here so long
That I beyond the grave may rest,
And, 'mid the white-robed seraph throng,
Behold the lost, the loved, the blest ?

¹ I have read of a deranged and wandering mind being
thus touched and arrested.

But what are words to woe like mine ?
And what is all that woe to thee ?
Yet, when thou bendest at the shrine,
Oh ! send to Heaven one prayer for me ;
For prayer, 'tis said, from holy heart,
Prevaileth, like a hallowed spell.
And now, old man ! for aye we part ;
In mercy judge. Farewell ! farewell !

.

MONK.

Not thus we part. Thy tale I've heard.
Much hast thou suffered, much hast erred ;
But I have words of peace for thee ;
The blessed words of Him who died
On Calvary's base and bloody tree,
And to a race of sinners cried,
'Be saved ! and look to Heaven through Me !'
Sinner ! repent ! thine ear incline ;
A darker, heavier curse than thine
His sacred blood hath washed away.
Oh ! come to Him—repent ! and pray !

Se'est thou yon bright and burning star,
Gleaming from Heaven's blue dome afar ;
An hour ago I saw it veiled
In vapoury clouds that o'er it sailed ;
Unshrouded now it pours its light,
And holier beauty gives to night.
A fairer Star o'er Bethel rose ;
The clouds of death eclipsed its ray ;
But rising from a brief repose,
It pours o'er earth a glorious day.

Takes from beneath his robe a crucifix, and, while holding it up before the Hermit's eyes, the vesper-bell of the Convent is heard tolling solemnly far below. The Monk exclaims, still elevating the crucifix :—

That Star behold ! and hark ! a voice
Calls on us through the gloom profound !
Oh ! man of crime ! take hope ! rejoice !
Nor close thy soul to that blest sound.
It calls on sinful souls to pray ;
It offers pardon to the meek ;
It speaks of Heaven and points the way ;
Blessed are all that way who seek !

Kneel down, thou man of sin! with me,
And Heaven's bright gates shall welcome thee.
The sweetest joy that angels know
Is when a penitent, forgiven,
Forsakes his sin, restrains his woe,
And lifts his face in faith to Heaven.
If Time a drop of bliss can pour
Into the deep, eternal Mind,
It is by sending from its shore
A soul in trial's fire refined.
Lo! who are these, in robes of white,
Seated beside the sacred river?
Lo! these have passed through trouble's night,
And now they dwell in peace for ever!
Repent! and thou shalt join that throng.
Thy sins are great, but love and grace are strong.

They kneel down—the bell tolling below—and the star
shining serenely upon them from above.

OCCASIONAL POEMS.

OCCASIONAL POEMS.



A WOUNDED SOLDIER TO FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

AMID the dismal silence
Of this ghastly house of pain,
What voice is falling softly
As a shower of summer rain?

Above this couch, where agony
The human form doth mar,
What angel-visage haunteth me,
Like a pure and holy star?

Oh! is it but a dream of night,
That mocketh eye and ear?
Or—can I trust my fading sight—
Is a gentle woman near?

Yes! thou art Florence Nightingale;

I know and bless thee now.

Thy cheek with weariness is pale,

But mercy lights thy brow.

Thou hast left a home of happiness;

Thou hast crossed the raging wave,

To shed a blessing o'er distress,

To rob the greedy grave!

For the kindness of that tender hand,

And the pity of that eye,

Who fears to suffer for his land?

Who sorrows thus to die?

This deadly shore is shining

With deeds of deathless fame;

But the fairest bays are twining

Around a woman's name!

Man! thou art strong in danger,

To DUTY faithful still;

But thy nature is a stranger

To the might of woman's will;

To her wealth of self-devotion,
To her love of sacrifice—
Greenest isle in trouble's ocean!
Brightest star in sorrow's skies!

Beneath the Cross—beside the Tomb,
Was woman's olden place;
And still there beameth on our gloom
A comfort from her face.

Oh, lady! if the crown of heaven
Be won by earnest prayer,
A thousand times, from morn till even,
Thy crown is purchased there.

'Tis all we have—sad wrecks of strife
Strewn thick in war's wild vale;
God bless thee! Angel of our life!
Sweet Florence Nightingale

THE STREAM OF LIFE.

‘The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be ; and that which is done is that which shall be done : and there is no new thing under the sun.’

• ‘STREAM! thou hast travelled far ;

Tell me what thou hast seen.

‘Mid trouble and toil and war

Many a day thou hast been.’

‘Yes! I have wandered long ;

Yes! I have wandered far.

Ever about me throng

Trouble and toil and war.

‘Strange is the gift I bear

On to the greedy sea.

Misery, mirth, and care

Travel along with me.

‘Tears, like a bitter rain,

Melt in my passing wave.

• Mine is the crimson stain,

Caught from the blood of the brave.

‘Over the wrecks of state
Often my tide hath rolled ;
Or wafted a gorgeous freight
Of the glittering idol—Gold.

‘I have listened to burning vows
Broken as soon as breathed.
I have witnessed glorious brows
Pallid when newly wreathed.

‘I have seen the love of morn
Turn to noon-day hate.
I have heard the lips of scorn
Fawn on the wealthy great.

‘I have known the rites of Faith
Flourish and fade and change !
Nothing of life, or death
Reckon I new, or strange.

‘Trouble and toil and care,
Battle and guile and pain ;
All that my waters bear
Was, and shall be again !

‘Fruit and blossom and bud,
Spoils of many a tree,
Hurry along my flood,
Down to a shoreless sea.

‘Life is my ancient name.
Death is my ocean-goal.
Changing, yet ever the same!
On through the world I roll.’



THE GIPSY BOY.

BLYTHELY sings the Gipsy boy ;
Care nor sorrow knoweth he.
Blessings on thy brow of joy,
And thy dark eye full of glee !

Bleak the blast, and murky midnight
Soon shall fold the world in shade.
Sheltering hedge, or ferny hill-side,
There thy lonely couch is made !

Heaven protect thee ! houseless being !

Father, mother, hast thou none,
None on earth to bid thee welcome ?
None to claim thee for a son ?

