

# ACTOR—SOLDIER —POET—

By

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The Mirrored Heart, etc.*



Robert Henderson-Bland

## *Part Four - A Sheaf of Poems*

The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

SHAKESPEARE'S *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

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## A SHEAF OF POEMS

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### THE LAST BULLETIN

(Midnight at Buckingham Palace, January 20-21st, 1936)

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground  
And tell sad stories of the death of Kings.

SHAKESPEARE.

We knew his life was passing peacefully—  
The message on the little board told that !  
We waited still, with never hearts less free,  
For they were with the dreams our minds begat.  
Across the courtyard with slow steps there came  
A man who in his hand a paper limply held.  
His gloved hands fumbled the string and frame,  
And we looked on, and all impatience quelled.  
The fumbling hands spoke like a tolling bell—  
Yes, told in silence all there was to tell,  
And then a policeman read the message hanging there.

Now crownless, sceptreless, alone he lies,  
And yet he reigns as no King ever reigned.  
The grief I note about me is a sign  
That he has empery yet, and dies  
To live once more in hearts he haply gained  
With kind sincerity, and with Love's wine.

## THE LYING-IN-STATE

(Westminster Hall)

Here things majestic jostle eye, and mind—  
Lift the heart singing to another sphere :  
For History like flames about the bier  
Now breathes, and lives, and forges ties that bind.  
Now England speaks ! This is her hour !  
She has in Keeping  
A Monarch sleeping,  
And symbols of power.  
O England ! Patient, noble England !  
What of the dead ?  
He was the very front of her,  
And her inmost soul.  
Wherever Englishmen confer  
There is he set in the whole  
Grand scheme of things  
That beats with imponderous wings  
On the shores of the world.

THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR

(November 11th, 1920)

What mother's son is this that they bring here  
With such high honour that in all its ways  
A nation halts, and dreams of fateful days  
The while deep thoughts now beat about the bier?  
The son of every mother, far and near,  
Who lost a lad in war, and gently prays.  
This is the boy brought home—this hour repays!  
The mother comfort finds though falls the tear.

O bring him on with music—bring him on  
While we recapture for a little time  
The glory of the hours when first we flung  
Our banners high with hope the world upon.  
He speaks of bloody sweat in every clime,  
And strong love known the fighting men among.  
*(Set to music by Teresa del Riego. Printed in "The Graphic.")*

Field-Marshal THE VISCOUNT PLUMER,  
G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., etc.

IN MEMORIAM

IMMORTAL YPRES stirred in her lonely pride,  
    And marked the passing of a man whose fame  
    Is linked with hers, and with one other name.  
MESSINES stirred too, well knowing one had died  
Whose planning, and great leadership defied  
    The maw of dark Oblivion—made a claim  
    On suffrage of the world when as a flame  
At MAFEKING he took the lordly tide.

This not the day, or time to praise the man  
    Beloved of those who held in War the Gate,  
But I will praise him for the kindest part  
    Of his firm will, for little things that ran  
Through all his acts as fibres of his fate,  
And made him loved. He rests at England's heart.

*(An illuminated copy of this poem is in The British School, Ypres.)*

## THE MENIN ROAD, YPRES

In the woods of Inverness, Glencorse, Sanctuary, and Polygon much of the fiercest fighting of the war took place. It was in Inverness Copse on August 22nd, 1917, that the Germans made use of liquid fire.

O dolorous way ! Of all ways but one  
The holiest, most terrible, most fair  
For at your breast was seen the lovely stair  
When lordly men went out with night, or sun.  
Not Salamis—Thermopylæ have won  
The corridors of Fame so unaware  
As those grim woods that your flanks proudly bear.  
O Inverness ! O Glencorse ! Polygon !

Not Dante with his visions sombre, keen,  
Could have set down the horror of those nights  
When "Inverness" was lit with baleful flames  
That belched and roared from tubes like things obscene.  
Yes, there the tumbled fount whereat Hell's lights  
Saw glory of the spirit kindling aims.

*(Printed in "The Graphic.")*

## BROOM ON HILL 60

"Hill 60\* in 1914 was merely a low ridge some 250 feet high, and 250 yards from end to end, formed artificially when the railway cutting was dug. . . . Its military importance was due to its being the highest point in this area and consequently commanding views in every direction."

*The Battle Book of Ypres*

(Written after a visit to Hill 60—June 4th, 1933)

So bravely breaks the golden broom  
 Upon the hill again  
 That we can see in Nature's mood  
 An easement of all pain.

Ah! who could guess when standing here  
 That men in fury fought,  
 And held their wills, and gave their lives,  
 To hold a place long sought?

This little hill that any child  
 With careless, happy laughter  
 Could make in one long, gallant run,  
 Is left to fame hereafter.

Here late was mud, and long churned earth,  
 But also roots that bore  
 A flaming bush to victory  
 From out the insensate maw.

(Printed in "*The Ypres Times.*")

\* Several V.C.'s were awarded for Valour on this hill.

CAPTAIN M. A. JAMES, V.C., M.C.

“Though wounded, he refused to leave his company, and repulsed three onslaughts. He made a stand, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. Ordered to hold on to the last, he led his company forward in a local counter-attack, and was again wounded. He was last seen working a machine gun single-handed, after being thrice wounded.”

The Gloucesters wear badges back and front of the head-dress. The regiment has thirty-four battle honours.

*Captain James first learned that he had been awarded the coveted decoration the V.C., through receiving a copy of this poem from his mother when he was a prisoner of war in Germany. When the poem appeared in The Graphic it was presumed that Captain M. A. James was dead.*

Did your mind see, when you stood battling there,  
“The Old Braggs” back to back while Egypt’s sun  
So haply shone on deeds that nobly won  
Them fame, and that lone Emblem they now wear?  
Does not the earth of grim Givenchy bear  
The Gloucesters’ dead—remembering what was done  
In hours all dark with fate, till night begun,  
And West to East called: “These men do and dare?”

We know not whether death shut out your life,  
But this we know, that you have linked your name  
With England’s story—stirred with pride and strife  
The hearts of men who wear the badge you wore.  
An honour like “Corunna” shares its fame  
With such as you, and three and thirty more.

## THREE CHARIOTS

I drove three chariots into heaven  
    With horses three to every one ;  
And those nine furious horses knew  
    That I had found the sources of the sun.

I found them in your lustrous eyes ;  
    In your soft voice, and lovely smile ;  
Yes, in your hands I found them, dear,  
    And on your mouth was surely lost erewhile.

*(Set to music by Teresa del Riego.)*

LIFE AND DEATH

“ Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.”—PROVERBS v, 6.

A little blindness when 'tis needed most ;  
A little kindness in a troublous time ;  
A little waiting at a wayside post ;  
A little lie when truth were half a crime.

A little anger that we should have quelled ;  
A little bitterness that writes its tale ;  
A little word unsaid—too long withheld ;  
A little courage when we nearly fail.

A little meeting of the lips in love ;  
A little sorrow, and an hour to weep ;  
A little holding of the hands of friends ;  
“ A little folding of the hands to sleep.”

## POPE INNOCENT X

Written after seeing a portrait by Velasquez at the exhibition of the Spanish Old Masters at the Grafton Galleries, 1913.

Despite the written word that said of him  
That humbleness and holiness were free  
Of all the ways his heart and mind could see,  
The Holy Father sits revealed, and grim ;  
As if he dared the man who came to limn  
His features masterful to find a key  
That would unlock his soul's repository,  
And paint the truth that time may not bedim.

The crafty, cruel eyes, half pitiless,  
Gaze under brows that oft were wont to frown ;  
And close lips speak of words he could repress.  
The chin that helped him grasp the Triple Crown  
Gleams through the beard like buttress ivy-bound,  
And lends the face that look of strength profound.

*(Printed in "The Pall Mall Gazette," January 24th, 1914.)*

THE RAMPARTS CEMETERY (LILLE GATE) YPRES

(Night of June 4th, 1933)

Calm, and lovely is the night,  
And the graves are lovely too :  
The moon rides high as if it rode  
With deep intent to strew  
Its beams upon the water  
Where peace is born anew.

It is well with you, my brothers, it is well  
Sleeping in the shadows of this immortal place  
That saw your comrades pass, and pass again,  
And was the silent witness of their grace,  
And all their holy pain.

*(Printed in "The Ypres Times.")*

## TRISTRAM TO ISEULT

“ In the court of his uncle, King Marc, the King of Cornwall, who at this time resided at the Castle of Tyntagil, Tristram became expert in all knightly exercises. The King of Ireland, at Tristram’s solicitations, promised to bestow his daughter Iseult in marriage on King Marc. The mother of Iseult gave to her daughter’s confidante a philtre, or love-potion, to be administered on the night of her nuptials. Of this beverage Tristram and Iseult, on their voyage to Cornwall, unfortunately partook. Its influence during the remainder of their lives, regulated the affections and destiny of the lovers.” *History of Fiction.* DUNLOP.

## I

The sudden flame that stole into your face,  
 And lit your beauty even as a smile,  
 When my lips slowly sought the self-same place  
 Where you did consecrate this cup erewhile,  
 A herald was proclaiming Passion’s reign.  
 I drank the wine and knew the hopeless pain—  
 That bliss in Hell of loving where to love means shame.