Sister, brother, is there no one

With a heart that beats for thine ?
Stars of Heaven ! on such a lone one
Seldom, seldom do ye shine.

Hark ! again his song is ringing

On the night-breeze, clear and shrill ;
'Tis my faith that richer mortals
Bear a heavier load of ill.

Heaven dispenseth wealth of pleasure

To the humblest of our kind.
One is poor with golden treasure ;
One is rich with peace of mind.

'Mid the blast an arm upholds thee ;

In the dark an eye surveys ;
Brightly, kindly still before thee,
Burns a lamp in all thy ways.

He, who feeds the wand'ring raven,
Robes the lily of the field,
His compassion is thy haven,
His omnipotence thy shield.

Dews and rains of night may wet thee ;
Churlish man may prove unkind ;
Providence will ne'er forget thee,
Tempering to thy strength the wind.

Take an alms—'tis freely given,
Which is donor, who can tell ?
'Tis perchance the voice of heaven
Pleads, lone boy ! in thee so well.

Mortals, in the days departed,
Angels, unawares, have fed ;
Nor in vain upon the waters
Cast their charitable bread.

Holy Writ proclaims it better
To bestow than to receive.
Homeless Boy ! I'm twice thy debtor,
For I both accept and give !

BYRON'S HEART.

'Lord Byron's remains, with the exception of his Heart, left in Greece, to be placed in a mausoleum, were brought to England, and interred in the family-vault at Hucknall, about eight miles west of Nottingham.'

'Twas meet that gifted Heart should lie
Where long it sadly strove for peace,
Beneath a glowing Grecian sky,
Near to the glorious 'Isles of Greece.'

There did it wake the Delphic lyre
To more than Delphi's highest strain.
The sightless Bard, with all his fire,
Must seek to match those notes in vain.

Recall thy glories, fallen land!
Thy Homer's birth, thy Solon's bier:
No nobler boast canst thou command
Than 'Byron sung and slumbers here!'

Degenerate, classic Greece! art thou.
Thy heroes, poets, all are fled!
Say! who could make thy Leuctra now?
Inspire thy living? hymn thy dead?

Yet, 'twas thy latest, purest pride
To weave for him the holiest ties,
Who loved thee more than worlds beside;
Whose heart, long thine, is still thy prize!

We grudge thee not thy precious trust,
Nor murmur at the Poet's will;
Long hath that Heart returned to dust;
Its light illumines mankind still.



ODE TO THE PEACE OF EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX.

HARK! a hundred bells are pealing
On the genial summer morn,
And the voice of human jubilee
On every breeze is borne.
The city-tower and hamlet-spire
Ring out a merry note.
There is triumph in the Castle;
There is gladness in the Cot.

Ring on! ring on! ye happy bells!

Nor let your music cease;

For ye breathe a blessed word to-day,

The holy word of 'Peace.'

'Tis the word that rang o'er Bethel,

In the midnight watches still,

When Angel-choristers proclaimed

The 'tidings' of 'goodwill.'

A stormy night hath vanished

From the Tartar's grassy plain,

And o'er Crimean hills a morn

Of beauty breaks again.

The trader now in safety

May plough the inland deep,

And the peasant trim his vineyard

Along the sunny steep.

On the ruins of his home-stead

Another home may rise;

For a scene of quiet sleeps at last

Beneath the quiet skies.

No more the heavens are startled
By the cannon's fiery breath ;
No more the earth is cumbered
With a ghastly load of death.

No more the waves of Alma
Run crimson to the main,
And wail around the bodies
Of the wounded and the slain.
No more upon the Euxine
Drifts on the smoking wreck,
With the mangled forms that lately stood
In pride upon her deck.

Amid the rocks of Inkerman,
Where rang the iron hail,
And along the verdant bosom
Of Baidar's peaceful vale,
And down to Balaclava,
That beetles o'er the steep,
Float the softly-plaintive bleatings
Of the gently-feeding sheep.

But long the musing shepherd,
As he wanders o'er the plain,
Will pause where rankly grows the grass
Above the gallant slain,
And think, while grateful memory
Rolls down the happy tear,
'The brave, who saved my land and home,
The brave are sleeping here.'

Ring on! ring on! ye merry bells!
For ye say to many an ear,
'Let cup of welcome crown the toils
Of those that now are near.'
The God of sea and shore hath heard
Your prayers at night and morn,
And the Forms, that rose amid your dreams,
From war and wave are borne.

And yet, for many a widowed heart,
I long to bid ye cease;
To them your peal is sorrow;
Oh! mock them not with 'peace!'


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The manly form, the beaming eye,
Shall bless them never more :
They are cold beneath the billow,
Or on the fatal shore.

Let others boast of Alma,
Where the Briton led the van ;
Of Balaclava's trampled plain,
And the crags of Inkerman ;
Of the leal and luckless Hearts of Kars,
Where Famine won the day,
And the soldier, dead upon his post,
Cold, but unconquered, lay !

To thousands these are stirring names
Of glory and of pride ;
To the widowed they but tell of those,
Who said 'farewell!'—and—died.
Ten thousand beating hearts they thrill,
As with a trumpet's tone ;
To them they whisper sadly,
'We have made your dwellings lone.'

But raise your heads, ye widowed ones
Your dead in honour sleep ;
They rest in well-won sepulchres,
Beside the conquered deep !
And may the ' God of Battles,'
Who ' maketh wars to cease,'
The Living visit, for the Dead,
With his holy balm of Peace !



THE SPIRIT OF IRE.

I AM the Spirit of the blast,
The Ruler of the storm,
And the wintry cloud,
With sleety shroud,
Wraps my shadowy form.

In the thunder peal
Through heaven I steal,
With the red-bolt in my hand,

And the clouds beneath me roll and reel,
Cleft by the edge of my burning wheel,
A dark, tumultuous band.

My grasp on the whirlwind's mane I lay,
My foot on the boiling deep,
And a thousand leagues away! away!
Where seething whirlpools love to play,
Where winged tempests sleep,
Till, roused by me,
O'er land and sea,
From their secret beds they leap,
And all night long
A dismal song
To the billows around me keep.

Where the red flame roars
Through roof and floors,
My standard of fire is unfurled;
Where Etna the lava-torrent pours
O'er the crashing woods and the groaning shores,
My throne is a ruined world.

Where Famine stalks,
And the Plague Fiend walks
Through the silent and grass-grown street,
I sit in the gloom
Of a mighty tomb,
While the wrecks of death, on the waves of doom,
Roll thickly around my feet.

O'er the rending deck
Of the tossing wreck,
My pale blue lightning plays,
Till every rope,
That offered hope,
Is wrapt in a ghastly blaze.

Where the God of war,
In his gory car,
Drives madly across the vale,
I goad the steed
To whirlwind speed,
The bright spear snap,
Like a withered reed,
And shiver the tested mail.

Six thousand years
I have rolled the tears
Over the Sinner's path.
In the dawn of Time
'Twas human crime
That gave me power
In an evil hour,
And sent me abroad in wrath.

The day draws near,
When this dark sphere
Shall blaze on its funeral pyre.
To a 'lower deep'
I then must sweep,
A dreary and dismal watch to keep
O'er spirits, like me, that never sleep,
In the Realms of endless Ire.

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE.

In the breeze of eve I wander by,
I glow in the morning beam ;
Mine is the blue of the summer sky,
The music of the stream ;
The tint of the flower,
The drop of the shower,
The blossom on the tree,
And the cloud, that rides
O'er Heaven's broad tides,
Are full of the spirit of me.

In the stars of night,
So pure and bright,
I watch over man below ;
O'er the prince's dome,
And the peasant's home ;
O'er a world of mirth and of woe.

To the smiling brow
I lend its glow,

Their magic to bright young eyes ;
I gleam in the tear
That falls on the bier
Of the lovely, the brave, and the wise.

Mine was the word
The Day-God heard
In the caverns of ancient Night,
When seraphs young -
Exultant sung
O'er the glorious birth of Light.

Mine was the strain
O'er Bethel's plain
To the midnight watchers borne ;
And mine the star
That poured afar
The beams of a holy morn.

Mine is the voice
That cried, ' Rejoice !'
To the faith of an olden time ;

And I whisper still
A sweet ‘goodwill’
O’er a world of care and crime.

Over earth and air
I am everywhere,
A Spirit of Peace and of Love.
I am come to cheer
The mourner here,
And to lead him to ‘rest’ above.

X ~~~~~
‘WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE
CHASTENETH.’

WHEN lightning smote the classic tree,
’Twas sacred from that mystic hour :
Reason and faith alike might see
A witness of celestial power.

Mock not yon frail and struggling form,
That bends beneath a load of care ;
The hand, that launcheth forth the storm,
Hath bound a sacred burden there.

That house of grief—this couch of pain—

Oh! man! with all thy soul revere,

Nor let them preach to thee in vain

The solemn truth, ‘Thy God is here!’

For not alone in morning beams

And summer flowers thy God abides:

Amid the clouds of night He gleams,

And on the drifting tempest rides.

Take not the thousand shapes of woe

For earnest of destructive wrath.

Lo! who are these in robes of snow?

They trod to Heaven by trial’s path!



THE OLD ENGLISH HALL.

NAY! chide me not—I watch with pain

These antique gables fall.

One day—and none shall see again

That quaint old English Hall.

There's not a moss-grown fragment there,
But has its tale for me ;
No wonder that I cannot bear
This havoc rude to see.

'Twas there my happy childhood passed,
And my lost brother played.
Alas ! to think that ruin's blast
These walls in dust hath laid.

A statelier pile you soon may raise,
And say it is my home ;
But there the memories of old days
To me can never come.

So much is lost 'mid change and toil,
I would not share the crime
Of adding to the hoarded spoil
Of that old miser, Time.

I would not fell yon hoary tree,
Nor raze yon ivied wall ;

For with them both would fall for me
What Time can ne'er recall.

You talk of nought, save gold and power :
The heart hath other gains,
Gathered from many a by-gone hour,
From pleasures, griefs, and pains.

I would not give the storied Past
For what may gild the morrow ;
And yet, it speaks of many a blast,
Of many a treasured sorrow.

I hoped the home that hailed my birth
Life's setting sun might see ;
No fonder hope was mine for earth—
Alas ! it may not be.

Hark ! how the ponderous hammer rings !
Long-knitted rafters start
The thoughtless serf, unconscious, sings—
And yet, he smites my heart

MACGREGOR'S PARTING.

“Raise me from my bed,” said the invalid, on learning that a person, with whom he was at enmity, proposed to visit him—“throw my plaid around me, and bring me my claymore, dirk, and pistols: it shall never be said that a foeman saw Rob Roy Macgregor defenceless and unarmed.” His foeman, conjectured to be one of the MacLarens, entered and paid his compliments. Rob Roy maintained a cold, haughty civility during the short conference, and so soon as he had left the house, “Now,” he said, “all is over—let the piper play, Ha til mi tulidh (we return no more);” and he is said to have expired before the dirge was finished.

‘Like Robin Hood of England, he was a kind and gentle robber, and, while he took from the rich, was liberal in relieving the poor.’—*Scott's Introduction to Rob Roy.*

KINSMEN ! raise me from my pillow,

And array me in my best ;—

Thus would I salute a clansman

E'er I take the dreamless rest.

Ne'er before the hostile chieftain

In my vigour did I crouch ;

And in age I would not meet him,

Tamely stretched upon my couch.

Play the strain that fired my spirit,
When I charged the Lowland foe,
Rushing, like the mountain-torrent
On the trembling vale below.

Ah! that Pibroch brings before me
Heather-bloom and Highland glen,
When the ringing rocks resounded
To the clang of martial men.

Feeble now the arm that scattered
Bands of foemen keen and brave,
And mine eye grows dim with shadows
Stealing, mist-like, from the grave.

I have trod a troubled journey,
Soon in death's drear vale to close ;
Soon Macgregor's form must vanish
From his friends and from his foes.

Yet I go not void of comfort ;
For, although this hand is red,

Blood of poor man nor of peaceful,
Never, never hath it shed.