## II

Your sweet lips quivered as lips will when stricken  
 By grief or joy not nameable, intense ;  
 And in your eyes I saw mists merge and thicken—  
 For passion pierced your body’s subtlest sense—  
 When to my outstretched arms you swayed as one  
 By sorrow smitten, or by joy undone,  
 And yielded up your lips and grievousness was not.

## III

With no light laugh your lips were yielded, dear,  
 ’Twas no light thing your un-kissed mouth to yield.  
 Your face uplifted spoke of perfect fear  
 When with closed eyes you learnt what love could  
 wield.

O perfect mouth ! is it less perfect now,  
Less worthy praise, because you did allow  
Stained lips to be where no small stain had ever been ?

## IV

I love you well, yet hate myself no less,  
For you are pledged to one who but for me  
Had wakened love through very worthiness.  
But your eyes speak of love's wild passionate plea,  
And now my soul has taken hold on shame  
And would forego the hard-won heights of fame  
For such an hour as this—for such a love as thine.

## V

Last night, love, when I kissed you in such wise  
That trembling, dear, and tame as any bird  
By winter tamed, within my arms a prize  
You hung, the while your spirit hovering heard  
The call of mine and flamed to its full height,  
I meant to go from out your face of light,  
But could not stir, mine such a piteous overthrow.

## VI

Since we must love we will love well, my dear,  
And fearful questioning we'll put to flight.  
God knows our sin is great—Ah, that's so clear :  
Clear as the dawn that drives the drowsy night.  
It may be through our sinning we shall know  
An ampler vision and our souls shall grow  
More perfect since they live in such abounding light.

## VII

Can we bind love ? Give it and take again ?  
Is it an evil thing because it falls  
Even as it has fallen on us twain ?  
To a man is it given when he calls  
Although he call the night through and the day ?  
Yes, though he call and with great fervour pray,  
Yet shall his calling be as beating of hurt wings.

## VIII

I strive to bind and smother love in vain  
 For of all things not one so hard as this ;  
 For love in bondage breeds such sickening pain  
 That life itself were given for a kiss.  
 Ah, what convulsive agonies have swept  
 Across my soul since you first smiled and wept  
 And found love fair, and worthy of acceptance, dear ?

## IX

Have I not ever been where honour is  
 And must I now walk in the ways of shame,  
 A bonds slave racked with amorous agonies  
 Yet still the challenge in my eyes the same ?  
 I once could trust my will in hours of need,  
 But now 'tis broken even as a reed  
 Smitten by heavy hail and worn by many winds.

## X

My Body and my Soul do find in you  
 Such absolute delight that I forget  
 To walk the long and narrow paths where through  
 Men grope their way to God and bear life's fret  
 However heavy and however low.  
 In spite of sin I see this great truth glow ;  
 Till principles are victors peace is never won.

## XI

Ah, dear, forgive those thoughtless words of mine,  
 Which never had been said had I but known  
 They were to drive the sudden bitter brine.  
 Nay, weep not ; let me with a kiss atone.  
 You dear, sweet woman, with a wondrous heart,  
 What is this soul of mine from you apart ?  
 A stricken, shuddering thing that flames not, neither strives.

## XII

Yes, then you are a torment and a flame  
That plays about the places of my mind ;  
And though in sleep I oft forget your name  
I surely wake to suffer and to bind  
Mad memories more closely round my brain  
And like a stricken thing that lives in pain,  
Apart from all once dear, I shudder in the gloom.

## XIII

Shake back your hair in that imperious way  
That I have learnt to love, and lean to me.  
Withhold your lips one moment while I play  
With this close curl that surely seems to be  
Curled closer since I kissed it overmuch.  
Lift up your throat, let torturing lips now touch ;  
O Love, now let your pulses quicken 'neath my kiss.

## XIV

Heart of my heart ! O this is love indeed,  
For you through all your giving take my soul  
Till it is lifted up, and haply freed  
Of things that burdened it beyond control.  
Yes, life puts on a greater glory now—  
Grief is no more ; and on your radiant brow  
I see the glory dawn wears when the night is done.

## PATRIOTISM AND REASON

“ I have already several times expressed the thought that the feeling of patriotism is in our day an unnatural, irrational and harmful feeling, and is the cause of a great part of the ills from which mankind is suffering.”—TOLSTOY.

“ Hobbes, like all other speculative politicians, does not allow for the perplexing irrationality of human kind. As long as the hearts of men are thrilled by the sound of their national hymn and the sight of their national flag, there is little use in asking them to listen to reason.”  
—*The Times Literary Supplement*, August 19th, 1904.

Must we forbid our hearts to thrill and flame,  
 When seen our flag flung proudly on the wind ?  
 Must we deny warm tribute to a name,  
 And hold none dear lest thoughtless love should blind ?  
     What sorrier hour and day,  
     O, what more hapless morn  
 Divides of night the sway,  
     Than that when we forlorn  
 Forget the names—forget the aims,  
     Remember shames  
 By men like Nelson borne ?

O, surely God can think it no bad thing  
 For men to love the land that first bestowed  
 A title proud as any time can bring.  
 What antique ancestry heaps prouder load !  
     Come out from the sad face  
     Of him who holds it dark  
 To love the dear birthplace  
     Of linnet and of lark.  
 O come away ; make no delay  
     Lest you betray  
 Fair Freedom's Hierarch.

Exult, O England! Isle of rare renown,  
Of freedom loved and lordly punitive;  
All high endeavour finds in thee its crown,  
And of thy sons, though lone and fugitive,  
Must you the first love be,  
For gods men are not yet,  
But liker children free  
Who love with no regret.  
If love did live with reason, it soon would pass  
to treason,  
As season succeeds season,  
And soon would all forget.

Is it to you as nothing that you bear  
An English name, and with that name a debt  
That should be paid if manhood you hold fair?  
Come, give some duty for the good you get.  
Will you let England halt  
While other nations press  
Because you won't exalt  
Your eyes of weariness?  
She has not done, she will not shun  
The task begun,  
And she needs you to help her to success.

O, why do we not look back on earlier days,  
As we look back upon an old man's prime?  
Think not that England walked in fairer ways  
In years agone than these where now we climb.  
Come, let us be strong,  
And go forth on our quest,  
With gladness and with song,  
With joy made manifest:  
For England is yet young, and nations proud  
among  
She lives the light, and tongue  
Of Freedom in her splendour and unrest.

## WHEN ONE LOVE BURNT ALONE

My heart is heavy with remembrance, dear,  
Even as eyes that ache with tears unshed :  
For though your message came as comes all fear,  
Unknown, unbidden, and to silence wed,  
It woke the old wild longing once again.  
It was not kind to wake the half-dead pain  
That slumbered as a thing that sleeping might have died.

Ever between my soul and peace you stand,  
And never may I know a small content.  
Yes, though an Angel stooped to take my hand  
I would not go unless your life were spent :  
Then only that I might sooner see your face.  
In other loves I only find disgrace  
For memories of you kill all desire like shame.

What is this life that God has given us ?  
A little joy well heaped about with pain.  
Desire that leads to paths so perilous  
And stirs the pulses of the blood and brain,  
Breeding the bitterness of longing sore,  
But makes men as the brutes are with their store  
Of meaner wants, but happier they, not knowing shame.

Though I am sad remembering good things lost—  
’Twas good to know your kiss my hair among  
The while your whispers owned the passionate cost,  
And later, on my lips your kiss that stung  
For all the sweetness of your mouth was mine,  
And overmuch, soon conquered like good wine—  
It is some joy to know that you cannot forget.

Yes, there are many women known to me,  
Worthier the wilful worship given you,  
Though lavish with your love and liberty ;  
Yet what can love of woman ever do  
That you at any time did leave undone ?  
O what of all the things that Love has won  
Did you not soon unfold and lay down at my feet ?

We crowded half our lives into the days  
When first you lit with splendour all my soul,  
And wandering led me through love's wondrous ways ;  
Where one grows faint and flings aside control ;  
Where passion puts on purple and is proud ;  
Where lesser loves are wrapped as in a shroud,  
And all cast out and claim no place in memory.

I gave you kisses, and I woke in you  
The smouldering sparks of paramount desire,  
For beauty such as yours must soon subdue  
Questioning souls however they aspire.  
Your hair was spread like corn beneath the flail ;  
Your lips in silence surely did prevail ;  
Your soul was given even as your body was.

I do not call on God now you are gone,  
Yet strive to make my soul a cleaner thing,  
Albeit knowing I am overborne  
With memories that sadden me and sting.  
You've taught my soul with all your free fair giving  
That here it may not know a lordlier living  
Than that of bygone days when one love burnt alone.

## TO RALPH WALDO EMERSON

“To do, to discover, to teach, these three things are all labour, all good, and all necessary.”—AMIEL'S *Journal Intime*.

I come to thee for wisdom and for peace—  
 To thee whose words and ways were more than good.  
 What worthier record of a body's lease  
 Has any men left to his brotherhood?  
 I fain would walk thy ways, be pure as thou,  
 Be without blame and wear thy radiant brow,  
 But paths by thee once trod not trodden overmuch.

O pure and splendid spirit without stain,  
 Thy fearless faith did fill thy spirit's cup,  
 And all thy life thou didst so well maintain  
 High hopes and strength for steadfast reaching up  
 That Heaven itself not loftier than thy soul,  
 Over which God alone had full control,  
 Though Hell not any lower than thy humbleness.