Like the oak tree, 'mid the tempest,
Battle with the proud I've made ;
But the feeble and the friendless
Found a shelter in my shade.

King of Terrors ! to thy mandate
With no craven fear I bow—
Wrong—not right—have I resisted,
And to bend becomes me now.

Sad my wants—but want of mercy
Paineth not this parting breath ;
Humbly, then, I hope for pardon
Past yon cloudy gulf of death.

Rushing stream and breezy mountain !
Wavy loch and bushy dell !
Ebbs my being's feeble fountain—
Scenes of life ! a long farewell !

TO THE SEA-BIRD.

SEA-BIRD ! rocking lightly on ocean's green wave,
To thee but a cradle, to thousands a grave !
How restless thy pillow ! how gentle thy sleep !
Pure child of the elements—pride of the deep.

No pearl of the sea-cave so white as thy plume ;
Thine eye gleameth brightly as star from the gloom ;
On the breeze, like a foam-flake, from ocean you
spring,
With the beam on your breast, and the dew on your
wing.

Thy nest was the grey cliff that frowns on the deep ;
The winds and waves warring first woke thee from
sleep—

What being so happy—so fearless—so free
As thine, winged rider ! of tempest and sea ?

The billow, that rends the proud vessel in twain,
To thee is a courser with far-floating mane ;

The blast, that o'erwhelms the pale pilot with fear,
Is the wild-ringing music thou lovest to hear.

No dream can be calmer than thee in thy rest,
With thy shadow, so star-like, in ocean's blue breast;
No fancy is fleetier than thee in thy pride,
When the steeds of the tempest invite thee to ride.

Then away on thy courser, thou child of the storm!
The beauty of freedom illumeth thy form—
Then down, like a meteor that gleams on the deep,
Thou art mirrored—an image of silence and sleep!

THE HIDDEN STREAM.

A HIDDEN stream stole softly through a glade,
Filling the air with freshness and with song ;
A path of green its devious course betrayed,
Where still it rolls in secrecy along,
Like holy charity, whose way is known
By the blest influence of deeds alone.

Thus, through a world of wickedness and woe,
The Spirit pours a hidden, holy tide ;
No eye can mark its blessed waters flow,
But fairest flowers drink beauty by their side ;
And ever in the ear of listening souls
A 'still small voice' of touching music rolls.

Thus many a life, by men unseen, unknown,
Glides through the glade of Time with gentle
tread,
Making a holy music of its own,
While bright-winged seraphs bend the approving
head,

And God accepts the notes that sweetly rise,
To blend with Heaven's high choral melodies.

Not the proud victor God alone commends,
Rushing, impetuous, on his conquering course ;
Nor the rapt sage, whose daring genius rends
The veil of error with resistless force ;
Like hidden brooks, obscurer spirits sing
A grateful song to Heaven's eternal king.

The mighty hand, that piles the giant hill,
And holds the waters of the weltering main,
Pours from a bounteous urn the hidden rill,
And scatters cowslips o'er the laughing plain,
Lights up the glow-worm's twinkling taper small,
Moulds the bright dew, and notes the sparrow's fall.

Nations to Him are but as drifting 'dust ;'
One breath of His can scatter kingly states ;
They only stand who in His greatness trust ;
Goodness alone for Him delight creates ;

A drop—an ocean—are to Him as one !
A grain of sand, and yonder blazing sun !

Oft have I sat within that lonely dell,
 Beneath the shadow of an aged thorn,
While on the turf a shower of blossoms fell,
 Or floated free, on gentle breezes borne.
Deep in the soil of vernal memory set,
Beside the brook, that hawthorn blossoms yet.

VOICES OF CREATION.

‘The Lord reigneth ; let the earth be glad.’

I LOVE the woods, the ever-whispering woods ;

There summer rears a leafy colonnade,
Where sweetly-pensive meditation broods,
With nought the dim seclusion to invade,
Save a lost sunbeam wandering 'mid the trees,
Or the leaf dancing to the piping breeze.

I love the flowers, the brightly-blooming flowers ;

For they restore to me the sunny past,
When varied pleasure winged the flying hours,
Too pure to happen twice, too sweet to last ;
How many hopes are scattered on the gale,
While a bleak stem repeats the common tale !

I love the streams, the softly-gliding streams ;

For they can sing to rest the fretted mind ;
And if they speak of fountains, bright as dreams,
Left on the path of travel far behind,

They tell the soul of that mysterious deep,
Where Life's chafed waters rest—yet never sleep.

I love the stars, the clearly-shining stars,
Priests of the night and Prophets of the morn ;
Now pouring balm upon affliction's scars,
Now speaking of a glory to be born,
Like faith, that sanctifies our mortal night,
By pointing to a dawn of never-setting light.

Yes ! scenes of nature ! beauty is your dower,
And eloquence beyond all human speech ;
Your language blends a sweetness and a power
Each heart to soften, and each mind to teach ;
Your tones persuasive breathe of Eden still,
Of peace and love, of mercy and good-will.

Oh ! nature ! nature ! one brief hour with thee,
At golden eve, or under dewy morn,
Might shame the Scoffer's heartless sophistry,
And light with faith the Atheist's brow of scorn.

Though man hath fallen, his earthly home is fair,
And every running rill proclaims that God is there!

His tender mercies o'er His works are spread ;
With His benignant smile the sunbeam glows ;
Flowers at our feet, and stars above our head,
Each wave that wanders, and each breeze that
blows,
Cry to the labouring soul, the spirit sad,
God reigns supreme ; let all the earth be glad !

Faint heart ! be strong—this earth is not thy goal ;
A future, bright and lasting, smiles for thee ;
These scenes are fair, but fairer wait the soul ;
Eye hath not seen thy glories yet to be ;
Man's home is Heaven—that kingdom of the blest ;
The wicked come not there—the weary are at rest !

THE TWO FOUNTAINS.

WHO, that beholds some nameless woodland rill,
Singing alone in sombre solitude—
(The water-cress, with green and glossy leaf,
Muffling the foot-fall of each fairy wave—
The meek Veronica, with pale-blue eye,
Pensively bending from the mossy bank :—
Few sounds to break the quiet, save the breeze
Bewildered 'mid the mazes of the grove ;
The rustling leaf, slow-fluttering from the bough
It once adorned ; the wild and sudden gush
Of music from the black-bird's tuneful throat ;
The tread of woodman, weary and athirst,
Wending to drink ; or step of stealthy roe,
Flitting at sunset on the wood's cool verge) :—
Who, that beholds this feeble rill, would think,
There sports the childhood of a mighty stream
That passes, in its long and varied course,
The basking Hamlet and the lordly Tower,
The rural Village and the City vast,

O'er-canopied with smoke, through which the spire
Shoots, frequent, forth, to point the soul of gain
To wealth unfading in a world above?

Who would believe that broad and buoyant flood,
Bearing the spoil of worlds upon its waves,
Or plunging o'er some rude and rugged ledge
In ceaseless thunder—drew its far-off birth
From the clear well that feeds the woodland rill?

And who, that sees yon rosy, sleeping child,
Smiling, unconscious, on its mother's breast,
The recent tear still glistening on its cheek—
Would think, there beats a Howard's generous soul—
A Milton's genius; or a Shakespeare's world
Of living fancies, warmed by fire from heaven;
A Newton's lofty and adventurous thought;
A Bacon's wisdom; or a Hampden's worth;
A miser's meanness; or a martyr's faith;
A saviour, or a scourge of human kind?
Oh! Human Nature! deep and wondrous well!
What line shall fathom an abyss like thine?

THE TEAR OF PENITENCE.

‘Joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth.’

WHAT sparkles bright,
In the pale moonlight,
On the lonely captive’s chain?
Is it a gleam
Of the pure star-beam?
Or a drop of drifting rain?

Is it the light
Of the lamp of night,
That falls through the wasted grate?
Or a taper’s ray,
That finds its way
To a scene so desolate?

No! ’tis the tear
To Heaven so dear,

The tear that the angels love,
That awakens joy
Without alloy,
In the city of saints above.

'Tis the tear of grief
That brings relief
To a spirit that weeps for sin—
That opens the gate
Of a better state,
To let the wanderer in.

Through the gloom of night
A hand of might
Carries that tear-drop hence.
In the crown of love
It is set above,
That jewel of Penitence!

The smile of the gay
Is bright as day,

The brow of the young is fair ;
But before the twain
Is the heart-shed rain,
That falls in the dungeon there.

That rain-like dew,
So pure and true,
Speaks of a tempest still,
And a morning bright
Of cloudless light,
On Heaven's eternal hill.

ADVICE TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

‘Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.’

WORK! thy mission is not slumber;

Sleep beseemeth not the Soul.

Sins and sorrows, without number,

Stand between thee and the goal.

Tremble! lest thy foot should stumble;

Death pursues on fleetest steed.

Strive with courage, yet be humble;

Be the wings of Prayer thy speed!

Fear! lest pleasure should entice thee

To forget the holy prize.

Fear! lest Riches should advise thee

Heavenly treasures to despise.

Tremble! for the Heart within thee.

Tremble! for the World without.

Fear! lest Sin or sorrow win thee
Once to droop, despond, or doubt.

Work! and rend each galling fetter
Satan would impose on thee.
Rest not—either worse, or better,
Every day thy Soul must be.

Fearing, trembling, striving, praying,
Onward, like yon rolling river!
Man's delaying proves decaying;
Soul immortal resteth never.

Rest celestial is not slumber;
Glory's pathway climbs to God!
Seraphs, spirits without number,
Tread that ever-rising road.

Ever up to Godhead soaring,
'Tis their glory still to soar,
'Mid eternal bliss adoring,
Heaven behind, around, before!


WINTER..

Is this the world that lately bloomed so bright?
Where are the laughing flowers, that starred the
earth,
Like jewels on the garments of a bride?
Where are the plummy choristers, that poured
Their songs from every spray? And where the
brook,
That warbled wildly near our cottage door?—
The dewy flowers shall breathe and bloom no more;
For Winter's icy wind hath o'er them passed.
In hollow trees, and under frosted eaves,
The cheerless birds lament the dying year,
Or speed to welcome Spring in other climes.
The happy brook is frozen in the act
Of singing God's own praise; e'en as a lark,
Hymning, exultant, at the gates of heaven,
Is stricken by the rabid, ruthless hawk,
And dies with music trembling in its throat.
The fleecy wealth of Winter from the skies

Pours, ceaseless, down, till every field is wrapt
In weeds of woe ; till every tree is hung
With feathery tapestry more white than wool ;
And mighty mantles, wrought by God's own hand,
Are flung in silence round the giant-hills.
And see ! yon northern Ben, like Peter's dome,
Towering supreme above the Roman roofs,
Rears o'er the clustering heights his snowy form,
A dome of silver in a heaven of blue !

So comes the Winter of our earthly years,
When Hope's gay blossoms wither, and are gone !
When Joy's sweet songs give way to sorrow's wail—
And when the winding-sheet of mortal woe
Is drawn by viewless fingers over all.
But courage ! courage ! thou undying soul !
Image of One who knows no end of days !
An endless Spring, with flowers of deathless bloom,
And songs of heavenly bliss, are thine beyond the
tomb !

THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE.



I stood within a dungeon grey and old ;
Its walls were written o'er with legends sad,
Graven by hands long mouldered into dust—
The hands of those who laid life's fetters down,
And fled the prison of this house of clay.
Some lines breathed nought save fretfulness and pain ;
Some flung defiance through that sunless cell ;
Some moaned in sorrow ; and a noble few
Uttered the confidence of holy hope.
The World, methought, is somewhat like that place,
A house of bondage unto many a soul.
Some feeble spirits only weep and pine ;
Some, like the gnarled oak amid the storm,
Roughly resist, and battle with their lot ;
Some, crushed beneath a mountain-weight of woe,
Still look to Heaven, their faces bright with faith ;
Hoping that, when life's prison-gloom is o'er,
Their souls to endless liberty will soar.