Yea, thou didst choose thy path in no light mood  
 As many choose but soon deny their choice  
 When trials fall to prove the magnitude  
 Of souls that sing but with no certain voice.  
 Thou didst submit thy free-born soul to God,  
 And railed not 'gainst thy lot or chastening rod  
 But went thy way with heart well set on all things high.

Surely thy soul through sinning overmuch  
 Was purged of passion in some other times?  
 In earlier days an Emperor who did touch  
 The lips of half-forgotten joys and crimes,  
 And lost his freedom for a thousand years  
 But slaked desire—yea, drowned desire with tears,  
 And from those sodden ashes rose a purer soul.

HÉLOÏSE TO ABÉLARD

“In age we’ll sigh  
O’er the wild reckless wicked days flown over.”—BROWNING.

I

Yes, I must long remember,  
And you can’t soon forget  
For still some dying ember  
Must flame and flicker yet.

II

Yes, flame and fiercely burn  
As memories burn in me  
When I so madly yearn  
For joys that cannot be.

III

What tears in grievous plight  
That fall adown a face  
Can half so gently smite  
As your lips yielding grace?

IV

What are my lips to thee,  
And what to thee are mine,  
That meeting they should be  
As draughts of rarest wine?

V

I cannot tell thee this ;  
I do not care to see ;  
Enough to know thy kiss—  
To know the sweets of thee.

## VI

O what would I not give,  
O what would I not do,  
Those hours again to live  
When known the sweets of you.

## VII

You feel my hair about your face,  
The pressure of your hands I feel ;  
You steal my soul through your embrace,  
Another kiss I gently steal.

## VIII

Ah, God ! what memories rise in me  
That I would purge and have renewed.  
Dear Christ ! I cast myself on Thee  
A soul all whelmed, disgraced, subdued.

THE CALL OF THE SEA

“ I send my heart up to thee, all my heart  
In this my singing.”

BROWNING.

The sea calls as a thing that is  
All one with pain and loss,  
And mourns and moans for ecstasies  
That sweep the soul across.  
The sea hides not its wild unrest  
And I will not hide mine.  
Many a wave with wilful crest  
A rebel must repine.  
I see them surge—I see them merge  
As half returning they entice  
The pebbles that must mark the verge  
Where seen the solemn sacrifice  
Of Nature with her chastening scourge  
By day and by night.

The sea sighs as a weary soul  
That never may attain  
The fair ideal that saints extol  
And urge all men to gain.  
The sea has never any shame  
It flings to Heaven its laughter  
And what on earth its wrath can tame  
When waves come tumbling after ?

In my ears the noise of a maddened sea,  
And on my face the rain,  
But never I think was my heart less free—  
My heart less free from pain,  
Than it is to-night, in the pale moon's light  
With Nature raging round me ;

For though I know the tide must flow  
And the tide must ebb again,  
I know that we can never be  
As one now we are twain.

I did not know—I could not guess  
What your going meant to me,  
But now I know that not more wild  
The calling of the sea,  
Than the longing, and the calling  
Of this my soul for thee.

## LINES WRITTEN AFTER A VISIT TO ST. HELENA

## I

This rock from out the Ocean rises sheer,  
And at its base no waves on sands make game.  
A jealous, blue, untroubled sea shews clear,  
And hugs this monument of England's shame  
Which man may never cancel—no, nor hide.  
I looked on St. Helena with no pride  
Remembering how Napoleon lived and suffered there.

## II

Yea, on the very forehead of our fame  
We wear this one brand that must burn always  
Because we quite forgot our ancient aim,  
And, paltering, let fear prompt us to betray  
Our noblest foe, who thought our record such  
That fallen men might trust us overmuch ;  
So gave himself as one might give in highest faith.

## III

Big fools belittle, lesser fools decry ;  
Yet glory surely gathers round that name,  
As men once gathered round those Eagles high  
Which he led on to conquest and to fame.  
If those should rule who are distinguished well  
By high degrees of spirit—who can quell  
Temptation by strong will, then such as he should rule.

## IV

No small ambition urged him—'twas his hope  
'Mong nations free to stand as arbiter.  
France ! What was France when he began to cope  
With all the fell disorder ravaging her ?  
The Gadarene swine were not more blind,  
Nor yet possessed of devils of worse kind  
Than thou, O France, before Napoleon came to curb.

v

He set his heart on glory when a boy,  
And saw no other star so worthy love ;  
And though his soul was not without alloy  
'Twas strong, and great so many souls above.  
Not pious, no—with work like his to do  
How could he be ? Had he on Plutarch's view  
Burst as he did on Europe's, other pages were.

LOVE DISPOSSESSED

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

KEATS.

I have done with thee, Love, and thy ways ;  
I have done with thy pleasures and pains :  
Yea, my brows have been crowned with thy bays,  
And my lips have grown red from thy stains.

Although many the paths that are better,  
There are none that are fairer, I ween ;  
For though love be but worn like a fetter  
It is sweeter than all that has been.

Though I turn from the joys that you render  
To all lovers who kneel at thy shrine,  
I am sad, and I grieve and grow tender  
When I think of those lovers of mine.

Ah, the numbers who never have known  
All the griefs and the glories of love  
Will they long for love's languors alone,  
When they move in a Heaven above ?

If our deeds are as holy as Heaven  
When our thoughts are but darker than Hell,  
Can they serve any soul as a leaven ?  
Can they make or unmake and impel ?

## NO FEAR OF DEATH

A protest against Mr. George Meredith's statement that the fear of death is the real cause of the objection to conscription in this country.

Yes, proud with all a lover's princely pride  
     To feel myself allied  
 To England's heritage of glorious fame—  
     Bearing an English name,  
 I blushed to hear one wrong our wilful blood  
     That late was poured in flood,  
 Where now, in many a place, grows greener grass  
     On kopje and in pass ;  
 The earth well knowing what is rare and good,  
     Repays, as all men should.  
 Not that our courage fails, that cannot be.  
     Death must have smiled to see  
 The hopeless, helpless, fearless groping hands  
     That sought to tear the bands  
 From off his eyes so eager some to die,  
     Feeling dishonour nigh.

England may yield for sons some stubborn fools,  
     Yet still the old race rules.  
 Albeit liking not compulsive sway,  
     As in an earlier day,  
 They liked not Papacy and held it dark,  
     And no good thing to mark  
 The height of English thought ; yet would they serve,  
     With blood and brain, and nerve  
 If England needed them to head the fight ;  
     With death forgotten quite,  
 As the shame of a maid is forgotten when Motherhood  
     Flames into sight.

WASTED HOURS

It is easy enough to be great  
When the noble are by us to cheer  
But what of the soul and its fate  
If the base and the little but sneer ?  
We give them a smile for their sneering ;  
No courage to show them our scorn,  
But we pay overmuch for our fearing  
With the shame that is ours with the morn.

Is there time, is there room, for our souls  
To enlarge, to enrich, and enshield  
If a longing for small things controls  
And subverts, and subjects till they yield ?  
O, what of the barriers we build  
Our souls and all full life atween  
When we cheat ourselves thinking them filled ;  
They being empty and no more clean.

There is shame at our hearts ever burning,  
As love burns at the heart of a maid,  
Because of the steps we are turning  
Into paths where our pleasures are laid.  
“ From the places of folly come out ”  
Is the cry of our souls in despair  
But in hearing we heed not or doubt  
For the canker has come unaware.

## PEACE AND PASSION

“ O pale, my lady, and were you death,  
Kissing away the soul's own breath,  
I would follow, for all cold Reason saith  
Even where Ruin raveneth ! ”

RODEN NOEL.

Thy beauty well might hold a saint in fee,  
For though he saw the devil in thine eyes,  
To him more sweet than glimpse of paradise,  
The tale told there of passion's princely plea.  
My soul cries out on peace, and yet to thee  
I yield like one not strong or otherwise  
And hug the hopes, that now reluctant rise,  
That peace may come where peace can never be.

Yea, for a little time I will forget  
The self-contempt implanting bitter scorn.  
Though now I don't relent or seek relief,  
And do not now remember or regret,  
I know full well that many thoughts unborn  
Will give me up to shame and hours of grief.

TO KEATS

(Written after reading the Poet's Letters.)

“ His own estimate must be measure enough, his own praise reward enough for him.”—EMERSON.

You deemed the earth more fair in earlier days  
And gave us glimpses of the gods of Greece  
Who in our tongue, of life took longer lease,  
So magical your pen with word and phrase.  
Ah! happier you not walking in the ways  
Of such events as shamed on earth all peace;  
Content to know that Beauty cannot cease  
But is for ever—ever in Man's gaze.

Your letters all a nobler spirit breathe  
Than do your poems, splendid though they be,  
And quite disprove the stories some did wreath  
About the breaking of your poet-heart.  
Your soul too strong, too glorious and free  
To let abuse a fatal sting impart.

## THE QUEST OF BEAUTY

This quest of Beauty breeds such bitter dole,  
And ends in places peace can never grace,  
For though we find in some fair lady's face  
The glory that must stir the inmost soul,  
And our hearts burn with longing to extol  
The beauty seen, what profits such a case?  
Ah, what is passionate love if we outpace  
Our chosen one when toiling to the goal?