THE WRECK-GATHERER.

LONG had the wintry tempest vexed the deep,
But now the winds are resting from their toil ;
The weary waves have rocked themselves to sleep,
And, like tired reapers, lie beside the spoil.
What moveth yonder 'mid the signs of storm ?
Much like themselves, an aged human form.

With bending frame, and ill-supported tread,
The lonely creature culls the drifted wreck,
By wind and wave among the sea-weed spread,
Once tapering spar, or well-cemented deck,
But stranded now upon the friendless shore,
Their mission done, their latest voyage o'er.

Poor mortal wreck ! thine emblem greets thee here,
Nor thee alone, but thousands of thy kind,
Who battle vainly, many a changeful year,
On Time's wide ocean, till some ruder wind
Casts their frail wrecks on bleak misfortune's strand,
Where DEATH steals on with greedy, grasping hand.

THE SABBATH-BELL.

‘Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become
new.’

SCENE—Banks of an American river. Time—Sunset.
Stranger and an old native conversing. Smoke of a
large city rising at a short distance.

STRANGER.

HARK! to the deep and solemn knell,
Sounding o’er forest-land and fell;
O’er river and savannah vast,
Where, free and fearless as the blast,
The kings of nature, unsubdued,
Reign ’mid primeval solitude.

’Tis louder than the vesper-hymn,
Chanted by boatmen as they skim
The brightly-sparkling waters,
Where nature sheds her sunniest smiles
Over the ‘Thousand’ fairy ‘Isles,’¹
Old ocean’s fairest daughters!

¹ The Islands of the St Lawrence.

'Tis fainter than the sullen roar
That rends the air and stuns the shore,
Where Niagara's waters pour
Eternal thunders down !
Old man ! what sad and solemn sound
Floats, like a spirit's tongue, around ?
Comes it from yonder rising ground,
Encircled by a sombre crown
Of venerable trees,
Where gleamings from a gilded spire,
Lit by the dying sunset's fire,
Flash forth, whene'er the breeze
The dark and heavy drapery stirs,
Robing yon patriarchal firs ?

OLD MAN.

Hark ! stranger ! to that solemn knell,
There is no sadness there ;
Hark ! 'tis the Sabbath vesper-bell,
Pealing the hour of prayer.

Stranger ! 'tis Heaven's mysterious voice,
Bidding the mourning soul rejoice,

 The heavy laden come
To rivers of celestial bliss,
Purer and nobler far than this,
 On whose green banks we roam ;
To scenes of more enchanting rest
From those fair islands of the west ;
 Scenes lighted by the face of God,
 Whose glory setteth never—

 The tearless and the bright abode
 Of hearts at peace for ever,
From sin absolved, from suffering free,
High Priests of Immortality !

STRANGER.

Years have gone by since last I trod,
Thoughtless of mood, my native sod ;
And were it not for that broad stream,
My former life might seem a dream.
These waters flow as then they flowed,
The sunset glows as then it glowed ;

But scenes, so eloquent of change,
Rise on mine eyes, where'er they range,
That baffled memory seeks in vain
The sleeping past to wake again ;
Like one who, in the eve of life,
Returns, from travel and from strife,
His early home to see,
But cannot by that vesper light
Regain the treasures once so bright,
The joys of infancy !

OLD MAN.

White are my locks as winter snow,
Once dark as raven's wing ;
Feeble the hand could deal a blow
That made the forest ring,
Or sped the arrowy canoe,
Like to a 'living thing.'
Dim is the eye that once was clear
As yonder starry ray,

And silent now to this dull ear
The leafy woodland spray ;
The sky hath lost its depth of blue,
The flower its gay and dazzling hue,
And birds and brooks are now for me
Bereft of half their melody.

Alas ! that man should count his years
By losses, not by gains ;
Feed memory less with smiles than tears,
With pleasures less than pains !

But other change this heart hath felt,
On other change these eyes have dwelt,
A change that gives not back again
The arm its nerve, the eye its light,
As summer clothes the wintry plain
With robes of green and blossoms bright ;
'Tis holier in its fruits than these,
As many a soul this hour can tell,
Beating beneath yon aged trees,
Obedient to the Sabbath-bell.
Nay ! smile not so—I tell thee true ;

Fair is the coming of the spring,
With dewy leaves and skies of blue,
When the last rush of winter's wing
Is heard, departing for the pole,
Where crashing ice-bergs plunge and roll.
But sweeter, fairer far than this,
Deeper and holier in its bliss,
The moral spring-time that renews
The dead—the cold—benighted mind,
Making it young with heaven's own dews,
And shedding, like an odorous wind,
The balmy breath of richer flowers
Than bloom in this dark world of ours.

The snow-drop, bursting from the ground,
When all is bare and bleak around ;
The frozen brook, from silence long
Exulting into life and song ;
The first bright star that leaves the dark
To guide the sleepless sailor's bark ;
Faint emblems these—nor half express
The change—the life—the blessedness

Of that long, long-remembered hour,
When the first drop of heaven's bright shower,
When the first ray of heaven's pure light
Fell on the cold, chaotic night
Of this old breast, that envies not
The livelier pulse of younger days,
Ere faith had hallowed every spot,
Reared on each field a fane of praise,
And read, on every leaf and clod,
The Goodness and the Power of God.

Look on these fields—you ne'er would guess
There stretched a homeless wilderness :
There graze the herd—there bleat the flock,
Where lately frowned the herbless rock :
Yonder the pastoral homes of men,
Where the fierce panther sought his den,
Or fiercer chief, intent on war,
Bared the remorseless scimitar.
These streets, that echo to the tramp
Of hurrying feet—there breathed a swamp,
O'ergrown with noisome slime and weeds,

On which the loathsome reptile feeds :
That stately square, enriched by art,
Where Commerce holds her bustling mart,
There sprung, exultant, to the breeze,
The leafy limbs of aged trees ;
This arm, now powerless for the blow,
Laid the first forest-monarch low ;
The giant had for ages spread
Where yon tall chimney rears its head,
And pours unwonted clouds afar
Into the realms of beam and star.
Nature is made the slave of Art
By powers from Nature won,
As Spirits, some believe, impart
The spell they can't disown,
And raise, in one triumphant hour,
Human to superhuman power !

Where sounds that holy Sabbath-bell
Once different notes arose—
The Indian's wild and warlike yell,
Grappling with mortal foes ;

Or round the sacrificial pile

A dreary death-hymn singing,
While through the forest's leafy aisle

The dismal dirge went ringing,
Till it roused from its coils the basking snake,
And woke the elk from the tangled brake,
And shook the bat from the mossy bark,
Where, in a doze from dawn till dark,
Its leathern wings were clinging.

Stranger ! a happy change hath swept
O'er scenes where midnight error slept.
Wafted by heaven's propitious breeze
From a free country 'mid the seas,
A richer freight, fair bark ! is thine
Than ever gleamed in Indian mine :
Nor Ophir's gold—nor Persia's bloom,
Whose breath exhales in rare perfume—
Nor gems from Araby the blest—
Nor glistening pearls from ocean's breast—
Can match the richness of a dower,
That charms despair from sorrow's hour,

And darkness from the tomb—
That scatters o'er the bleakest wild
The roses that in Eden smiled,
Ere, cold and cutting, came the breath
From the envenomed lips of death.

Stranger! the 'Word' of love and might,
That called from gloom the glorious 'light ;'
This was the treasure wafted o'er
From a green Isle to our dark shore—
This the kind Power that came to bless,
With fountains clear, a wilderness—
To plant the 'fig and myrtle' mild
Where 'thorn and thistle' wantoned wild—
To hang in air the Sabbath-bell,
Whose voice falls, like a holy spell,
On all who water with a tear
Their path of toil and trouble here.

Oh! happy time! when countless isles
Shall warm beneath the blessed smiles
Of wisdom and of faith ;

When to the farthest peopled North

The stirring tidings shall go forth

Of Him who vanquished death !

When to the Indian's rude recess,

By nameless lake and wilderness,

And o'er the savage rocky mount,

And to Missouri's infant fount,

The voice of Truth shall swell the breeze

With tales of heavenly victories ;

Till forests clap their mighty hands,

And ransomed, renovated lands,

Shall hear, from every field and dell,

The summons of the Sabbath-bell !

Soon shall the narrow chamber close

O'er all my pleasures—all my woes ;

But I have lived with joy to hear

Words breathed from Heaven to nerve and cheer ;

Nor other boon could please so well

As a last sleep beneath the shade

By yonder aged fir-trees made ;

My dirge the Sabbath-bell ;

The dead man's history o'er my bier—
'Ye seek in vain—he rests not here !'

Stranger ! farewell ! I haste to share
God's mercy in the House of Prayer.

STRANGER.

Father ! right glad I'll go with thee—
In that green Isle far o'er the sea,
 Kind fortune bade me dwell.
In every glen and hamlet there
Rises the hallowed house of Prayer,
 Where peals the Sabbath-bell,
Calling the weary to the brink
Of that pure fount, where all may drink
New strength—new joy—to cheer and bless
'Mid Life's besetting wilderness.
That trial borne—that journey o'er,
Friends meet with friends, to part no more,
To celebrate, with Saints above,
A Sabbath of eternal love.

INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF PIZARRO.

‘Half-naked, and pining with famine, there were few in that little company who did not feel the spirit of enterprise quenched within them. A ray of hope was enough for the courageous spirit of Pizarro. Drawing his sword, he traced a line with it on the sand from east to west. Then turning towards the south, “Friends and Comrades,” he said, “on that side are toil, hunger, nakedness, the drenching storm, desertion, and death; on this side, ease and pleasure. There lies Peru, with its riches; here, Panama, and its poverty. Choose, each man, what best becomes a brave Castilian. For my part, I go south.” So saying, he stepped across the line. Fame has commemorated the names of the little band, who, in the face of difficulties unexampled in history, stood firm by their leader, as an example of loyalty to future ages.’—PRESOTT.

THEY stood upon a friendless shore,
That small, dejected Band;
The boiling breakers dashed before,
Behind them stretched the sand,
And a blood-red sun was glaring o’er
The wild, unsheltered strand.

K

Two shattered barks are resting there
On their seamed and leaky side ;
The comrades of that wave-worn pair
Lie deep beneath the tide ;
The flag of Spain no more they bear
In a blazoned roll of pride.

Each visage there with want is thin,
Complaint is in each eye,
And above the breakers' angry din
Rises the hopeless cry,
' What unforgiven and deadly sin
Hath brought us here to die ?

' Come ! let us from this howling shore,
And o'er that tossing foam,
With streaming sail and straining oar,
We'll seek our distant home ;
Our wives are weeping at the door,
And our children bid us come.'

Then one, their dark-eyed, swarthy Chief,
Sprang from the drooping band,

And, with a bitter taunt and brief,
 Stretched forth his mailed hand,
And drew a line, in rage and grief,
 With his sword upon the sand.

‘Look on that line,’ he fiercely cried,
 ‘Traced on the burning sand ;
Faint hearts ! upon the seaward side
 Lie home and native land ;
Landward there stretches far and wide
 That World I shall command !

‘Who sighs for home and friendly words,
 Put forth on that bleak sea ;
Who pants for gold, in glittering hoards,
 Arise ! and follow me !
For I swear by the Cross on our good swords
 Rich realms our own shall be !

‘The wilderness before us lies,
 The mountain bars our way,

And armed myriads will arise
To bind us, or to slay ;
But a World before us for a prize
May nerve us for the fray !

‘ Then forward ! gallant hearts ! with me—
High courage for our guide ;
Let all who fame and fortune flee
Turn homeward o’er the tide ;
Yonder my Home, or Grave, shall be !
Ho ! fling my pennon wide !’

Some left behind that desert strand,
And ploughed the stormy wave ;
Some found, amid the southern land,
A kingdom and a grave ;
No voice hath fame for the coward-band,
But history names the brave !

Wide are thy golden realms, Peru !
But wider rings the name

Of one to his own purpose true,
Pizarro—word of fame!
And yet 'tis well the world hath few
Who live by such a claim.