The gracious tenderness of women is  
So very sweet—ah, well I know how sweet—  
But yet there are some nobler agonies  
Than love's, I ween, that earnest souls must greet.  
Go forth to fight and let thy will be strong,  
And thou shalt win the place where peace reigns long.

DESPAIR

“Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise  
(That last infirmity of noble mind)  
To scorn delights and live laborious days.”

MILTON, “*Lycidas*.”

Lips invoke and souls aspire alway.

When musing on the greatness toil hath won  
Those minds whose deeds illumine, while ages run,  
Fame’s pinnacle, at thy lone heart there lay  
Great hopelessness, and night through and the day  
Wild, dolesome voices cry :—“Thou art undone !  
Thou canst not gaze on such a blinding sun ;  
Nor climb to summits so remote, so grey.”

Then humbly raise thy head and answer make :—

“This mind infirm, and feebler will, decree,  
Too well, that I may never hope to slake  
My thirst for fame ; yet shall my life e’er be  
Changeless endeavour this weak soul to wake  
Deserving proved the chrism of victory.”



The Death of Chatterton - painting by Henry Wallis

CHATTERTON ON DETERMINING TO COMMIT  
SUICIDE

Once more with rage in my heart I'm thrown  
Back on myself alone :  
So to thy kingdom, O death ! with unbowed head,  
With no wild prayer late said,  
I come unfalteringly, fearless, unafraid  
Like one who having paid  
A heavy price for his peace takes with no thanks.

Thou should'st be glad and delight that one so young  
Should come thy world among ;  
One who has striven to make his soul a thing  
Clean as a dove's white wing—  
Attuned to beauty and truth and all things fair ;

Grown tired of seeing so many little souls  
Creep where thy breath controls—  
Grown tired of finding so many dark and foul,  
Of hearing numbers howl ;  
It must be better to see one walk as I  
Now walk with head full high,  
With scorn unsmothered at heart and eyes aflame.

Here is an end to my singing and my pain ;  
An end to my short reign.

TRIAL

“When life ceases to be a promise, it does not cease to be a task ;  
its true name even is Trial.”—AMIEL'S *Journal Intime*.

Ah, never on earth as the gods are we,  
Content and simply glad to be ;  
For turbulent blood is a thing that throws  
The spirit back howe'er it glows.

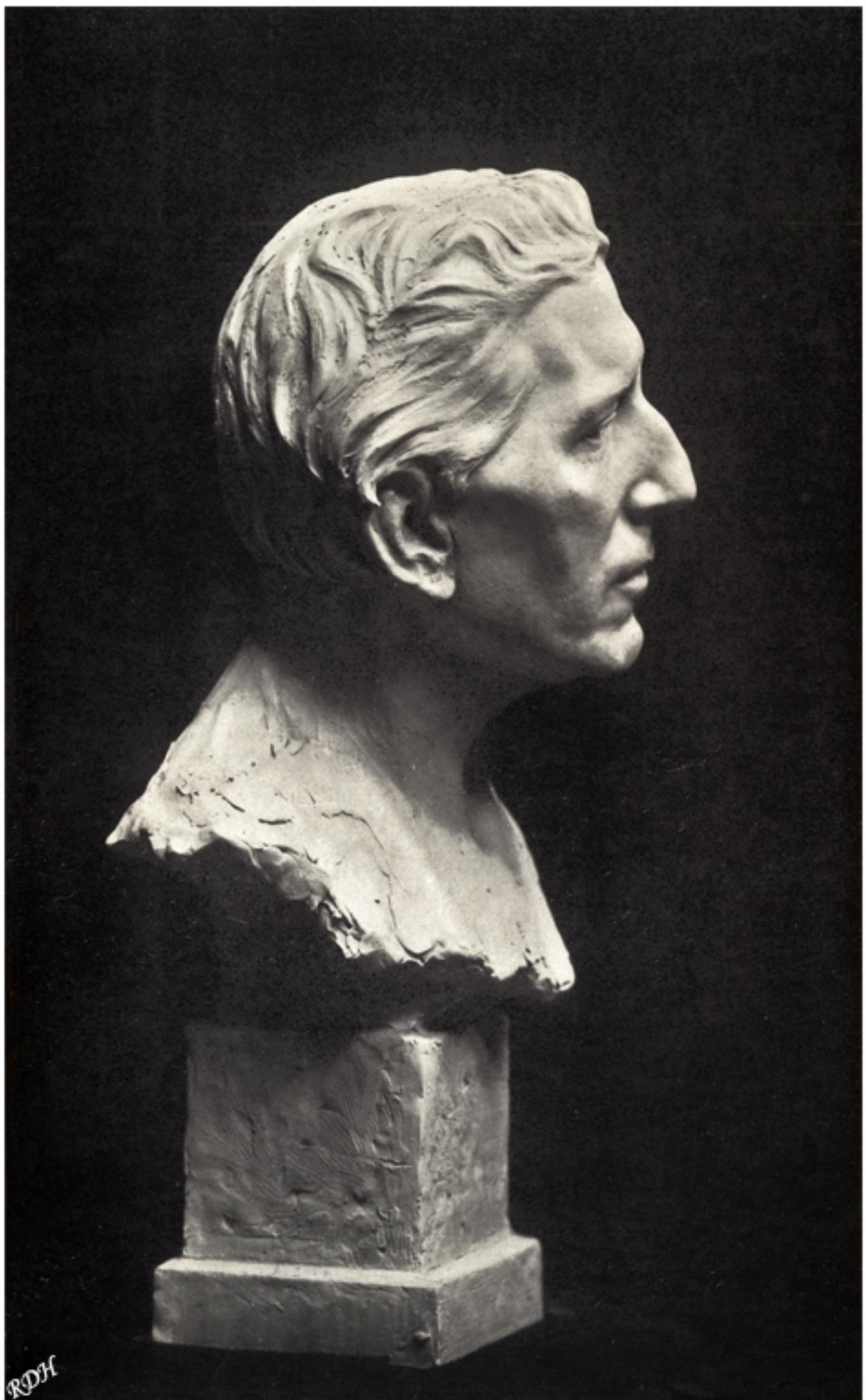
Ah, seldom a sin but its source was seen  
Where wilful blood was working teen ;  
But what were a man if all passionless ?  
And what were life without stress ?

Ah, never a sorrow but hidden there  
A seed that grows through all despair ;  
For what were the night if it never gave  
Promise of dawn and light we crave ?

Though many the spirits who find this world  
A place where Hope's fair flag is furled,  
And empty of joys or the chance of one,  
There still remains a task undone.

Ah, seldom was faith e'er so justified  
As 'tis to-day by turning tide  
Of science, that having a hold on truth  
Will see the world renew its youth.

Though ever this world an imperfect place,  
A training ground for a godlike race,  
The ultimate triumph of spirit is  
Certain as Death's dread energies.



Henderson-Bland  
Portrait Bust by Albert Toft, F.R.B.S. Exhibited Royal Academy

## A CHOICE

Alfred de Musset to George Sand after she had left him and was living in Venice with Pietro Pagello.

So you've chosen a fool for your lover, dear—  
You with a soul of flame.  
Have you made him a man with your godlike cheer  
That conquers more than shame?

Can a fool like your lover rejoice to greet  
The strength of your desire?  
Ah, your heart must now beat as a bird may beat  
'Gainst little bars of wire.

When our spirits once flamed at a festival  
Of love that held high place,  
Ah, we knew that our joy was the best of all  
The joys in life's keen race.

There was never a kiss that you gave me, dear,  
I did not own full sweet;  
And you never could sigh but my heart would hear—  
My soul you could not cheat.

TWO BURDENS

If you must love, love well ;  
    Love one and love no other :  
Though you take hold on Hell  
    Great love you will not smother.  
Ah, love is no light thing  
    To treat with some light laughter.  
The best the soul can bring ;  
    The best of all things good ;  
The best that comes hereafter  
    In gleams of gratitude  
Take up, lay down and leave  
    At love's fair long-kissed feet :  
Rejoice, and later grieve,  
    But own your burden sweet.

If you of love grown tired—  
    Grown tired of griefs and stings  
From joys fulfilled, desired,  
    Set thoughts on higher things ;  
Know that your freedom lies  
    Down ways not wide but long  
Where with exalted eyes  
    Many have gone alone  
In darkness with no song  
    Though heard life's undertone.  
If shorn of strength by sorrow  
    And hopeless is your mood  
Sleep well and rise to-morrow,  
    And own your burden good.

## TOO LATE—A SONG

“ We said that hope was dead  
 So many years ago ;  
 We planned to make her bed  
 Where all the sweet flowers blow,  
 To lay her quiet head  
 Where the long grasses grow.”  
 PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

## I

I lay my songs where long hath lain  
 My heart with more than music filled.  
 I give them with no thought of gain,  
 For all my hopes were long since killed.

## II

This gift the last I give to thee,  
 None other have I left to give,  
 And though my songs unworthy be  
 O let them in thy memory live.

## III

O love, dear love, if these my songs  
 Could stir the pulses of thy heart,  
 The wasted hours that grief prolongs  
 Should nevermore fulfil a part.

## IV

If only I had sooner come,  
 Had you been free to hear me plead,  
 It may be you had not been dumb  
 When ardent love did intercede.

V

O long, too long, though lost to me,  
    Must this my heart remember, dear.  
O soon, too soon, forgot by thee  
    My little songs you will not hear.

VI

Ah, nevermore shall I be glad  
    As I was glad ere meeting thee ;  
But evermore a little sad  
    Though gentler grief must fall on me.

VII

I grieve no more, for grief to me  
    Brings memories of other wrongs ;  
I care not if you smile or be  
    A little glad to hear my songs.

VIII

I lay them as a crown is laid  
    With reverence in splendid state—  
Down at thy feet, amid the slain,  
    Where lies my heart that came too late.

## LOVE AND PASSION

“Loving is feeling the delight of another in one’s self ; but feeling one’s own delight in another, and not that other’s delight is one’s self, is not loving.”—SWEDENBORG.

Although I would not tell you this,  
To me as nothing is your kiss :  
Your lips so red, your lustrous eyes  
Have smiled and told too many lies.

Though Beauty be a thing of might  
It cannot blind the soul’s strong sight ;  
I do not think that love can do  
The miracle of moving you.

Ah yes, desire in flames may leap  
And even urge your eyes to weep,  
But never may you know the joy  
Of feeling love without alloy.

Come, take your lips from off my mouth ;  
My soul grows faint beneath such drouth :  
I should become a thing like you  
If once your kisses overthrew.

## TO —

Yea, grief consumes the very heart of me,  
    And I am stricken, love, with longing sore ;  
While these my lips that I have kept for thee  
    So wildly now their barrenness deplore.  
Though they are barren of the swift, sure bliss  
They knew when flaming redder 'neath thy kiss  
They cannot all forget the kingdom they have known.

Thy beauty is a thing that stabs and burns.  
    Thy mouth so sweet that bitterness grows there,  
For thy kiss smites the sense until it yearns ;  
    And, O, thy hair, the fragrance of thy hair !  
Ah, that is crueller than all things cruel  
That have for guerdon love, and sighs for fuel,  
For I should stir though dead if on my face it fell.

Thy hands too through their shapeliness have held  
    Dominion in the regions of delight ;  
And madly strained in mine have oft impelled  
    My blood to quicken to one pulse of might,  
When my lips lay upon thee for a sign  
That granted us the Chalice and the Wine  
Of passion passing fair, and lordlier far than death.

Thine Eyes ! how can I celebrate thine Eyes ?  
    Two lamps before the ark of Beauty set  
To lighten ways of them that solemnise.  
    I would not have them that they might forget  
In such a sanctuary such love as mine,  
And be for ever glories in that shrine  
While I in outer courts might wildly call in vain.

Dear, I have thought that we might make of life  
    Something less puny than the lives we see  
Lived round us here, so hedged in from all strife  
    That Souls on lease now for Eternity  
Have little room to grow in and be strong.  
I would not have thee saintly overlong,  
But large in all thy thinking, and in feeling too.

HAVE THEY SPOILT YOU SO?

Ah, little lady, have they spoilt you so,  
Those laughing lovers who once found you fair?  
Too gentle, and too delicate to know  
The grossness and the baseness some men wear.  
Though nevermore your beauty shall delight,  
A fairer thing you are in my soul's sight  
Knowing all bitterness yet not all bitter grown.

What kinder thing than death could visit you  
Of all the things now left your soul to know?  
It having been such foul and dark ways through  
Calm death would come in beauty with no throe.  
To those who suffer grievous loss, and pain,  
And bow beneath the burden on them lain,  
What fairer and more dear than death that comes like sleep?

## A MEETING

“ ‘ Now kiss me, dear ! it may be now,’ she said.”

GEORGE MEREDITH.

I stood once more in your dear room alone  
 The while a mist of memories did mount ;  
 And well I knew your presence would atone  
 For days that grew quite grievous past all count.  
 O Love, so glad I was to feel you near,  
 And so uncertain how to greet you, dear,  
 That on the stillness heard the throbbing of my heart.

You came to me as one less loved might come,  
 And took my hand as you a friend's might take.  
 I saw no sign, and you, dear, being dumb,  
 I heard no word, that might keep Hope awake.  
 I stood in silence, speechless, and afraid  
 Of something nameless that the hours had made ;  
 Then late you lifted up your face and lips to me.

I saw your eyes with transient tears were wet,  
 And when my lips were lowly laid on thine  
 I heard you say, “ O, love, can I forget ? ”  
 And then I knew that still your soul was mine.  
 There was no need for other words to fall,  
 It was enough your brain could still recall  
 The memories that stung me, thinking your love dead.

Not any word of bitter blame did mar  
 The precious passion prized that on me fell  
 Knowing your kisses, which of kisses are  
 As surely sweet as any that excel.  
 A kingly kindness met the queenly quest  
 Of lips that lifted me where love is best.  
 And all too soon your hands did push our faces free.

Through all the days that were so grey for me  
Your face did loom a lamp to my lone heart,  
As lights may gleam upon a moonless sea  
Quite careless of the comfort they impart.  
It was my joy to feel that no slight stain  
From lips I might have sought to ease my pain,  
Had marred the mouth where you your kisses lately shed.

O Love, my soul to you allegiant turns  
Like some fair sleeper turning in her sleep,  
Who sighs, and smiles, through dearest dream that burns  
And wakes to pain and saddest eyes that weep.  
I could not step from out the paths of you  
With half the ease that many others do,  
But worship worthily by walking in your ways.

Of all the peace that is, what peace I say,  
Can ever be for love like yours and mine?  
For passion inconclusive as a day  
That never sees the sun in splendour shine?  
The bounteous boon of beauty which you wield  
When yielded up, for you your youth must yield,  
Shall live in memories that rob me of all peace.

The days dividing us, and nights too long,  
But yield the empty pleasance born of dreaming,  
And this my heart so passionate, and strong,  
'Gainst barriers beats a rebel unbeseeming.  
What happier hour than when we met again,  
When joy did pass the very verge of pain,  
Of all the hours that are, have been, and are to be?

## A PARTING

“The bitter pain of rent and ended love.”—WILLIAM MORRIS.

We have no more to learn of love, my dear.  
 Not these our feet a greater height to climb.  
 We shall degrade the perfect passion clear  
 That your calm eyes reveal, with gaze sublime,  
 If we now set the currents of our blood  
 To such abandonment that may make flood  
 Where we have hidden pride in thought, and strong control.

Come, let us now put on a large content  
 And ask of Life no greater gift than this :  
 A love to teach desire to quite relent ;  
 A love that surer grows beneath each kiss.  
 I hate and love the passion stirring me,  
 Which leads me where my soul would never be  
 Unless 'twas urged by tumults of a deep desire.

What though we be of all sad souls most sad,  
 This night which is the saddest of sad nights,  
 Yet will we now in striving to seem glad  
 Rebellion quell ere he achieve his rites ;  
 It may not be ; I cannot be content.  
 Great griefs are here, and memories augment  
 The baneful burden heaped on us through hour, and day.

O, Mighty God ! tell me why these things be.  
 Why this fair woman finding me quite fair  
 Should have made pain the joy she has in me.  
 Does she not now enough of sorrow bear  
 Though bitten by all bitter griefs that throng ?  
 Her soul is steadfast, and her love is strong,  
 And she has ever been in ways where Beauty is.

Why did we meet when surely seen of Thee  
The love that was to grow in earnest eyes ?

Why meet again if meeting we should see  
The consummation of a fond surmise ?

A prating priest would talk of trials sent  
To chasten us, and bid us be content  
To love and part, when all her beauty sorely burns.

Well then we part, and find it bitter pain,  
But not through Thee, O God ! Who seeing all  
Hast seen her tears that fell like sudden rain,  
And will see many tears that are to fall.

We part because we love no life of lies ;  
And not that these our souls are otherwise.  
In loving her, and leaving her, I love Thee less.

## TRUTH

“All conviction, were it never so excellent, is useless till it convert itself into conduct.”—CARLYLE.

To languish here, amorphous, with spirit bare  
Of hope in grand mutations that disclose  
High promise, soon intolerable grows :  
And welters then the soul through mists of care.  
My feet in ways uncertain straying were  
And life's foul lamps forbade my soul repose  
When heights among, in splendour, late uprose  
A star : then passed the solstice of despair.

O Truth ! a suppliant, at thy lone shrine  
I fling me down and worshipping forget  
All littleness in life. Should doubt beset,  
With shades immensurate, this soul of mine,  
Hide not thy beams but let them ever be  
Where Sorrow surges in obscurity.

TO GRAY

Written after a visit to the Churchyard at Stoke Poges where Gray wrote his immortal Elegy.

“The paths of glory lead but to the Grave.”—GRAY.

Could I but sing one splendid sudden song  
To match the glory of the verse you made  
In that Churchyard beneath the yew tree's shade  
What were my joy? and what were pain or wrong?  
Yea! thou art one of that immortal throng  
Whose words make echo down the deep'ning glade  
Of Time where Worth, relentlessly assayed,  
Lifts up his head and sighs not overlong.

Indeed I wonder not that thoughts did press  
About thy brain and urge thy hand to write  
Whilst sitting there in such a solemn scene  
Where Beauty pours her chrism upon distress:  
A place of graves so fair in Death's despite.  
Why marvel knowing where thy steps have been?