The waves have washed his mark of pride
From the bleak and houseless shore;
But o'er his realms from side to side
His name is writ in gore,
Nor Time, with his ever-rolling tide,
Shall brighten his memory more.

Wild are the hurricanes that sweep
Through the vallies of Peru,
And wild the torrent-streams that leap
From the mountain-summits blue;
But a wilder tempest crossed the deep
With Pizarro and his Crew;
That land seems yet to crouch and weep,
Stricken with terror through!

THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.

‘If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.’

’MID the hot desert, where the Pilgrim pines
For the cool shadow and the streamlet clear,
Seeking his weary way to Zion’s shrines,
A fountain murmurs comfort in his ear.

Stern winter seals not up that source of bliss,
The eastern sunbeam never drinks it dry ;
Fresh flowers and greenest grass its waters kiss,
And whispering palms defend it from the sky.

There men of every clime refreshment seek ;
All sins and sorrows meet securely there ;
These waves have kissed Remorse’s haggard cheek,
And smoothed the wrinkles on the brow of Care.

The lip of Passion there hath quenched its flame,
While pale Contrition sadly hung its head ;
That fount hath mirrored back the blush of Shame,
And washed the savage hand, with murder red !

Sinner ! for thee a purer fountain flows,
To soothe the sorrowful, to help the weak,
To wash the reddest crimes, like spotless snows
That gleam on Lebanon's untrodden peak.

Come ! men of every crime and every care ;
Behold the words upon that fountain's brink—
If any sigh in sin, to Me repair ;
Or thirst in sorrow, ' Come to Me and drink !'

The Word of God is that unfailing fount ;
Life is the desert where its waters flow ;
Drink ! if you hope to win the holy mount,
Where Zion's shrines in light eternal glow.

SUNSET AND SUNRISE.

Soon as his daily race is run,
In glory sinks the setting sun ;
But rises o'er some other land,
Bright as he left his Maker's hand.
So do I wish, life's journey o'er,
My soul to set, and yet to soar,
And bask, 'neath ever-glorious skies,
'Mid the green fields of Paradise.
As God appoints, then, let me run,
And thou shalt be my type, obedient sun !

DENMILN, OR THE LAST OF THE BALFOURS.

Denmiln Castle, situated between the banks of the Tay, near Newburgh, and the Lake of Lindores, was the ancient seat of the once powerful, but now extinct family of Balfour. One of this house, whose ashes rest in a burial place on the shores of the above-mentioned lake, is recorded by Sibbald to have led three hundred followers, all, or mostly, kinsmen, to the Palace of Falkland, to pay their homage to the reigning king. Sir James, the chief of the Balfours, is well known to the student of history as the author of the "Annals of Scotland." During the reigns of Charles I. and II. he held the office of "Lyon King-at-Arms." One of this house fell on Flodden Field; a second was slain in a duel with Makgill of Rankiellour, near Cross Macduff; a third founded the Surgeon's Hall, Edinburgh, and established the Botanic Gardens; and the last disappeared in the manner described in the following ballad. Conjecture supposed him to have gone over to the wars in the Low Countries; for although the whole district was diligently searched, in the supposition that he had come to an accidental death, no traces of the last of the Balfours were ever discovered.

In sorrow and in silence
I gaze on yonder pile,
Around whose mouldering battlements
The beams of evening smile;

For smile they ne'er so brightly,
 They never can restore
 The lustre of a noble Home
 Renowned in days of yore.

Denmiln ! upon thy battlements
 The bearded thistle waves ;
 Thy Halls with moss are carpeted,
 Thy sons are in their graves ;
 For one lies low on Flodden field,
 And one, on yonder hill,
 Poured out his life in sternest strife
 With the dark-browed Makgill.

And one, Lindores ! is sleeping
 On thy green, sequestered side,
 Calm contrast to his living day
 Of chivalry and pride,
 When three hundred gallant kinsmen,
 To Falkland's royal seat,
 He led to kneel, in tested steel,
 At the Scottish Monarch's feet.

And one has left his memory
Amid the pillared stone,
Where Science, robed in mercy,
Sits meekly on her throne,
Dispensing life to langour,
And pleasantness to pain,
And lighting up the pallid cheek
With hope's bright smiles again.

Or amid the sunny gardens,
That bloom along the steep,
Between Dun-Edin's ancient towers
And the never-resting deep,
When the odour-laden breezes
O'er the blossoms lightly skim,
Some heart, alive to beauty,
May gently muse of him.

The mind, that loveth olden days,
Will long delight to dwell,
Sir James! upon the storied page
Of thy quaint Chronicle,

Where, like a place of burial,
Amid the Past we tread,
And gather sober wisdom
From the legends of the dead.

Last of a fated family !
No marble marks thy grave.
Say ! dost thou sleep on field of war ?
Or 'neath the moaning wave ?
Or didst thou slowly, sadly fall,
By want's remorseless tooth,
Far from the sheltering walls of home,
The genial scenes of youth ?

Perchance the base assassin's steel
Laid low a loyal line ;
Perchance his bones gleam drearily
From some long-abandoned mine ;
But no kindred eye beheld him
From that morning, chill and grey,
When, mounted on his sable steed
He slowly rode away.

Yet, beside the peasant's hearth,
When the nights were long and cold,
And the blaze was bickering merrily,
I have often heard it told,
How, amid the wars of Flanders,
There rode a knightly form
On a steed as black as midnight,
And headlong as the storm !

His story and his lineage
Confided he to none.
His sword was ever flashing first
Where fearless deeds were done.
No dangers e'er could daunt him,
No praises e'er could cheer ;
He seemed to battle hard with Fate
For the favour of a bier !

One evening, when the sunset
Fell gloomily and red
On a cumbered field of carnage,
And on the gory dead,

The Stranger and his sable steed
Lay rigid on the heath ;
And whether crime or care were his—
The secret slept in death !

· FINIS.

MURRAY AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

A CATALOGUE OF NEW WORKS IN GENERAL LITERATURE,

PUBLISHED BY
MESSRS. LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
39, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

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