## A SERVANT OF SHAME

“It is the cry of women, my good lord.”—MACBETH.

Sparks from a shaken brand must fail though freed,  
And pass to failure sputtering in the night,  
Like these my tears and words that may invite  
No better doom, for who will hear or heed  
Servants of Shame bound by the body's need?  
I tell thee, man, you reach the very height  
Of shame, by giving gold to buy delight  
From ministers whose wretched hearts but bleed.

Take up your gold and go to augment shames  
On lips and faces that will smile to hide  
The shaking shudders wasting passive frames.  
Back to your wife whose faith you now deride,  
And with a kiss her mouth but gently gain—  
Still sweet thy lips to her despite their stain.

TO SHELLEY

“ Hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.”  
PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

What stricken lute could yield a note so sweet  
As sung of thee? What mind had fairer dreams?  
Thine was the pain of yearning for extremes  
In Beauty and in Truth. How thou didst beat  
About the unapparent ways with heat  
And eager questionings, and yet no gleams  
Of truth could save thee from the touch and screams  
Of misery where fools and wise must meet.

With wild exultance, and with grief thy days  
Were passed, in scorn for confines of a creed:  
Yet thou didst deem the spirit's noblest need  
A hope to pierce with thought, in wide surveys,  
The veil of things unknown. Surely the Spring  
Were fairer now if thou wert here to sing?

## TO —

“ Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down  
 Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,  
 Or they dead leaves ; since her delight is flown,  
 For whom should she have waked the sullen year ? ”  
 “ Adonais.” SHELLEY.

If all thy love could be but mine alway—  
 Thy smiles and tears might be but mine alone,  
 Then were my life most splendid to atone  
 For littleness that bound my common day  
 Before my soul had made this last survey.  
 Yet what am I to thee that any moan  
 From lips of mine should reach thy sun-girt throne—  
 Should help thy thought to pierce where woe is grey ?

We may not smother sorrow by increase  
 Of pain, nor waken Love when he would sleep ;  
 But if we find 'tis some relief to weep  
 Then wherefore charge the wilful tears to cease ?  
 Suffer their streams upon the salt wet ways,  
 And they shall fall like falling hours, and days.

THE UTTERANCE THAT FEEDS DESPAIR

“When a fair face and tender voice had made me mad and blind.”  
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

How can I gaze upon thy beauty rare  
And well conceal the love mine eyes confess?  
The passion curb that prompts the wild caress?  
Or still the utterance that feeds despair?  
Too young my heart, too warm its blood to wear  
Thine image, and prove cold and passionless.  
Forget—forgive that hour of fond distress,  
When lip on lip was folded—souls laid bare.

What happiness thy homager to be—  
Tho’ weeks may pass to months, and months to years;  
And joys may change to sorrows, smiles to tears,  
To yield in humbleness my fealty  
As faithful knight among his proud compeers,  
In times agone, with bent knees willingly.

## PASSION'S AFTERMATH

To a Suicide whose History was well known to me.

“ In tragic life, God wot,  
No villain need be ! Passions spin the plot :  
We are betrayed by what is false within.”

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Forlorn thy soul a burning truth did bear,  
And time but served thy heavy woe's increase ;  
So bidding eloquence of eyes to cease  
Made welcome Death with passionate despair.  
A strange confessment of unrest it were  
A secret late from silence to release—  
To breathe upon the night a hope for peace  
And swiftly sunder life from soul-sick care.

Thy lips, now cold, once wreathed with smiles, to hide  
The heart's drear pain, and laughter mingled sighs  
With its untruth. Yea, thou in loving wise  
Didst keep inviolate the secret tide  
Of passion that must surely sanctuarise  
Thy memory, thou lover of Love's pride.

“ BOTH EYES WERE SHATTERED ”

“ The Queen to-day conferred on Captain Ernest Beachcroft Towse, Gordon Highlanders, the decoration of the Victoria Cross, for conspicuous bravery.

“ Mrs. Towse, wife of Captain Towse, who led him in, had the honour of being presented to the Queen.”—*The Times*, July 19th, 1900.

Methinks I should have wept, and with no shame,  
    Seeing thee led who late did bravely lead—  
    Seeing thee kneel in blindness while the meed  
For valour then was granted thy high claim.  
A Cæsar wept for cause of lesser fame.  
    That sovran mother-heart, which knew thy deed  
    Deserving of all honour, sure did bleed  
Knowing thee cast where Death wins half his aim.

Our lives are little, for we grope and grieve  
    For unessential things that have no worth,  
And grasp mean pleasures rather than achieve.  
    Though blind to all the glories of the earth,  
Lift up thy face : thy soul has been sublime  
And now need never fear the aftertime.

## TO WOMEN

“For ’tis the eternal law  
That first in beauty should be first in might.”  
 (“Hyperion”) KEATS.

It is not much that I can do or give  
To lessen debts of kindness that must grow  
In heart, and brain, through all the days I live ;  
For harvests come in season when we sow.  
Some women have been kind to me  
And never claimed my gratitude,  
So I in gentlest mood,  
Late born of memory,  
Dear ladies, crave your leave  
To humbly sing, and later bring  
A little offering  
Of woven thoughts which memories shall weave.

Some women are so wonderful to me ;  
So patient, too, as patient as the moon.  
The lifting of a lip to smile may be  
An act more gracious than a granted boon.  
The lifting of two earnest eyes that soon  
Are dark with tears more beauty may reveal  
Than setting sun can shew at any noon.  
And gentle voices may on senses steal  
As bursting buds on night that jealous leaves conceal.

Most women worship beauty in all things ;  
Yes, worship constantly through weary days,  
And grieve to spurn the bounty that it brings—  
The gracious glory left about its ways.  
They seldom gladly walk with shameless gaze  
Where ugliness may leave a lingering stain  
That only time can utterly erase.  
How many women hide a hopeless pain ?  
Surely a well-borne sorrow will some guerdon gain.

A SONG

O why should love be ever blind ?  
In loving we but love in vain.  
O why should love be so unkind ?  
The future can but bring us pain.

Though love in his great blindness, dear,  
Has wrought this great unkindness here,  
I would not have it otherwise,  
Or lose the mem'ry of your eyes.

It may be, love, that we no more  
Shall walk together in old ways.  
Though I was led to Hope's own door,  
I found it closed through all our days.

I could not find in loving thee  
The strength to strive my will to free ;  
So stood in very humbleness,  
Not wishing I could love thee less.

## A SONG

If we to-night were taking  
A last farewell, my dear,  
Would not your soul be making  
A solemn requiem here ?  
If my last kiss were burning  
Upon your lips, my dear,  
Would your soul yield a yearning ?  
Would your eyes yield a tear ?

If you no more should see  
The flowers so often seen,  
Would not their beauty be  
More fair than it has been ?  
If you no more should breathe  
The sweet air after rain,  
Would you not surely wreath  
Regrets that pass to pain ?

The noise of birds more sweet,  
All things more fair to see,  
And grasses at our feet  
Were trodden tenderly,  
If we could only turn  
All discontent away ;  
If we could only learn  
To live a life each day.

## COVENT GARDEN

No garden this where peach trees range the walls,  
    And birds reply to calls ;  
Where vines show bunchy grapes all thickly hung  
    The amorous leaves among ;  
Where plums are seen with lazy fronts to woo  
    The sun, and change their hue ;  
Where fig trees glad in their young fruit rejoice ;  
    Where bees bend o'er their choice ;  
Where flowers may lift shy faces to the sun  
    Till his warm kiss is won.  
Not this the garden that I often see,  
    Which ever gladdens me,  
With smell of fruits, and flowers, and sight of same  
    What time I care to claim  
My little pleasure when I pass that way  
    Early or late the day.  
This garden is a place of grievous hours  
    For all the fruits and flowers  
So thickly spread the dusty shelves along,  
    Amidst a thrifty throng.  
Their bounteous beauty fills a noisy place,  
    And, sadder, leaves small trace  
Upon the souls of them that bargain here  
    Through day, and month, and year.  
A garden fed by many gardens rare ;  
    Old Covent Garden Fair.

## HAVE WE NOT SEEN ?

“ All things are best fulfilled in their due time ;  
And time there is for all things.”

MILTON.

Because our souls are glad with little things,  
Content to joy in any transient theme ;  
Because our lips accept the kiss that brings  
A load of shame that mars the fairest dream,  
When love would pass to passion's swollen stream,  
Where love's kind kiss is like the kiss of lust ;  
Because we dare not be, but only seem ;  
Because our souls are dark with driven dust ;  
We are so weak, such fools ! And worse, we are unjust.

Let us stand up and throw aside the pall  
Well woven from the fallen hours by fear,  
And dare to be ourselves though long in thrall.  
Let us come forth and throw upon the bier  
Of littleness all vanities so dear !  
All cant that hides our souls beneath light lies ;  
All sorrow should self-pity's wings be near,  
And hold the will in fee to truth's fair eyes,  
That beckon us to paths that ever upward rise.

Like passionate, lone petrels, proud of wing,  
About this life's storm some souls wildly beat,  
But never heard the song they fain would sing ;  
Their joy and grief not vocal though they meet  
Within their souls as wave on wave may greet.  
Have we not met those tempest-ridden hearts  
That feeling overmuch deny their heat,  
And leave the worn ways where men play their parts  
Storming for bargains in the world's relentless marts ?

Have we not seen young men that naught could tame  
Walk gladly in the places passion knows,  
And later heard the hurrying feet of shame  
That mocks the glory that it soon outgrows  
And smothers joy though passion fiercely glows ?  
Have we not seen mute mouths of maidens plead  
For kisses : for the tares that passion sows ?  
And heard some say, " Had love but been my meed,  
How many hours, and nights, had never heard my need ? "

Have we not seen the wife her mouth submit  
To lips she knew quite stained with lingering shame  
From kisses that a cruel passion lit  
In one whose shudders shook a fragile frame ?  
Have we not seen her softly comfort claim  
From arms that late another form did fold,  
And seen her curb the bitterness of blame ?  
Have we not seen her tears that surely told  
Of highest hopes expiring ere the heart grows cold ?

Have we not seen the son despair to feel  
He must despise when he should love with pride ?  
Have we not seen the daughter shrink to seal  
A gentle kiss the aching heart belied ?  
Have we not seen and heard old men deride  
The worthy worship yielded by the young ?  
Yes, all these things we see are by our side  
What time joy's cope above our heads is hung,  
And we would walk and only dream of hopes unsung.

## THE LAST MEETING

Bastien-Lepage, dying of consumption, was carried on a mattress by his friends to the studio of Marie Bashkirtseff, who was also on the point of death. Marie Bashkirtseff died in October 1884, at the age of twenty-four, and Bastien-Lepage in November of the same year at the age of thirty-six.

In at the studio door, shoulder high,  
They bear the painter on a mattress-grave.  
He for the last time comes to one who gave  
Her heart to him : and also soon to die.  
The lovers too exhausted to comply  
With what the brain prompts, make no movement save  
To turn their faces, smiling to outbrave  
The last defeat that they cannot deny.

Despite relentless, darksome doom that hangs  
O'er them as mist about lone mountain peaks,  
So glad they are that no words fall to break  
The silence wrapping friends who know such pangs  
That tears make their slow way adown wan cheeks  
While all the air is heavy with love's ache.

TO GEORG BRANDES

A strong apostle of fair liberty,  
Thou lookest o'er the world for such as preach  
That of all tasks the noblest is to reach  
Where man puts on his godhead, being free.  
Has not brave Poland cause to honour thee,  
For words that did most solemnly impeach  
The brutish fools which time has yet to teach  
That truth by force can never conquered be?

A judge of judgment, thou with vision keen  
Hast well appraised the written words of men  
Who stirred the world, and took the ways of fame.  
So many who in market place have been  
The noisest, have fallen 'neath thy pen,  
And those that smothered were have burst to flame.

[I received the following letter from Copenhagen dated August 4th, 1914 :

DEAR SIR,—You have honoured me in writing a charming poem to me. I think, no one will print it in the times through which we pass. Now the individual loses all interest. What we shall see will be so grand in its horror that no one in the history of Europe has been witness to something equal.

Yours sincerely,

GEORG BRANDES.

This letter interested the editor of *The Boston Transcript* so much that he asked permission to print it in facsimile. It appeared on the front page of *The Transcript* beside one of my poems. I was very proud of this letter from the great savant whose monumental work, *Main Currents of Nineteenth-Century Literature*, interested me so much that I read the six volumes six times.]

## A BONDSLAVE

“ As if a phantom caress’d me,  
 I thought I was not alone walking here by the shore ;  
 But the one I thought was with me as now I walk by the shore, the  
     one I loved that caress’d me,  
 As I lean and look through the glimmering light, that one has utterly  
     disappeared,  
 And those appear that are hateful to me and mock me.”

WALT WHITMAN.

From many lesser loves you save me, dear,  
     For I, remembering all that you once were,  
 Can feel anew your kisses oft shed here,  
     And loosened tears still linger in my hair.  
 Yet often I do wish it otherwise.  
 I live a bonds slave in a paradise  
 Of memories that my unwilling mind must keep.

If some sweet woman, being more than fair,  
     Wishing to love, and of love feeling need,  
 Should lean to me, and with her eyes declare  
     A pent-up passion that her soul did lead,  
 I would not wrong her beauty with a kiss ;  
 Unless she wept, and then I might do this—  
 Atween my two hands take her face and kiss her brow.

Not much—a gentle kiss upon the brow ;  
     Yet what could I give more remembering one  
 Whose beauty leads me into bondage now,  
     And utterly usurps a soul undone ?  
 I know this passionate regret will pass ;  
 And may be as an aftermath of grass,  
 Another love will grow all stronger for this flood.

The heart has huge capacity for pain,  
     Which heavief seems in youth, but this I know  
 That one so young as I may hope to gain  
     Exemption from the griefs I undergo.

For youth must kindle hope, and hope shall be,  
The one thing splendid in a soul not free—  
A lamp that lights the labyrinths of love, and hate.

Where is the vaunted freedom that I knew  
    In earlier days ere you and I had met?  
Where are the highborn hopes that hourly grew?  
    And where the kisses which so often set  
My senses to a madness sweet to know?  
All gone, and many other things must go,  
I pray God grant that soon my soul may understand.

I found you, loved you, but to lose you, dear.  
    I may no longer follow where you lead.  
To wish you all the happiness once here  
    In this my heart were kindest wish indeed.  
In what strange paths, and stranger places too,  
    Have I been led in eager search of you.  
Now the Atlantic yawns atween our yearning hearts.

## TO YOU

My mind is such a wilful thing—  
It will go wandering.  
It wanders in an avenue,  
Full of memories of you,  
And all that love can bring.

Beneath the interlacing leaves,  
So thick they almost hide,  
The starry track that half relieves  
The darkness far, and wide,  
I pace with friends and talk ;  
But you, my love, are by my side,  
Yes, by me as I walk.

The water gently laps the shore—  
The beauty of the night  
Has entered our two souls once more  
And made them, Love, unite.  
I take you in my arms and kiss  
Your mouth so loved of me,  
And on your hair I now do this—  
I leave a tear that only God can see.

*Printed in Town Topics during Verlaine week*

EUGÈNE CARRIÈRE

Written after seeing a picture of a woman with a child, and the Verlaine portrait in the Luxembourg.

How he looked through the flesh that clothes the soul,  
This youthful painter, on whose humble head  
The chrism of genius was surely shed.  
Never for him the bare facts that control  
Some painters with the vision of the mole.  
See how the yearning spirit has o'erspread  
The face of this fair mother who has fed  
The babe she fondles ! Where the aureole ?

Now stand with me before this picture here,  
And on the face silenous-like discern  
The glory of the spirit that could light  
The brutish features when the poet-seer  
Caught glimpses of the splendid stars that burn,  
Where poesy illumines the nether night.

## A PLACE OF DREAMS

What of the hours when we as through a spell  
Took on of love's fair loveliness the gleams  
But seen of those who struggle with this night?  
I did not count the moments as they fell,  
But I have strung them in a place of dreams  
And they are lamps that beckon, and delight.

LOST

O, I shall never take the sea again  
Nor on a wide deck muse and slowly pace  
Without the haunting sound of your voice,  
And memory of a pale, and lovely face.

TO —

You in your beauty led me  
Where the gods have fared,  
And I with gratitude  
Think on joys long shared.

I nothing ever did so free  
As letting this my soul but see  
The loveliness, and fragrance shed  
About your spirit, and your head.

## THE POETIC TEMPERAMENT

Printed in *The Poetry Review*

THAT poets are not as other men is a generally accepted truth. The prevailing difference lies chiefly in the direction of temperament rather than in degrees of potential forces of the brain. In truth, too great a preponderance of brain may wake thoughts that loom upon the horizon of infinity in such magnitude that all rhythmical beauty of expression may be overlooked.

Swedenborg is an instance ; the emotional temperament was entirely subsidiary to his intellect, which in its vast peregrinations not so much heard the ebb and flow of rhythmical waves upon the shores of the universe as saw all beauty in the unapparent. In his book on *Divine Love and Wisdom*, he writes of these divine attributes as though making geological observations.

Keats is an instance of the intellect being temporarily subsidiary to his emotional forces. I say temporarily by reason of a respect I have for the poet's own words. After recording several emotions that afforded him delight, he asks :

“ And can I ever bid these joys farewell ?  
Yes ; I must pass them for a nobler life,  
Where I may find the agonies, the strife  
Of human hearts.”

I may presume from these few lines that he recognised that the recording of emotions alone was not the complete mission of a poet.

Carlyle might well have paused before he observed that Keats was “ dead dog ” to him, for surely a youth of scarcely twenty-two years—at the time the above lines were written—having accomplished so much and with a further promise of achievement in the lines quoted merited kinder treatment.

One may be sure that he would have gladly suffered even the charge of being a proselyte to "flunkeyism" had he known that Shelley would sing "a dirge for him, the doubly dead, in that he died so young."

"The sweetest lyricist of his saddest wrong" surpassed himself in writing *Adonais* amidst a total abandonment to grief.

Tennyson united strong emotional forces with an acute intellect, a fine judgment in the selection and omission of images, and great dignity and beauty of expression.

A diverse richness of temperament, or that part of it which may be called sensibility, has invariably been possessed by the greatest poets. Without this the most acute and incisive intellects can seldom hope to write poetry that is above mediocrity, although no conclusive proofs can be deduced to justify its relegation to a lower position in our minds. The best proof is to take up one of the lesser poets and to find a passage expressing an emotion which we know has been expressed by a master mind: the difference is easily recognised. The one writes in a cold, yet possibly in a very polished style, unconvincingly by reason of his nature not having felt such an emotion, or one similar, in its rich entirety.

The other records an experience with warmth; its memory alone is sufficient to quicken the pulses of the brain. As surely as a bird knows by instinct where to find materials from which to weave a nest, the poet turns to strange unfrequented sources, finding there food for his life within dreams, and shuns the ways of the many.

His knowledge may be empirical, yet in the fullness of his spirit he will sometimes touch the highest truths. It might then be truly said of him, he knows not what he utters. When the imagination is fervid it is possible for the poet to write something to which he may not be able to attach a satisfactory meaning a few days later, and years after men will interpret those particular passages in such wise that the writer might deem himself dispossessed of them, for no such train of thought was in his mind at the time they were written. At such periods the poet is under the governance of his inspiration and speaks beyond himself.

It may be doubted whether Burns had a sound knowledge of any one system of philosophy, and yet his poetry is the proudest possession of a people. His secret lay in writing from the heart, and not from the intellect.

Emerson somewhat deploras a too great devotion to the intellect at the expense of the emotions in an essay on "Old Age."

"We postpone our literary work until we have more ripeness and skill to write, and we one day discover that our literary talent was a youthful effervescence which we have now lost."

The poetry of Emerson certainly has little effervescence, and does not strike one as bearing the mark of spontaneous utterance, and therefore loses the chief charm of verse; but his essays should rank among the glories of literature.

Swift mistook verse for a medium for satire, and failed in the province of poetry.

Byron was never so much a poet as when he ceased to write cynicism of the intellect and outpoured the feelings of his heart.

The *Lycidas* of Milton, expressing sadness of regret at the death of his friend King, will stir thousands of souls on whom the sublimity of his great epic is quite lost.

Shelley, in his *Alastor*, has given us a most beautiful picture of the poetic temperament, and we can easily believe that this poem is a record of his own exquisite sensibility.

Goethe—the first man to fully elucidate the character of Hamlet—in his drama *Torquato Tasso* presents us with an interesting portrayal of the peculiarities of the poetic temperament.

In hours of gloom and dejection, the majority of men will seek society or some amusement to dissipate the clouds that sink so suddenly; not so the poet, who knows them for the best, recognising that in such hours the spirit suffers a greater expansion, and when bound by the deeps of desolation becomes stronger, loftier, and more universal in its aims.

Is there time and room enough for the rich resources of the mind to repose and enlarge themselves if an incessant

restlessness and hunger for amusement for ever subverts any high resolve ?

The poet is essentially eclectic ; where most men eagerly accept the smallest pleasure offered without questioning the same in relation to the future, he will refuse it, knowing that such an experience can be of no service to him.

The poetic temperament may present to the ordinary observer few of those beautiful attributes so often insisted upon in poetical creations. In place thereof a certain selfish irritability may manifest itself, and quite disregarding of those small amenities of which an aggregate is happiness to many, the poet passes by and keeps jealously hidden a soul intensely yearning. So well may this secret be guarded, that none guess the all-consuming sorrow of a soul rushing to complete the cycle of its years with no adequate achievement marking the progress of its passage.

The tragic significance of a splendid soul wrapt in glories of its own imaginings and wasting the loftiest gifts in idle inactivity can seldom be strongly impressed upon a mind that is not of kindred sympathies. It is only when engaged on some great and congenial task that the poet exhibits a sublime cheerfulness so exultant that he seems to dally with the sun.

To severe habits of repression may be attributed the generation of that ardent and lofty enthusiasm which has impelled genius to undertake the most arduous tasks with possibly no encouragement save a self-conviction of the glory of its own conceptions. The noblest enthusiasm is often exhausted by a too frequent conjunction with the world. Speaking of society, Byron observed : " I have been too much in a circle, especially 1812-3-4." In *Manfred* these lines occur :

" I have had those earthly visions,  
And noble aspirations in my youth,  
To make my own the mind of other men,  
The enlightener of nations."

(Act III, Scene I).

Byron's fame is glorious enough, and yet I cannot help thinking that if the dust of the world had not blackened that

magnificent spirit and often made it "blind in unascended majesty," he might have been third of the sons of England.

The poet is often a sterner realist than the man of more prosaic temperament. This statement might seem somewhat paradoxical if it stood alone with no explanation or examples to enforce its truth. Emerson remarks :

"The scholar may lose himself in schools, in words, and become a pedant ; but when he comprehends his duties he, above all men, is a realist, and converses with things."

Swedenborg affirms that "man is not life, but a recipient of life," and

"that the conception of a man from his father is not a conception of life, but only a conception of the first and purest form receptive of life ; to which form, as a stamen or initiament are successively added in the womb substances and matters in forms adapted to the reception of life in its order and degree."

That men are recipients of life and not life itself is a truth widely respected by Oriental philosophers. Insomuch as the human body is a receptacle of life, we can conceive that there are greater or lesser potentialities of reception according to the several degrees of perfection or imperfection of the receptacle. Shelley seems to have been convinced of this. In his *Alastor* we find :

"And what am I that I should linger here,  
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,  
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned  
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers  
In the deaf ear, to the blind earth and heaven  
That echoes not my thoughts."

and later this passage :

"Even as a vapour fed with golden beams  
That minister'd on Sunlight, ere the West  
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame—  
No sense, no motion, no divinity—  
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings  
The breath of heaven did wander."

Spenser indubitably held this conviction. He writes :

“ So every spirit as it is more pure  
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,  
So it the fairer body doth procure  
To habit it, and so more fairly dight  
With cheerful grace and amiable sight ;  
For of the soul the body form doth take,  
For soul is form and doth the body make.”

If the poet possesses a frame more exquisitely attuned to beauty, and therefore more receptive of life than frames of most men, surely I am justified in thinking that he is often a sterner realist.

Of all poets, Dante had the widest experience : Ambassador, soldier, poet, philosopher, and exile in poverty. With what stern reality did this soul touch life at its extremest points. Heaven and Hell, Beauty and Hideousness, and Love and Hate conjoined within this breast. His love for Beatrice Portinari is, perhaps, the most beautiful ever recorded. Meeting her at a very early age, he gave up his soul in total surrender and worshipped her. She married, and a few months later, died. That she was very beautiful is known from words of the poet, who remarks that people paused in the streets to look at her as she passed by in very humbleness.

Dante married with no happy result, and even evinced some affection for a third lady, to whom he addressed a sonnet, and yet, according to his own confession, he smothered this nascent flame and nurtured memories of Beatrice. The intermittent, mutable, and fanciful attachments that many men form seldom satisfy a man of this peculiar temperament, by reason of his nature needing a far deeper reality. What a picture we can conjure up of that wayward genius Byron, when a boy, rushing wildly into the night with his wounded spirit ; one awful sentence, framed to mockery by the lips he loved, flooding his soul with pain. “ Do you think that I could care anything for that lame boy ? ” If there be truth in the remark,

“that state determines time; time is only an appearance. Happiness of state causes time to appear short, and unhappiness of state causes time to appear long.”

or, in the passage of *Cain* :

“With us acts are exempt from time, and we  
Can crowd eternity into an hour  
Or stretch an hour to eternity.”

then we can believe that Byron lived longer in that one experience than hundreds of men would have done in seventy similar ones.

Keats, laughing at the extravagances born of love, lived to marvel at the strength of passion that consumed him in his last years. In his letters he writes :

“Oh God! God! God! If I had any chance of recovery this passion would kill me. It surprises me that the human heart is capable of containing so much misery.”

Friendship is accorded and accepted by the poet on a nobler basis than a mere participation in pleasures and an escape from ennui. Though a similarity of professions or pursuits may not be necessary, a movement on the same plane of thought or enthusiasm must exist to inspire a friendly attachment that passes beyond the confines of acquaintanceship. Hear Goethe's words :

“At this time all within was fermenting and seething in the first action and reaction. Fritz Jacobi, the first whom I suffered to look into the chaos, and whose nature was also toiling in its own extreme depths, heartily received my confidence, responded to it, and endeavoured to lead me to his own opinions. He, too, felt an unspeakable mental want; he, too, did not wish to have it appeased by outward aid, but aimed at development and illumination from within. I could not comprehend what he communicated to me of the state of his mind, so much the less, indeed, because I could form no idea as to my own. Still, as he was far in advance of me in philosophical thought, and even in the study of Spinoza, he endeavoured to guide and enlighten my obscure efforts. Such a purely intellectual relationship was new to me and excited a passionate longing for further communion. At night, after we had parted and returned to our chambers, I

often sought him again. With the moonlight trembling over the broad Rhine, we stood at the window and revelled in that full interchange of ideas which, in such splendid moments of confidence, swells forth so abundantly."

I shall conclude this fragmentary essay with the sestet of a sonnet of Keats' :

" And calmest thoughts come round us—as of leaves  
Budding—fruit ripening in stillness—Autumn suns  
Standing at eve upon the quiet sheaves—  
Sweet Sappho's cheek—a sleeping infant's breath—  
The gradual sand that through an hour glass runs—  
A woodland rivulet—a Poet's death."

*The End*